

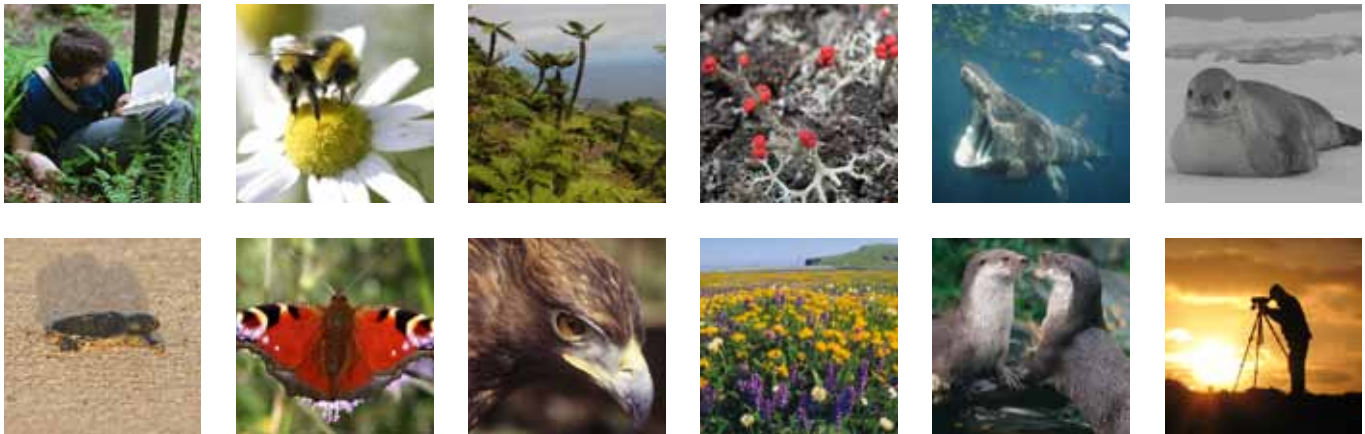


Conserving and Managing Biodiversity Beyond 2010



**British Ecological Society and
Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management**

October 2009



Biodiversity encompasses the diversity of biological life on earth, from ecosystems through species to genes. There is clear evidence that the current loss of global biodiversity is occurring at a rate never before experienced except at the times of mass extinctions that ended major geological epochs. There is also growing evidence that many ecosystem services - the economic and life-support systems derived from nature and upon which mankind relies - require functioning communities of plants, animals and other organisms. All projections of future demands for food, water, land and energy predict that biodiversity will come under ever greater threats. As emphasised by the many events and activities that will take place in 2010, the International Year of Biodiversity, policy-makers with biodiversity briefs require as never before the best scientific, practical and professional advice about the current state of biodiversity, the causes and consequences of biodiversity change, and interventions to help manage biodiversity.

In addition to the issues affecting all nations, the UK has a special concern about its own environment and those of its crown dependencies and overseas territories. As one of the largest industrialised economies and a major scientific power, and because of its historic links with countries throughout the world, the UK is also a major contributor to the study and protection of biodiversity globally. The UK has many local, national and international commitments to protect biodiversity. It is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity where it pledged to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss. In a move strongly supported by our organisations, at the 2001 EU Leaders Summit in Gothenburg the UK went beyond this to agree to halt biodiversity loss by 2010. However, there is general agreement that this goal will not be met. Government (national, regional and local), NGOs, industry and all other organisations involved in the environment require focussed scientific input to formulate the best policies affecting biodiversity.

Our position statement on the science and best practice underpinning biodiversity management and conservation

Based on existing evidence our two organisations state that:

- The current and future threats to biodiversity are so great that they demand the highest attention by policy-makers; biodiversity has huge intrinsic value and there is strong evidence that intact ecosystems are critical for producing many of the ecosystem services upon which human life and livelihoods rely.
- The BES and IEEM are ready to help identify priorities for investment in biodiversity science and practice in order to understand better the current state of biodiversity, the causes and consequences of its perturbation by mankind, and the means by which biodiversity can be restored, protected and managed.
- An informed, professional, science and evidence-based approach to the conservation and management of biodiversity requires new multi-disciplinary collaborations. The members of our two organisations are actively engaged in policy-relevant ecological and environmental research as well as its application in practice. We call for a greater dialogue between scientists, policy-makers and biodiversity practitioners to ensure that relevant research takes place and to strengthen the translation of research into practice. More needs to be done to establish a vibrant, multi-stakeholder network, of which ecologists and environmental managers will be an important part, to address the biodiversity challenges in the UK and beyond.
- New targets will need to be developed as the Convention on Biological Diversity moves beyond 2010. The targets and the means by which they are monitored must be based on the best available science and management practice, and our organisations on behalf of their members are eager to contribute to this process.
- Our organisations recognise the need for excellent fundamental, non-directed research that will form the basis of the next generation of applied biodiversity science.
- Evidence points to a reduction in the teaching of biodiversity-related subjects at school and in particular a drop in field trips and opportunities for children, especially young children, to experience biodiversity at first hand. Our two organisations affirm the importance of biodiversity instruction in producing an informed public and the next generation of biodiversity scientists, managers, and policy-makers.

About us

The British Ecological Society is the UK's learned society for ecology. Established in 1913, it is the oldest ecological society in the world, publishes some of its most prestigious journals, and holds scientific meetings that attract scientists from across the globe. The Society has over 4,000 members worldwide, including the vast majority of the leading ecologists in the UK and internationally. The BES has an active policy team, which works to ensure that policy-making is based on sound scientific evidence.

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The Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management is the organisation supporting professionals in the fields of ecology and environmental management. The Institute currently has some 4,000 members and provides a variety of services to develop competency and standards in ecology and environmental management. One of IEEM's objectives is to further the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and maintenance of ecological processes and life support systems essential to a fully functional biosphere.

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The BES and IEEM are both members of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity UK Partnership Network.



Parliamentary Office of
Science and Technology

