Kunming–Montreal
GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK

The United Kingdom's 7th National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity: Summary Report

UK Government

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

This publication should be cited as: JNCC. 2026. Seventh National Report to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity: United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Summary Report. JNCC, Peterborough.

This publication is available at: https://uk.chm-cbd.net/sites/gb/files/2026-05/cbd-7nr-uk-summary.pdf.

We have used Copilot Chat to help support the production of the target and goal summary text. We have verified the accuracy of the target and goal summary text and take full responsibility for their contents.

Any enquiries regarding this publication should be sent to JNCC at: Communications@jncc.gov.uk.

Contents

1. Introduction

The Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KMGBF) of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) – considered 'the Paris moment for nature' – sets a vision of a world living in harmony with nature where by 2050, "*biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people,*" which it has encapsulated in four global goals.

To realise these goals, the KMGBF has set a mission for countries around the globe by 2030 "*to take urgent action to halt and reverse biodiversity loss to put nature on a path to recovery for the benefit of people and planet.*" This mission is broken down into 23 action-orientated global targets, which should each be met by 2030. The expectation is that countries contribute to these global targets according to their national circumstances, priorities and capabilities.

Parties to the CBD are required to submit national reports to the Conference of the Parties on the measures taken for the implementation of the CBD and their effectiveness in meeting its objectives. This summary report provides a concise overview of the UK's 7th National Report (7NR). Further details are available in the full report.

2 UK Approach

In response to the KMGBF, the four countries of the UK stated their collective ambition to work together to address biodiversity loss in the UK National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). The UK NBSAP contains 23 ambitious national targets that commits the UK to achieving all the 23 KMGBF targets domestically. The UK's 7NR provides an assessment of progress against the implementation of the KMGBF, including progress towards the UK's national targets in the UK NBSAP.

Devolution allows the four countries of the UK to tailor KMGBF implementation to their unique circumstances, and each has set out biodiversity and wider environmental plans and actions through which to do so – including on agriculture, pollution, climate change, food waste and the circular economy. These sit alongside jointly prepared plans and strategies such as the UK Marine Strategy (UKMS) and documents addressing reserved matters. Furthermore, the CBD has been extended to six of the UK Overseas Territories (British Virgin Islands; Cayman Islands; the Falkland Islands; Gibraltar; St Helena, Ascension and Tristan da Cunha; and South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands) and the three Crown Dependencies (the Bailiwick of Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man) (UKOTs and CDs). The UK has recently published a UK Overseas Territories biodiversity strategy (2025), providing a shared framework to support biodiversity conservation, governance, capacity-building and delivery of international commitments across the UKOTs.

The UK has adopted a coordinated and evidence driven process to develop its 7NR collaboratively among the four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs that have the CBD extended to them. The UK's 7NR has been coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) – the UK's statutory advisor on nature – and provides details of the actions the UK is taking to meet its 23 national targets and ultimately to contribute to the four global goals of the KMGBF. The UK's 7NR provides the first comprehensive assessment of progress across the UK and the UKOTs and CDs.

The KMGBF Monitoring Framework contains 27 'headline indicators' that parties are required to use and report progress against and which provide high-level information and allow national results to be aggregated globally. These are complemented by categorical 'binary' indicators which record whether specific enabling actions have been taken. The UK has supplemented these with additional national and subnational indicators, where appropriate.

Within the UK, biodiversity is monitored and reported through the UK Biodiversity Indicators (UKBIs), which draw on long-running monitoring schemes (e.g. the UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme and the Breeding Bird Survey) and are published annually as official statistics. The UK undertook significant efforts in 2024–2025 to update and align its UKBI suite with the headline indicators for the purpose of reporting progress against the goals and targets of the KMGBF. Despite being a data-rich country, the UK has found it challenging to ensure all targets were

assessed in the 7NR using the required indicators. Of the 27 headline indicators, the UK has developed and published 19 with two still in development. The remaining six headline indicators either lack an agreed global methodology or are not considered relevant to a UK context.

In August and September 2025, the UK issued a call for evidence from stakeholders, which sought input on the UK's current level of progress in implementing the targets, as well as key challenges and any opportunities or solutions to address them. The call for evidence was shared with 79 stakeholders across the UK and relevant UKOTs and CDs, including non-governmental organisations, industry, and business representatives. Responses were received from eight organisations (Wildlife & Countryside Link (England), Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, UK Overseas Territories Conservation Forum, Finance for Biodiversity Foundation – UK Policy Subgroup, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Bat Conservation Trust, St Helena National Trust and Global Youth Biodiversity Network UK) and were considered in the drafting of the UK 7NR where sufficient supporting evidence and sources have been provided.

3 Progress towards National Targets

Progress towards each target in the UK's 7NR was assessed using a systematic evidence-based methodology reflecting a set of considerations that includes different indicators, actions taken, and observed outcomes. Progress was scored using the categories in Table 1 as agreed in Decision 16/32 adopted by the Conference of Parties to the CBD at COP-16 on the mechanisms for planning, monitoring, reporting and review.

Table 1: Categories used to assess progress towards each national target.

Progress Categories
Achieved
On track to achieve target
Progress made but at an insufficient rate
No significant progress
Unknown
Not applicable

So far, the UK is on track to achieve the following three targets by 2030:

- **Target 13:** Ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources, digital sequence information and traditional knowledge.
- **Target 17:** Establish biosafety measures and distribute the benefits of biotechnology.
- **Target 20:** Strengthen capacity building, technology transfer, and scientific and technical co-operation for effective implementation and biodiversity.

For 19 of the targets, progress is being made but at an insufficient rate to achieve them by 2030, and progress is currently assessed as 'unknown' for Target 9 (ensure management and use of wild species are sustainable to deliver benefits for people).

Many biodiversity interventions, such as restoring habitats, rebuilding species populations or improving ecosystem condition, take years or decades before measurable change becomes visible. As a result, current assessments may not yet capture the full impact of policies and investments already underway. As a clear commitment to achieving all 23 national targets, the four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs have recently updated or developed comprehensive biodiversity strategies or environmental improvement plans that are underpinned by legislation. These strategies and plans form the basis of many of the actions in the UK's 7NR. Summaries of progress against each national target are provided below.

3.1 Target 1: Plan and manage all areas to address land and sea use change and reduce biodiversity loss

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs operate statutory terrestrial and marine planning systems, guided by national development plans and marine policy frameworks. Biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and participatory approaches are in place, with ongoing work to map areas of high biodiversity value and strengthen spatial measures that aid conservation and protection. These include Biodiversity Net Gain/Net Benefit requirements in England and Wales, the rollout of Local Nature Recovery Strategies in England, Scotland's National Planning Framework 4 and Northern Ireland's overarching Strategic Planning Policy Statement, all of which integrate nature into spatial decision making. All four countries of the UK now operate Marine Plans and have expanded management measures in Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) (see Target 3).

Progress: All land areas in the UK operate under statutory planning systems, and each country's national planning is guided by their respective National Planning Framework. In England, Local Nature Recovery Strategies are being developed and implemented, with 24 of 48 strategies now completed by December 2025, and Planning Policy Wales was updated in 2024 to strengthen Net Benefit for biodiversity policy by requiring the submission of green infrastructure statements for all development proposals.

Under the UK Marine Policy Statement, Marine Plans are now published in all countries with some currently undergoing review. Nearly 60% of England's 181 MPAs now have management measures restricting damaging fishing gear and Scotland introduced prohibitions in 20 offshore MPAs in October 2025. Wales manages 139 MPAs with targeted byelaws, and Northern Ireland and the UKOTs maintain similar frameworks. Despite progress on land and at sea, most assessed ecosystems remain threatened (Table 2) and natural terrestrial ecosystems cover only around a quarter of the UK land area (Table 3). Additional work is needed to effectively implement the plans already in place, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance close to zero by 2030, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity.

Table 2: Red List Ecosystem assessments to assess the risk of collapse of individual ecosystems in the UK (Source: Headline Indicator A.1: Red list of ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Red List of Ecosystems)).

Threat category	Total ecosystems within category
Ecosystems assessed as Critically Endangered	2
Ecosystems assessed as Endangered	7
Ecosystems assessed as Vulnerable	8
Ecosystems assessed as Near Threatened	1
Ecosystems assessed as Least Concern	2
Ecosystems not assessed	28

Table 3: UK land and sea areas covered by natural ecosystems (Source: Headline Indicator A.2: Extent of Natural Ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent of Natural Ecosystems)).

	Total area (ha)	Percentage of sea/land
UK terrestrial ecosystems	5,885,239	24%
UK marine ecosystems	73,010,200	100%
UK terrestrial and marine ecosystems combined	78,895,439	81%

3.2 Target 2: Ensure at least 30% of all degraded ecosystems are under effective restoration

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs are restoring degraded terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine ecosystems through statutory frameworks, national biodiversity strategies, legally binding targets and long-term government funded programmes. Across the UK, action focuses on priority habitats such as peatlands, woodlands, wetlands and coastal ecosystems, supported by spatial planning, fisheries reforms and locally tailored UKOT and CD approaches. Delivery of restoration activities relies on partnerships across governments,

landowners, non-governmental organisations and communities, with a growing role for nature-based solutions and blended finance.

Progress: There have been major investments made in nature recovery, for example, woodland creation in England is accelerating with 5,765 ha of new woodland planted in 2024/2025, reflecting a 27% increase on the previous year, and Scotland's Peatland ACTION programme has restored over 51,000 ha of peatland to date, supported by a £250 million commitment to restore 250,000 ha by 2030. Marine and coastal ecosystems are benefiting from recovery projects (e.g. coral restoration and seagrass projects) and will benefit from new byelaws in MPAs that aim to restrict the use of certain fishing gears and reduce the damage they cause to the seabed. Progress on the restoration of degraded ecosystems is being made across the UK and the UKOTs and CDs. However, more work is needed to understand how current actions contribute to achieving the target coverage and intended outcome. The Headline Indicator 2.1: Area under Restoration (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area under Restoration), which will measure progress towards Target 2, is currently under development.

3.3 Target 3: Effectively conserve and manage at least 30% of land and 30% of ocean

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs are expanding and improving protected areas and other effective area-based conservations measures (OECMs) through national legislation and strategies, and through the development of 30 by 30 frameworks at the country-level. Marine protection is being strengthened through the designation of Highly Protected Marine Areas in England, expansion of MPA networks across Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and enhanced management measures such as byelaws restricting damaging fishing gear. Work on improving management effectiveness and strengthening MPA monitoring aims to deliver representative, well-connected and well-managed conservation areas.

The UKOTs are expanding terrestrial and marine protections through initiatives such as the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office's Blue Belt Programme, which provides sustained support for the management, enforcement, and scientific monitoring of MPAs and OECMs as well as contributing to advancing understanding of the effectiveness of existing marine protection.

The UK is also supporting international implementation of this target, including through partnerships, such as the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People and the Global Ocean Alliance, and by introducing legislation to enable the UK to implement its obligations under the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ Agreement) and move towards ratification. The UK also commissioned research to develop a shortlist of

potential area-based management tools, including MPAs, that could be proposed once the BBNJ Agreement is in force.

Progress: During 1950–2010 there was a steady increase in the extent of protected areas, and during 2010–2020 there was a rapid and substantial expansion in the extent of MPAs (Figure 1), which now cover 38.2% of UK inshore and offshore waters in 2025. In contrast, only 10.6% of terrestrial areas are protected (Table 4). Several of the UKOTs and CDs have already designated over 30% of their land and 90–100% of their marine areas.

Regarding progress in improving the condition of protected sites across the four countries of the UK, in 2025: 62% of Areas or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (A/SSSIs) (England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) are in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering, 59% of Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) are in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering, and 66% of Special Protected Areas (SPAs) (Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) are in favourable condition or in an unfavourable condition but recovering.

The UK has developed the National Indicator 3.a: Management Effectiveness of Protected and Conserved Areas (MEPCA), which will be critical to tracking progress and securing well-managed systems of protected areas and OECMs. Interim results of this new MEPCA indicator suggest that 52% of all UK MPAs are currently under effective management.

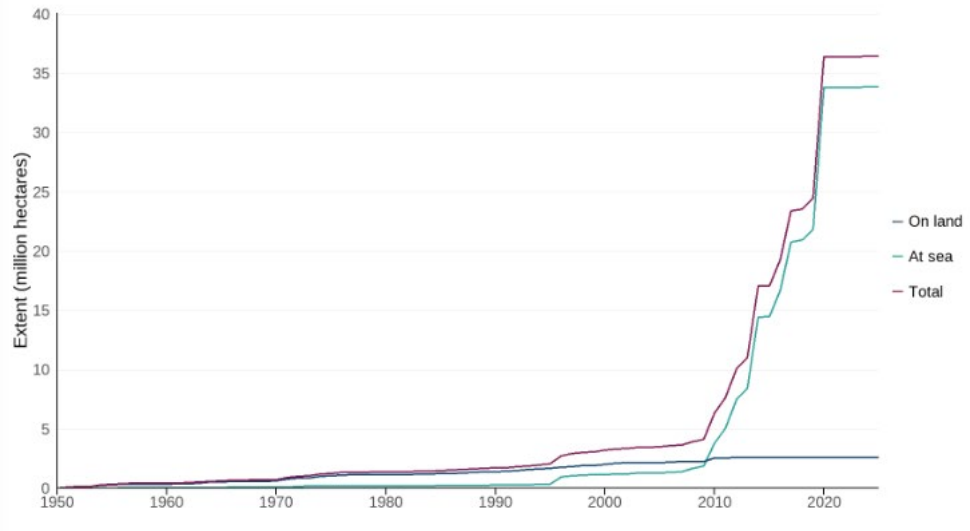

Figure 1: Total area of formally protected sites: on land and at sea, 1950 to 2025 (Source: Headline Indicator 3.1: Coverage of protected areas and other effective area–based conservation measures (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas)). See also Indicator K4: Extent and condition of terrestrial and marine protected areas in the UK Overseas Territories (UK Environmental Indicator Framework) for information on protected–area coverage in the UK Overseas Territories.

Table 4: Extent and percentage cover of protected areas by country, 2025 (Source: Headline Indicator 3.1: Coverage of protected areas and other effective area–based conservation measures (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Extent and condition of protected areas)).

Country	On land (M Ha)	On Land (%)	At sea (M Ha)	At sea (%)
England	0.85	6.5%	9.29	40.3%
Scotland	1.39	17.6%	22.76	36.9%
Wales	0.23	10.9%	1.55	50.3%
Northern Ireland	0.14	9.8%	0.24	35.6%
United Kingdom	2.60	10.6%	33.84	38.2%

3.4 Target 4: Halt species extinction, protect genetic diversity and manage human–wildlife conflicts

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: National legislation in the four countries of the UK protect valuable habitats and species including legislation collectively referred to as the 'Habitats and Species Regulations', the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in England, Wales and Scotland, and the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (2011) in Northern Ireland. Offshore marine areas beyond 12 nautical miles, encompassing the UK's Exclusive Economic Zone and the UK continental shelf, are protected by the Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations (2017). The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs are also advancing species recovery, including taking targeted action for threatened species, through the delivery of programmes, action plans and partnerships at the national level.

In the marine environment, the four countries of the UK are also working to achieve Target 4 through enacting the Fisheries Act (2020), which will make a positive contribution to the achievement of the Good Environmental Status targets for cetaceans, seals, birds, fish, food webs and benthic and pelagic habitats in the UK Marine Strategy. In the UKOTs, conservation plans have shown results including the successful reintroduction of native species. Work is also ongoing to maintain the genetic diversity of the UK's domestic and wild species and to manage human–wildlife conflicts.

Progress: While the overall global risk of extinction of species which occur in the UK shows a slight decrease (Headline Indicator A.3: Red List Index), the overall trend in

status for many wild species in the UK is declining or not improving. The abundance of species prioritised for conservation in the UK has declined by 62% since 1970 (Figure 2). In the short-term (2018–2023) and medium-term (2013–2023), the indicator, which includes 251 of 2,890 priority species, has shown little to no change. This is because there is now an equal proportion of species that are increasing (41%) in abundance as those that are declining (41%). This compares with the long-term trend (1970–2023) where only 24% of species increased in abundance, but 51% had declined.

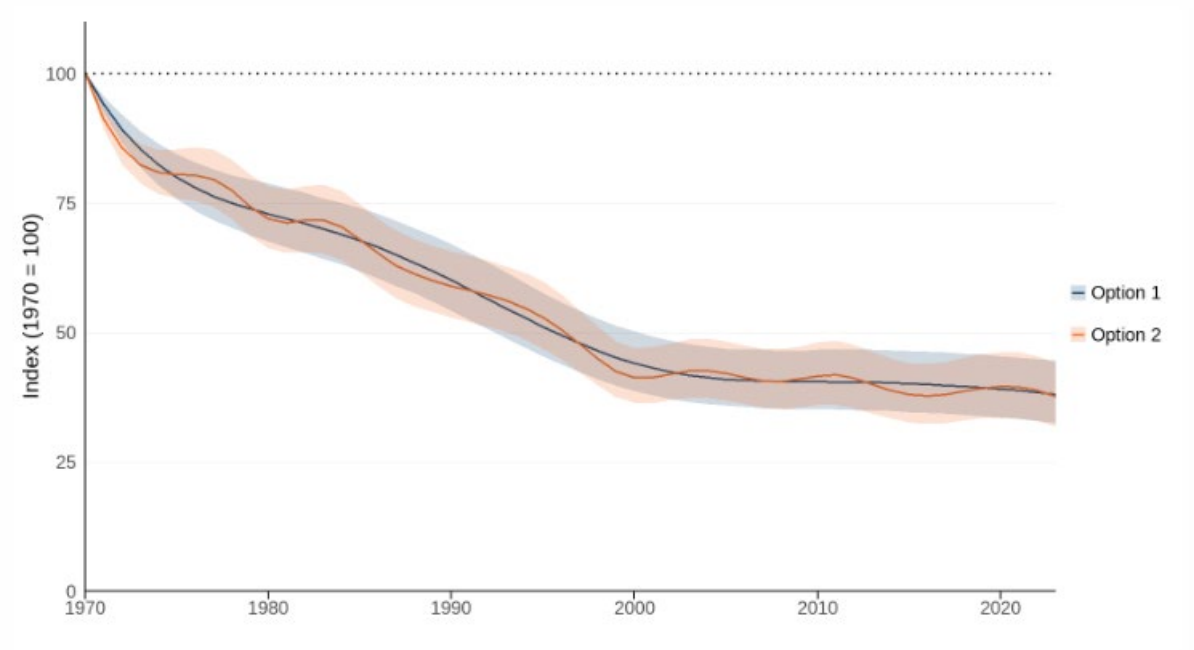

Figure 2: Change in the relative abundance of 251 out of 2,890 priority species in the UK, 1970 to 2023. (Source: National Indicator 4.a: Status of priority species: relative abundance (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of priority species: relative abundance)). This figure shows the two options for the smoothed trend (solid lines) with their 95% credible intervals (shaded area).

Regarding genetic diversity, the UK population size of 64% of assessed wild species, meets or exceeds minimum thresholds (Figure 3). Scotland has developed a Genetic Diversity Scorecard for 26 target species of importance, which assesses their genetic diversity and any associated risks and over half the species were classed as being at negligible genetic risk (National Indicator 4.d: Genetic diversity indicator for wild species (Scotland)). In domestic livestock, there has been little to no change in the proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk in the UK, which has remained around 87% during 2000 to 2024. Among the native breeds at-risk, several groups are experiencing declines in effective population size, especially over the most recent five years (National Indicator 4.e: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Animal genetic resources – effective population size of Native Breeds at Risk).

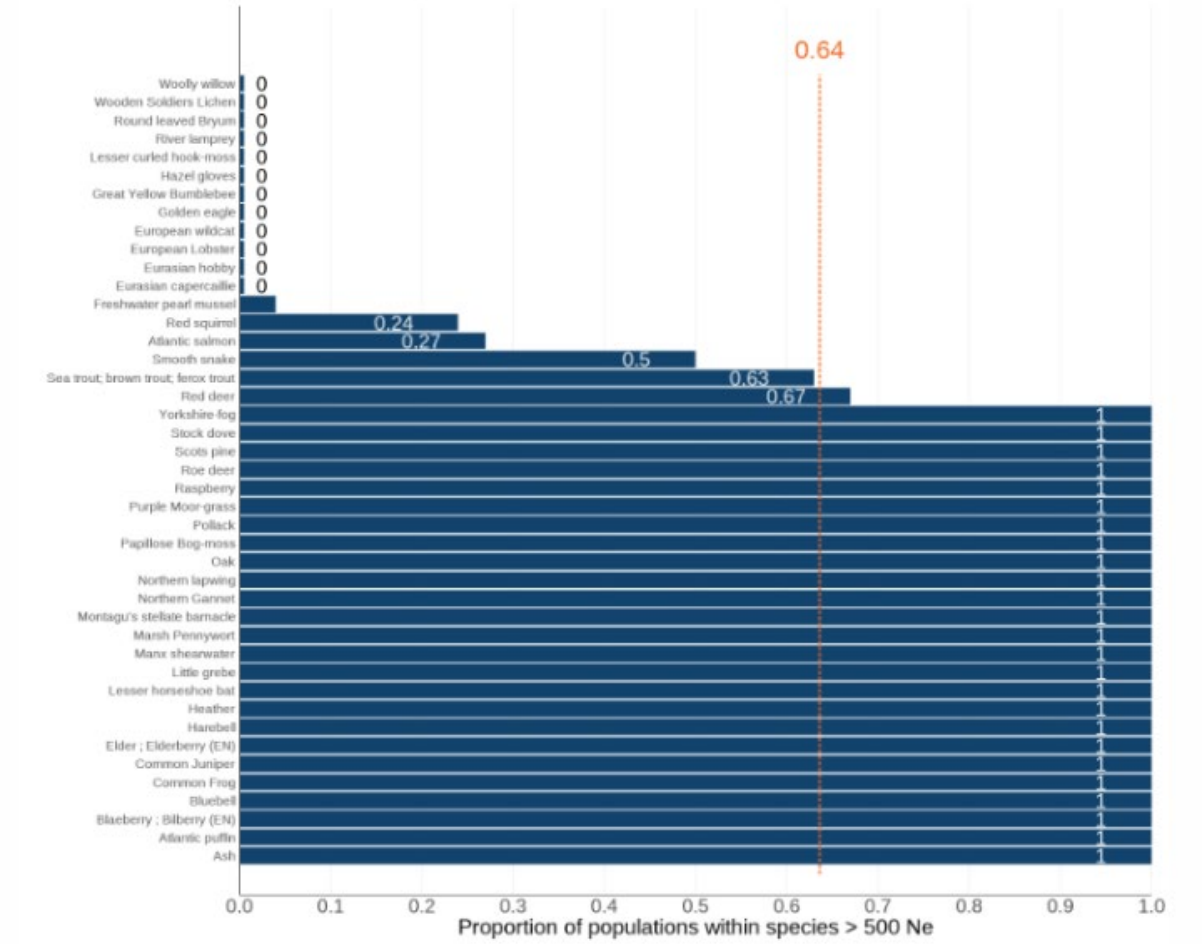

Figure 3: Assessing genetic viability: Species-level proportion of populations with an effective population size (Ne) above 500 (Source: Headline Indicator A.4: Proportion of populations within species with an effective population size greater than 500 (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Genetic diversity of wild species)).

3.5 Target 5: Ensure sustainable, safe and legal use, harvesting and trade of wild species

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs ensure the sustainable, safe and legal use of wild species through a combination of legislation, policy frameworks and international cooperation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, which regulate the take, sale and exchange of certain species and the use of certain methods of take. A UK-wide Joint Fisheries Statement, published in November 2022, is driving progress in sustainable fisheries management with a requirement to publish 43 evidence-based Fisheries Management Plans, and the UK is an active member of five Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs).

Safe and legal trade is upheld through strong implementation of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) under the wildlife trade regulations (WTRs), rigorous border controls and targeted wildlife crime enforcement, and as a Contracting Party to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, the UK plays a central role in the International Whaling Commission (IWC), including upholding the global moratorium on commercial whaling.

Progress: The UK has made measurable progress towards ensuring sustainable use of wild species, particularly in fisheries. Nearly three-quarters of assessed UK quota fish stocks are now harvested sustainably (Figure 4) and the proportion of stocks at full reproductive capacity has increased over time albeit with little to no change in the short-term (2015–2020) (National Indicator 5.a: Percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest with biomass at levels which maintain full reproductive capacity (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Sustainable fisheries: fish stocks harvested within safe limits)). Eleven Fisheries Management Plans have been published, with further plans being developed across the four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs, where successes also include Marine Stewardship Council-certified fisheries and the recovery of Nassau grouper in the Cayman Islands.

Enforcement against illegal trade has strengthened, with 207 convictions and over £840,000 in penalties in 2024/2025, alongside hundreds of seizures of wildlife products under CITES. Evidence suggests a ban on lead ammunition will prevent an estimated 7,000 tonnes of toxic metal entering ecosystems annually, reducing risks to over one million birds. However, bycatch of marine mammals and birds remains a major challenge, and broader application of ecosystem-based management is needed to maintain prey availability for predators. Progress has been made, however there are notable gaps in terrestrial and freshwater management and systematic monitoring of wild bird harvests.

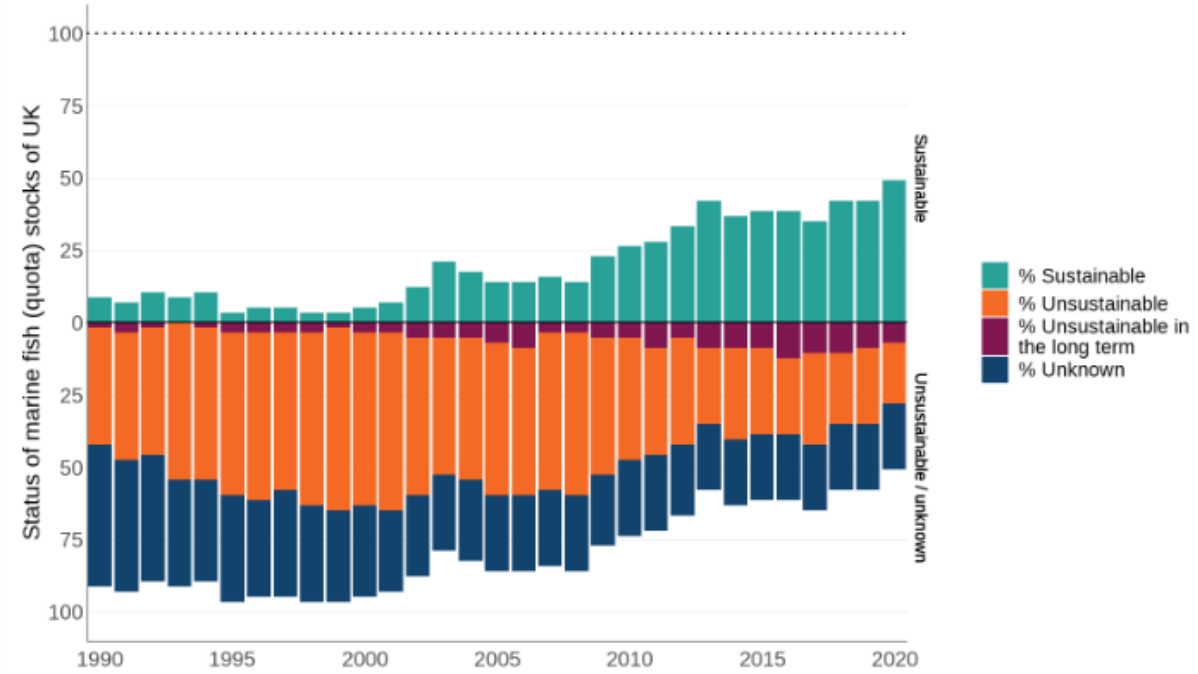

Figure 4: Percentage of marine fish (quota) stocks of UK interest harvested sustainably, 1990 to 2020 (Source: Headline Indicator 5.1: Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels (UKBI – Sustainable fisheries)). NB. This indicator has been modified to better align it with the requirements of the KMGBF Monitoring Framework. Of those UK quota-fish stocks (including Norway lobster) for which we have data, 73% were being harvested sustainably (fished at or below F_{MSY}) at the most recent assessment in 2020, an increase of 52% since 1990. This value is calculated using the number of stocks harvested below F_{MSY} (teal bars) or in F_{MSY} range (maroon bars) out of the total number of stocks (teal, maroon and orange bars, not including those with unknown status in dark blue). However, there were also 23% of stocks for which we don't have the data necessary to determine if they are being harvested sustainably or not. See the published datafile for more details. Figure 4 includes the percentage of unknown status and so the percentage of sustainable stocks (teal bars) appears lower than the overall headline indicator (5.1).

3.6 Target 6: Reduce the introduction of invasive alien species by 50% and minimise their impact

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs have taken significant steps to reduce the spread and minimise the impacts of invasive non-native species (INNS). In England, Scotland and Wales, there has been joint effort through the Great Britain Non-Native Species Secretariat and Inspectorate under the Great Britain INNS Strategy. Northern Ireland collaborates with the Republic of Ireland via the Windsor Framework and implements EU Regulation 1143/2014 for 11 listed species. In the UKOTs and CDs, where endemic species are highly at risk,

targeted eradication programmes, such as removing cats, rats and mice in the Falkland Islands and control efforts in the Cayman Islands, are helping to protect native wildlife.

Progress: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs have made progress in increasing the understanding of the risks and management of specific INNS. The number of INNS established in Great Britain has been increasing since 1969 when records began. As of 2024, there are 14 freshwater, 30 marine, and 64 terrestrial invasive species established in or along 10% of Great Britain's land area or coastline (Figure 5). The rate of establishment shows little or no overall change over time and is estimated to be approximately three species establishments per year (Figure 6). The increasing prevalence of INNS in Great Britain places increased pressure on native biodiversity in freshwater, terrestrial and marine (coastal) habitats. Measures and regulations to prevent the introduction and establishment of INNS are partially in place across the four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs. Pathway management has advanced through the implementation of the Merchant Shipping (Ballast Water) Regulations 2022, and draft Pathway Action Plans for boating, angling, horticulture, zoos, and pets are in progress. The threat from invasive mammals at important marine bird island breeding sites in the UK has been reduced. The UKOTs have achieved notable successes, such as reducing green iguana populations in the Cayman Islands from 1.3 million in 2018 to 244,189 in 2024. Overall, progress is positive but early detection and eradication remain key challenges.

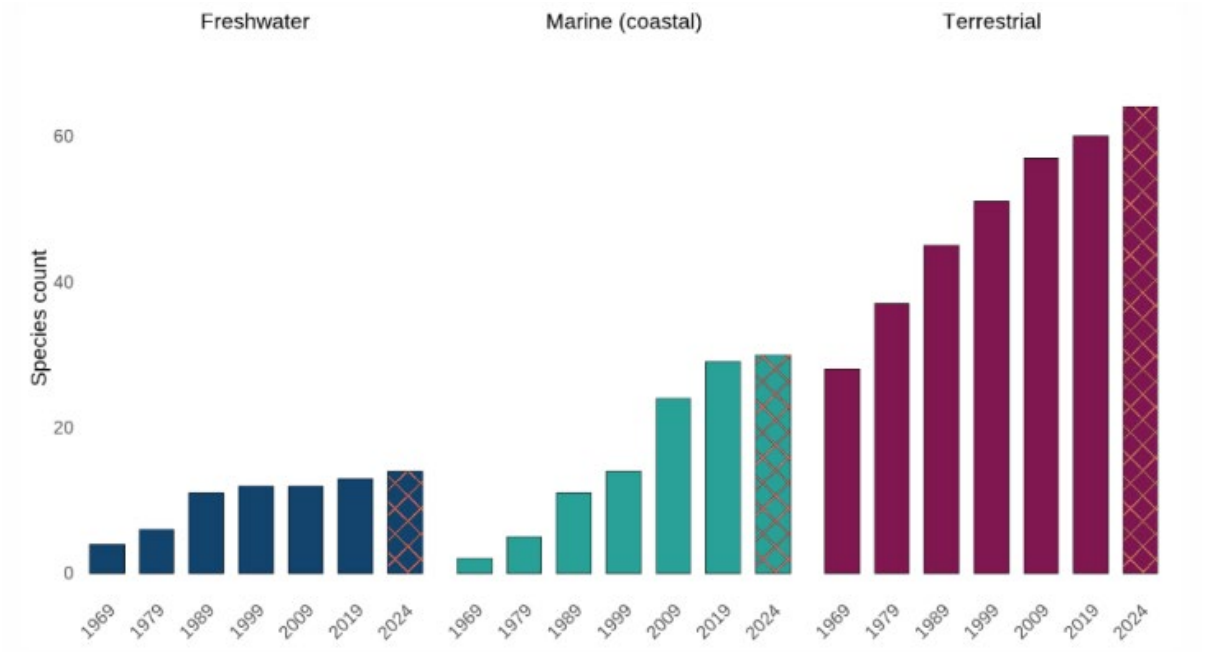

Figure 5: Number of invasive non-native species established in or along 10% or more of Great Britain's land area or coastline, 1969 to 2024 (Source: National Indicator 6.a: Number of invasive non-native species established in or along 10% or more of Great Britain's land area or coastline (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species)).

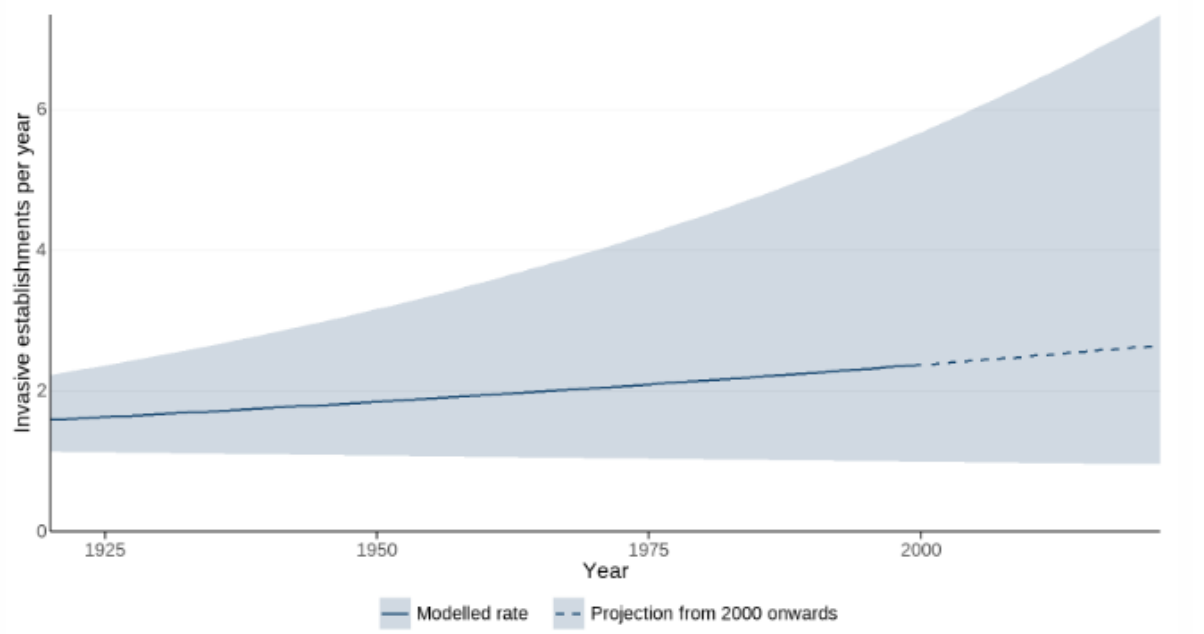

Figure 6: Modelled rate of invasive alien species establishment, 1920 to 2022, with projection (hashed line) from 2000 onwards (Source: Headline Indicator 6.1: Rate of invasive alien species establishment (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Pressure from invasive species)).

3.7 Target 7: Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK is taking comprehensive action to reduce pollution risks and the negative impacts of pollution on biodiversity, including through commitments made under national strategies and legislation, such as the UK Marine Strategy and UK Best Available Techniques, alongside commitments under international conventions. Key actions include air quality policy frameworks across all four countries of the UK, a legally binding target in England under the Environment Act 2021 to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment pollution from agriculture into the water environment by at least 40% by 2038, and sustainable pesticide measures under the UK Pesticides National Action Plan (2025). The UK remains committed to eliminating the use of polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) in line with the Stockholm Convention, and the use of other persistent organic pollutants (POPs) has been prohibited in Great Britain.

Measures to reduce single-use plastics have been introduced across the UK. Further, a UK-wide ban on wet wipes containing plastic was announced in 2024 and a UK-wide ban on single-use vapes was introduced from 1 June 2025. The

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has delivered a programme of work to improve understanding and management of noise pollution including new measures in 2025 to reduce underwater noise in the marine environment from offshore wind construction and the clearance of unexploded ordnance from the seabed.

Progress: Air quality has improved with acid deposition exceeding critical loads in 44% of sensitive habitats in 2021, compared to 66% in 2003, and nitrogen deposition falling from 94% to 84% over the same period (Figure 7). In UK freshwater systems, 33% of terrestrial water bodies were in high or good ecological status in 2024, with the percentage showing little or no overall change since 2009 (National Indicator 7.c: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status). In the marine environment, 95% of UK coastal and shelf areas had largely met Good Environmental Status (GES) for reducing the impacts of nitrogen enrichment from land run-off, however, GES has not been fully met for reducing levels of contaminants in the marine environment (National Indicator 7.a: The extent to which Good Environmental Status has been achieved for eutrophication). The amount of hazardous waste generated per capita across the UK remained fairly stable between 2010 and 2018. More positively, the proportion of hazardous waste treated by being deposited onto or into land, had reduced from 66% to 40% with pressure on 10 key taxonomic groups from pesticides substantially declining since 2008, though may be increasing since 2020 (Headline Indicator 7.2: Aggregated Total Applied Toxicity (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Aggregated Total Applied Toxicity); interim results).

Work to eliminate plastic pollution shows mixed results. The single-use plastic bag charge in England reduced carrier bag sales by 98% and UK Plastic Pact members have cut the amount of problematic plastic sold by 55% since 2018. Marine litter levels remain high, although there are indications of reduction with statistically significant decreases in beach litter (including plastic) observed in the Greater North Sea and in the Celtic Seas, which include UK coasts. However, there is a slight increasing trend in probability that hauls in the Greater North Sea contain litter between 2012 and 2019. Despite the positive progress described above, considerable challenges remain, particularly in fully addressing plastic pollution, pesticide risk and excess nutrients and tackling marine underwater noise pollution.

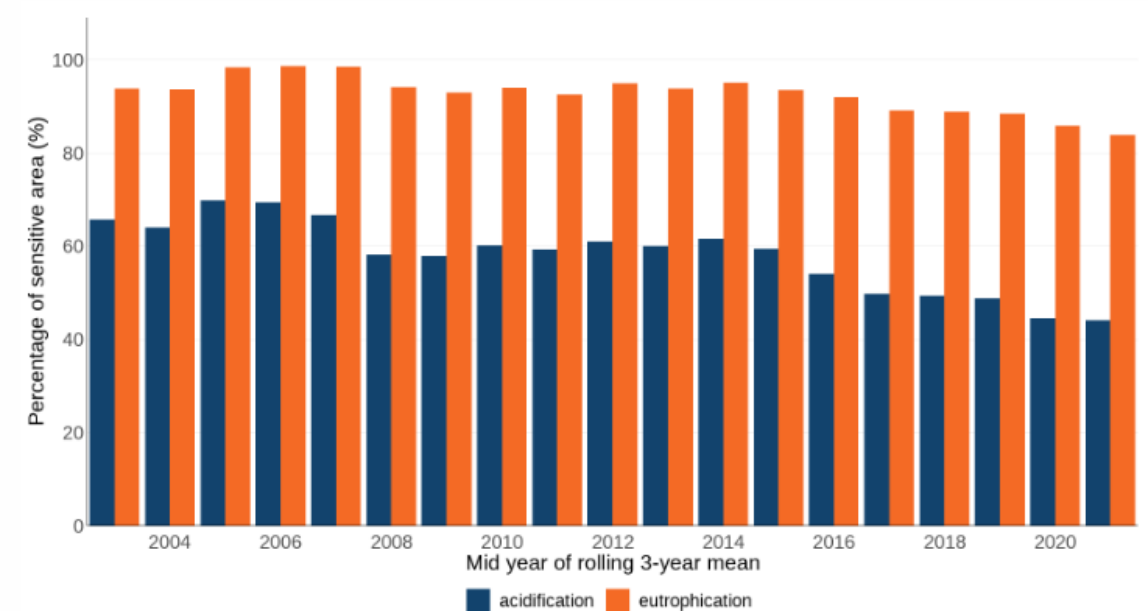

Figure 7: Percentage area of sensitive terrestrial UK habitats exceeding critical loads for acidification and eutrophication, in the UK, 2003 to 2021. (Source: National Indicator 7.b: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Air pollution: area affected by acidity and area affected by nitrogen).

3.8 Target 8: Minimise the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and build resilience

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK has advanced a wide range of measures to mitigate climate change, with progress driven by legally binding commitments and strategic plans. The UK has set ambitious Nationally Determined Contributions to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and at least 81% by 2035 compared to 1990 levels – excluding international aviation and shipping emissions. The UK's Climate Change Act 2008 made the UK the first country to introduce a legally binding, long-term emissions reduction target and sets our commitment to reach net zero emissions by 2050 in law. The Third National Adaptation Programme (2023) set out the actions that the Government and others will take to adapt to the impacts of climate change from 2023 to 2028 with a focus on restoring resilient habitats – woodlands, peatlands, and coastal and marine ecosystems. Evidence for marine adaptation is strengthened through research partnerships and monitoring. Renewable energy expansion incorporates biodiversity safeguards, with Biodiversity Net Gain requirements for solar projects and rigorous environmental assessments for onshore wind. Offshore wind growth and environmental protection is supported by the Offshore Wind Environmental Improvement Package, which introduces Marine Recovery Funds, wider environmental compensatory measures for unavoidable impacts to MPAs, and best practice standards to accelerate deployment while restoring marine ecosystems.

Progress: The UK is the first major economy to halve its emissions – having cut them by 53% between 1990 and 2023 (National Indicator 8.a: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Statistics), while also growing its economy by over 80%. The UK is scaling up nature-based solutions to mitigate climate change and enhance resilience. It is estimated that from 1990 to 2023, forests in the UK have cumulatively stored the equivalent of 590 million tonnes of carbon dioxide (Figure 8). Peatland restoration is accelerating: 14,206 ha were actively managed in England in 2024/2025, Scotland has restored over 51,000 ha under its Peatland ACTION project, and Wales restored over 3,600 ha through its Welsh National Peatland Action Programme. Environmental farming schemes (see Target 10) are supporting climate mitigation in England. Further, natural flood management is expanding in England, supported by a £300 million investment over 10 years and 38 projects. Across the UKOTs, 9,809 people gained improved climate and disaster resilience between 2022 and 2025 through projects funded under Defra's Darwin Plus programme. However, gaps remain in monitoring resilience to ocean acidification and on progress being made to minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity and increase its resilience.

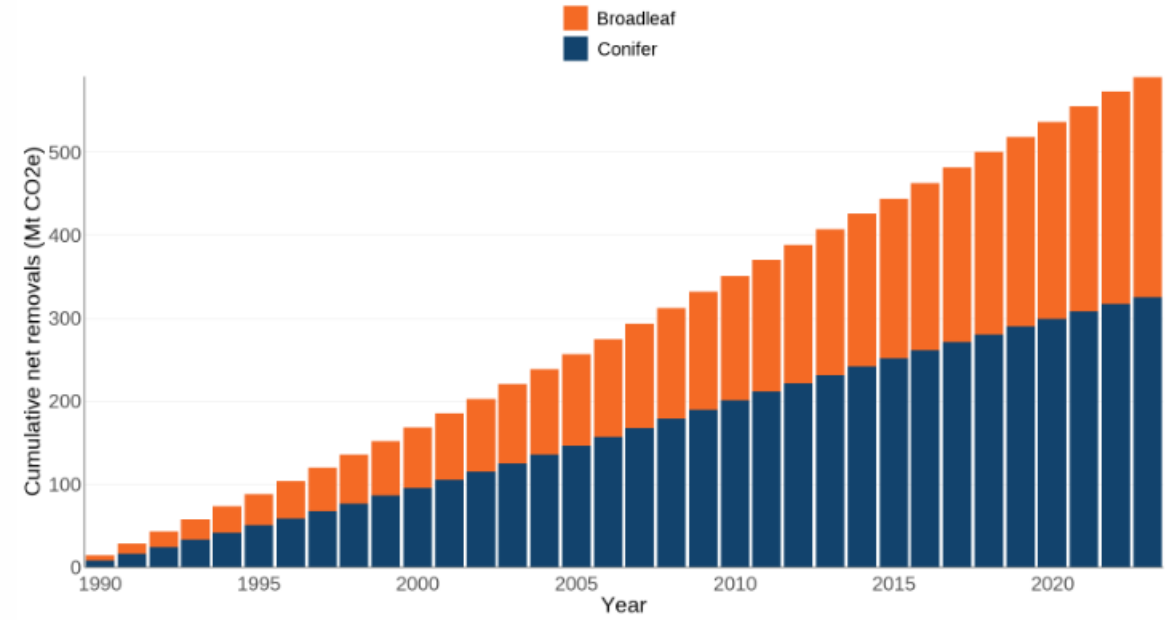

Figure 8: Cumulative net removals of greenhouse gases by UK forests, 1990 to 2023 (Source: National Indicator 8.b: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Removal of greenhouse gases by UK forests).

3.9 Target 9: Ensure management and use of wild species are sustainable to deliver benefits for people

Progress Score – Unknown

Actions: The UK has implemented a range of measures to ensure the sustainable management and use of wild species, with a strong focus on marine fisheries and recreational activities. The Fisheries Act 2020 and the Joint Fisheries Statement provide a comprehensive regulatory framework for sustainable fisheries, supported by 43 Fisheries Management Plans (FMPs) developed collaboratively with stakeholders. Recreational fisheries have adapted to protect stocks while delivering social benefits, including a new catch-and-release bluefin tuna fishery and restrictions on sea bass retention. On land, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 regulates the taking of birds and other animals in Great Britain, with protections for all wild birds except around 20 species that can be legally shot outside close seasons. Robust CITES implementation across the four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs ensures legal and sustainable wildlife trade.

Progress: Sustainability indicators show improvement, with the latest GES assessment for the period 2016–2021 showing that 42% of marine quota fish stocks and 11% of non-quota shellfish stocks have achieved GES, an increase of 9% and 6% respectively since the last assessment for 2012–2015. Recreational fisheries have been adapted to maximise benefits while protecting stocks, including a new catch-and-release bluefin tuna fishery and restrictions on sea bass retention. On land, the British Quality Wild Venison Standard supports rural economies and sustainable deer management. However, despite the actions taken so far, details of how they will deliver specific social, economic and cultural benefits remains limited, so overall progress is assessed as “Unknown”.

3.10 Target 10: Enhance biodiversity and ensure sustainable management of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs are taking action to ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably through legislation, policy, and financial incentives. New agricultural frameworks across all four countries of the UK are shifting land use toward habitat restoration, improved soil and water health and climate smart practices, with similar biodiversity-focused schemes across the UKOTs and CDs. Strict regulatory frameworks and targeted initiatives are in place to ensure aquaculture is sustainable and supports biodiversity. For example, Scotland operates a robust regulatory system and has set out long-term goals in its Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture,

aiming for environment and biodiversity outcomes by 2045. The UK Fisheries Act 2020 provides a comprehensive regulatory framework for managing fishing activity. This is implemented through the UK-wide Joint Fisheries Statement (2022), which sets out how the objectives of the Act will be met, including a requirement to produce Fisheries Management Plans. The UK is also promoting sustainable forestry. All afforestation projects must follow the UK Forestry Standard. The UK Timber Procurement Policy ensures government timber purchases are legal and sustainable and the Timber in Construction Roadmap (2025) aims to increase safe, sustainable timber use in construction.

Progress: The UK has made progress in promoting sustainable management of agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry. Positive developments include Scotland's £37 million investment in organic farming since 2015 and in Wales the Universal Layer of the Sustainable Farming Scheme started in January 2026, which supports biodiversity through actions including soil health and the maintenance of habitats, hedgerows, and woodlands. Further, England has seen significant uptake of Environmental Land Management (ELM) schemes with £1.8 billion allocated to ELM and over 70,000 agreements covering half of England's farmed land in 2025/2026. The proportion of agricultural land now under productive and sustainable management has slightly increased in 2021–2023 (Figure 9) and higher-level schemes have expanded steadily, covering 3.7 million ha in 2022. Despite these improvements, biodiversity indicators remain concerning; for example farmland bird populations have fallen by nearly two-thirds since 1970 and by 11% from 2019 to 2024 (National Indicator 10.b: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Birds of the wider countryside and at sea)) and 89% of local livestock breeds remain at risk in 2024 (Component Indicator 4.CT.4: Proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, not at risk or at unknown level of risk of extinction).

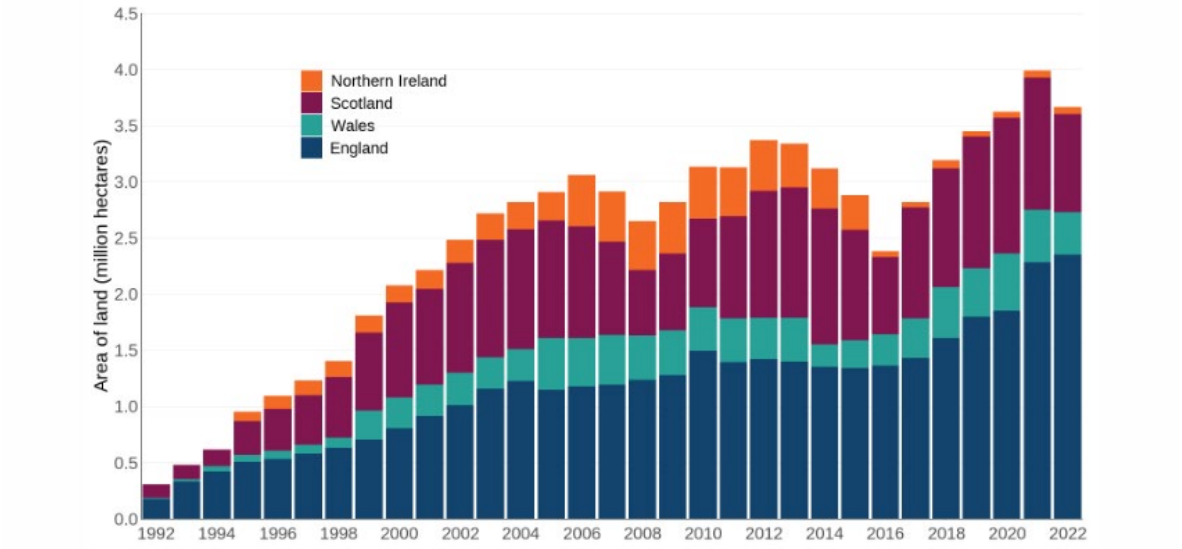

Figure 9: Area of land covered by higher-level or targeted agri-environment schemes, 1992 to 2022 (Source: National Indicator 10.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of land in agri environment schemes).

Progress has been made in improving the sustainability of aquaculture and fisheries. The proportion of UK quota fish stocks within safe biological limits rose from 28% in 1990 to 58% in 2020 (see Target 5) and the percentage of UK quota-fish stocks harvested sustainably has increased from 9% in 1990 to 73% in 2020 (see Figure 4). Forestry sustainability remains stable, with 1.44 million ha of certified woodland – around 44% of UK woodland area – remaining unchanged for two decades (Figure 10). While woodland bird populations have declined long-term (1970 to 2024), they are showing signs of stabilising between 2019 and 2024 (National Indicator 10.b: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Birds of the wider countryside and at sea), however, woodland specialist butterflies continue to fall (National Indicator 10.c: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Insects of the wider countryside (butterflies)).

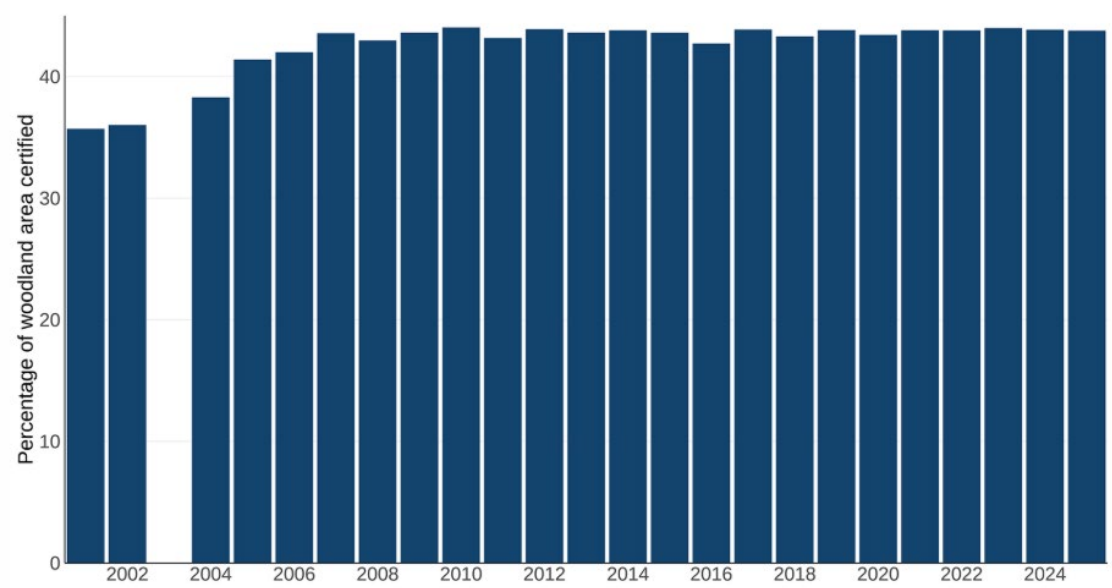

Figure 10: Percentage of woodland area certified as sustainably managed in the UK, 2001 to 2025 (Source: Headline Indicator 10.2: Progress towards sustainable forest management (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Area of forestry land certified as sustainably managed)).

3.11 Target 11: Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs have taken some actions towards restoring, maintaining or enhancing nature's contributions to people, particularly around flooding, carbon sequestration and soil health. Nature-based solutions are advancing through ELM schemes, large-scale peatland restoration and tree planting, and expanded marine monitoring under the UK Marine Strategy and marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) programme. To minimise impacts on pollinators, new UK guidance was published in 2024 to support increased use of integrated pest management for farmers. The UK has commenced

work on a national wetland inventory expected to be available in 2026 in support of the Ramsar Convention, which will provide a publicly accessible digital repository of information on UK wetlands and enable a better understanding of the status of sites across the UK. Further, the UK Government has committed more than £10.5 billion into our flood and coastal erosion defences by 2035/2036. Natural flood management is playing an increasingly prominent approach to mitigating flood risk, providing wider benefits for environment and society such as carbon reduction, environmental enhancement, improving water quality and water resources. Despite numerous actions underway, further information is needed on how nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches are being used within such actions.

Progress: There is growing evidence that UK actions are contributing to restoring, maintaining and enhancing nature's contributions to people. The overall indicator value of the flow of key ecosystem services provided in the UK (for example agricultural biomass provision (provisioning), air pollution regulation (regulating) and recreation (cultural)), increased by 12% between 2014 and 2022 (Table 5).

Table 5: Indices of service flow values for the UK, England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, in 2022, relative to a baseline value of 1 in 2014 (Source: Headline Indicator B.1: Services provided by ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Services provided by ecosystems)).

Ecosystem service group	UK index	England index	Scotland index	Wales index	Northern Ireland index
Overall	1.12	1.16	1.09	1.05	1.23
Provisioning	1.17	1.24	1.10	1.17	1.37
Regulating	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01
Cultural	1.12	1.14	1.16	0.83	1.15

In addition to the positive developments in agriculture outlined under Target 10, as of April 2025, 885,000 ha of arable land is now farmed without insecticides in England, reducing harm to pollinators and improving soil health. Further, in England, woodland creation in 2024/2025 was the highest since 2002/2003 and peatland restoration commitments rose from 15,255 ha in 2023 to 17,826 ha in 2024 across protected landscapes. In Scotland campaigns such as NatureScot's Make Space for Nature initiative will continue to support people to encourage nature into their lives and reduce their impact on nature. In Wales, the Local Places for Nature programme, with £66 million invested, has created over 4,000 new or improved green spaces and pollinator sites and involving 15,000 volunteers since 2020. In Northern Ireland, the Soil Nutrient Health Scheme is the largest baseline soil sampling programme ever undertaken, with £37 million invested, and as of July 2024 over 280,000 fields have been tested for soil nutrients. There is much progress in the UKOTs and CDs also,

including private investment in supporting the restoration of temperate rainforests on the Isle of Man and £170,000 made available for restoration and environmental projects in the Falkland Islands.

Despite this progress, ecosystem functions and services remain under pressure. For example, the percentage of UK surface water bodies in high or good ecological status over the long-term (2009–2022) shows little to no overall change (see Target 7), and the there was an overall decrease in the distribution of pollinators in the UK from 1987 onwards (National Indicator 11.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Status of pollinating insects). Further, more information on progress made is needed to ensure that nature's contributions to people are restored, maintained or enhanced by 2030.

3.12 Target 12: Enhance green and blue spaces and urban planning for human health and well-being and biodiversity

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK has made measurable progress towards this target by expanding access to green and blue spaces and embedding biodiversity-inclusive urban planning. In England, the £33 million Access for All Programme has improved accessibility in Protected Landscapes, forests, and National Trails through path resurfacing, mobility equipment, and inclusive facilities. Over 2,500 miles of the King Charles III England Coast Path have been approved, with over 2,000 of those miles already open to the public, and nine new National River Walks are planned by 2026. The Nature Towns and Cities programme aims to help 5 million more people access nature and create 1 million opportunities for children to play outdoors. Wales' Local Places for Nature programme has invested £66 million, creating more than 4,000 green spaces, 730 pollinator sites, and 220 community food-growing sites, engaging 15,500 volunteers. Scotland has developed nature guidance published in support of the Scottish National Planning Framework 4. In Northern Ireland, 110 green and blue spaces are designated across towns and cities, including the 7-mile Comber Greenway – a traffic-free section of the National Cycle Network – which runs along the old Belfast–Comber railway line and is managed in a biodiversity-centred way, while the Isle of Man and Gibraltar have introduced Biodiversity Net Gain and green infrastructure policies.

Progress: The overall proportion of urban areas across Great Britain allocated to accessible green spaces is 4.3% while blue spaces account for 1.2%, making a total of 5.5% of urban areas allocated to these spaces (Figure 11). However, the direction of progress cannot be inferred from the indicator results because there is currently only one datum point. Across the four countries of the UK, there is data now being collected on the quality of blue and green space and further work beginning to investigate how these spaces are used and are beneficial for human well-being.

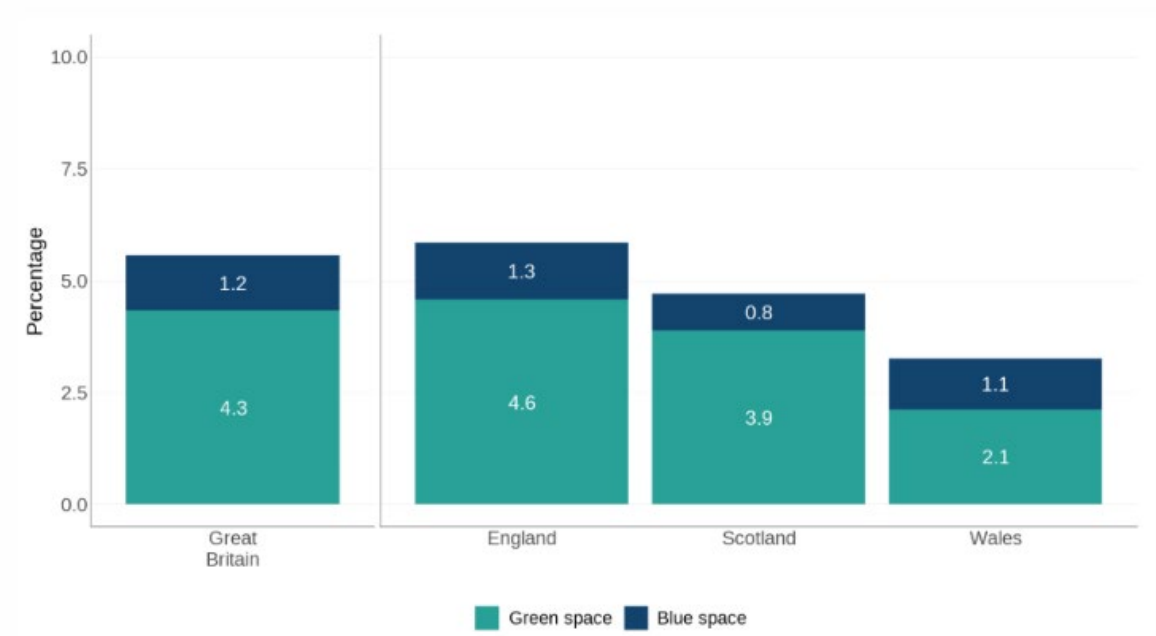

Figure 11: The proportion of the urban areas across Great Britain which is publicly accessible green and blue space. (Source: Headline Indicator 12.1: Green and blue space in built-up areas (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Green and blue space in built-up areas)).

3.13 Target 13: Ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the utilisation of genetic resources, digital sequence information and traditional knowledge

Progress Score – On track to achieve target

Actions: The UK has taken positive legal, policy and administrative measures to implement Target 13 and ensure fair and equitable benefit sharing from genetic resources and digital sequence information (DSI). As a Party to the Nagoya Protocol, the UK ensures compliance through our Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS) Regulations, requiring UK users to demonstrate due diligence, prior informed consent and mutually agreed terms when using genetic resources from other countries. Internationally, the UK played a leading role in negotiating and operationalising the multilateral benefit-sharing mechanism for DSI, including the establishment of the Cali Fund, and co-launched the Friends of the Cali Fund coalition to mobilise global support. The UK is also implementing the BBNJ Agreement through new legislation and supports capacity-building initiatives for Small Island Developing States. In addition, the UK contributes to benefit sharing under the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, maintaining major gene banks and making Annex I materials available for research and breeding under standard material transfer agreements.

Progress: The UK has been a Party to the Nagoya Protocol since 2016 and has fully fulfilled its obligations by implementing a compliance mechanism: the UK ABS Regulations. These regulations apply to UK-based users of genetic resources and associated knowledge, accessed from other Parties to the Protocol. ABS regulations ensure agreement for use of genetic resources and information and that benefits are shared equitable. Following agreement of the Cali Fund, the UK is now working with businesses to raise awareness and encourage contributions aligned with the agreed modalities.

3.14 Target 14: Integrate biodiversity in decision making at every level

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: There have been considerable efforts across the four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs to integrate biodiversity into local development and planning policies and legislation. Some parts of the UK have further advanced work investigating their natural capital to inform future decision-making. There have been actions taken to integrate biodiversity into different policy areas. In the area of poverty alleviation, more information is required from sectors which have a high impact and/or are dependent on biodiversity. Further work is needed to align all relevant public and private activities, fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of the KMGBF.

Progress: The UK has made progress in integrating biodiversity values into policies, planning, and national accounting. Significant steps toward achieving the target include mainstreaming biodiversity through legislation such as the Environment Act 2021, which introduced the Environmental Principles Policy Statement and strengthened the Biodiversity Duty, requiring public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. England's rollout of Local Nature Recovery Strategies is advancing (see Target 1). Biodiversity Net Gain, launched in 2024, mandates a 10% biodiversity gain for new developments in England. Economic valuation of nature is improving: the UK's natural capital asset value, excluding oil and gas, reached £1.64 trillion in 2022, with annual ecosystem service flows, excluding oil and gas, estimated at £47.6 billion in 2022. The Office for National Statistics has developed accounts for urban natural capital and health benefits of green spaces, supporting policy decisions. Scotland's Natural Capital Asset Index shows long-term improvement since the 1990s, though this has plateaued since 2017. Wales has embedded biodiversity into all public authority functions through Section 6 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. Despite these advances, integration into poverty eradication strategies and fiscal flows remains limited, and environmental economic accounting is not yet fully used to quantify the monetary and non-monetary values of biodiversity. Overall, progress is tangible but fragmented, requiring accelerated action across sectors to align with the target.

3.15 Target 15: Encourage and enable businesses to monitor, assess and disclose biodiversity-related risks to reduce negative impacts on biodiversity

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK is developing and implementing a range of policies to help businesses reduce their negative impacts on biodiversity, promote sustainable consumption and comply with ABS measures. The UK has been a key actor in supporting the development of the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures (TNFD), which empowers businesses with the risk management tools they need to monitor, assess, and disclose their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity. The UK also continues to implement the Nagoya Protocol (see Target 13). Additional steps are needed to enable businesses to make information available to consumers on the impacts of business practices on biodiversity so that people are empowered to make more informed decisions about their consumption patterns.

Progress: Since 2016, there has been an increase in the number of businesses that have published sustainability reports from 239 companies in 2016 to 492 in 2021 (Component Indicator 15.CT.1: Number of companies publishing sustainability reports (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts)) and ISO 14001 certifications covered 37% of medium and large businesses in 2023 (National Indicator 15.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Integration of biodiversity considerations into business activity). The number of companies reporting on disclosures of risks, dependencies, and impacts on biodiversity (in line with the TNFD recommendations) increased by 31% in 2025 with 47 companies adopting the framework in 2025, increasing from 36 the previous year (Figure 12). UK organisations currently constitute 12.6% of the global adoption figure and represent the second highest national proportion of the TNFD adoption globally. Consumer-focused measures, such as eco-labelling for food and drink, are in development, with mandatory recycling labelling expected by 2028, and compliance with ABS regulations under the Nagoya Protocol continues. Overall, while frameworks and initiatives are emerging, progress remains insufficient to ensure large companies and financial institutions systematically reduce biodiversity impacts and align with sustainable production patterns.

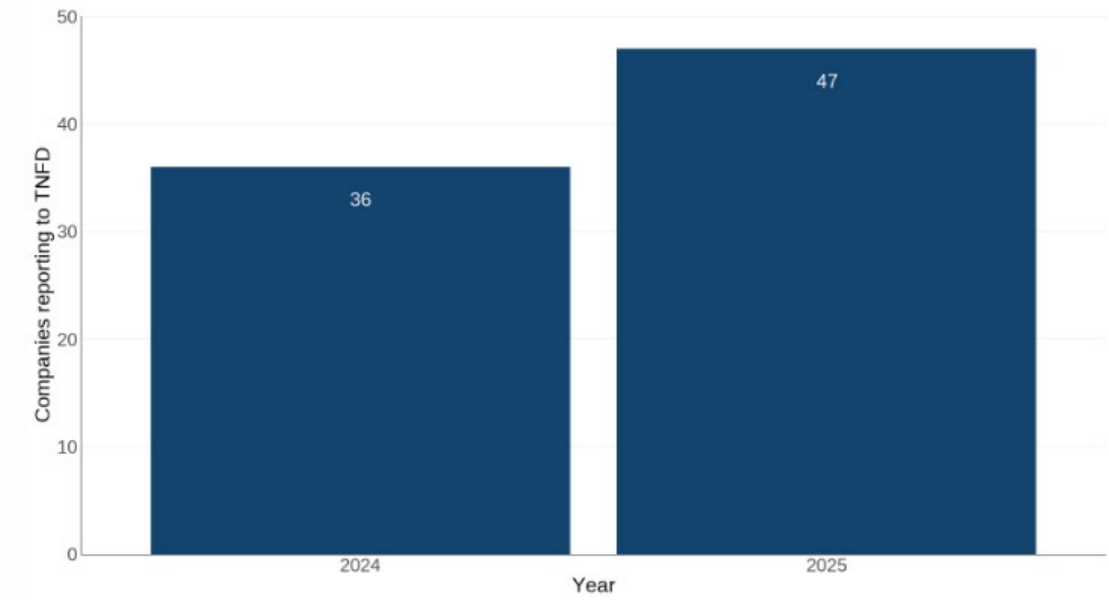

Figure 12: Companies making their first TNFD-aligned disclosures by year, 2024 to 2025 (Source: Headline Indicator 15.1: Number of companies reporting on disclosures of risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Number of companies disclosing their biodiversity-related risks, dependencies and impacts)).

3.16 Target 16: Enable sustainable consumption choices to reduce waste and overconsumption

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs have taken a range of actions to enable sustainable consumption choices, including the introduction of a UK-wide Extended Producer Responsibility scheme, and UK-wide bans on the sale of wet wipes containing plastic and on single-use vapes. Other legislation will come into force in the next 2–3 years that will introduce a UK-wide deposit return scheme and mandatory recycling labelling of products. There are national strategies and roadmaps for a circular economy in development across the four countries of the UK and UKOTs and CDs as well as initiatives in progress that work with both producers and consumers to reduce single-use plastics, reduce food waste, reduce landfill waste, increase recycling and reuse rates, combat waste crime and run nationally led activities to educate and inform consumers.

Progress: The UK has made good progress towards encouraging and enabling people to make sustainable consumption choices. National circular economy strategies and initiatives to reduce food waste, landfill and single use plastics are showing positive results. Total food waste in the UK declined by 18% during 2007–2021, redistributed food increased by 18% between 2022–2023, and the provisional UK recycling rate for waste from households was 44.6% in 2023. Industry initiatives such as the UK Plastics Pact have also achieved significant progress in increasing

sustainable use and reducing the footprint of consumption. Since 2018, Pact members have eliminated 99.9% of problematic single-use plastic items, 71.6% of plastic packaging is now recyclable and 53% of plastic packaging is recycled or composted. However, the UK's consumption still has a large global footprint although this does appear to be getting smaller. The UK's annual consumption of crops, cattle-related commodities and timber in 2023 was associated with an estimated 29,000 ha of agriculture-driven deforestation worldwide compared with 65,000 ha in 2005 showing an improving trend over time (Figure 13). Despite these gains, overconsumption and waste generation persist and recycling rates remain stagnant at the UK level.

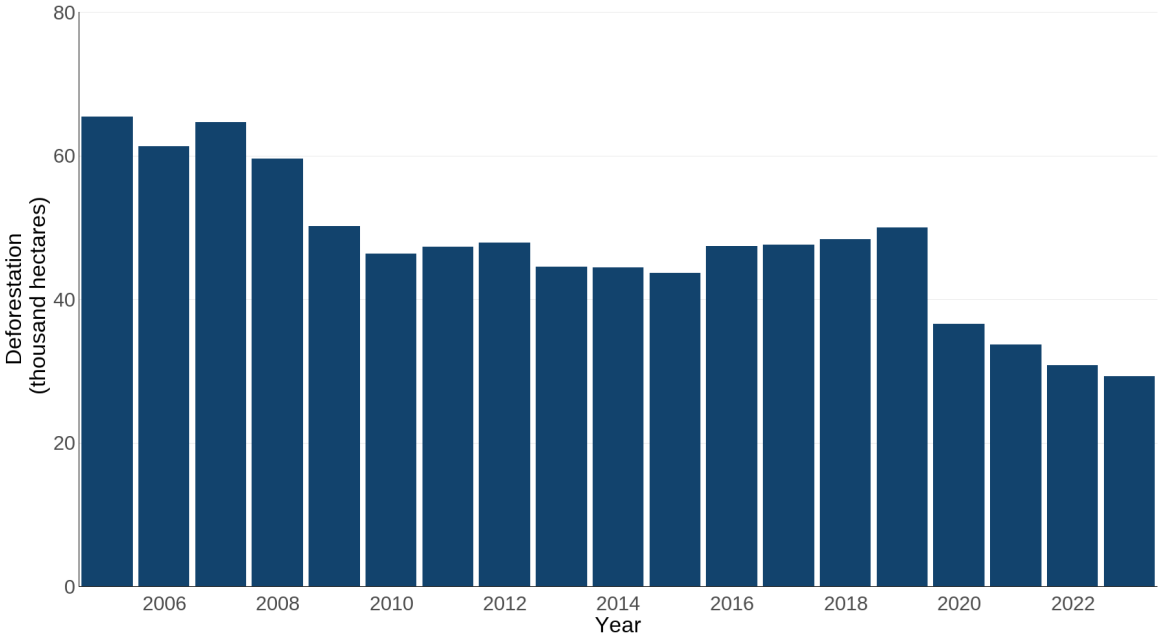

Figure 13: Area of deforestation worldwide associated with UK consumption annually, 2005 to 2023. (Source: National Indicator 16.a: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity / sustainable consumption).

3.17 Target 17: Establish biosafety measures and distribute the benefits of biotechnology

Progress Score – On track to achieve target

Actions: The UK complies with relevant biosafety legislation controlling the use of living modified organisms (LMOs), including by implementing the Cartagena Protocol. Regarding distributing the benefits from biotechnology, the UK operates coordinated initiatives that specifically enable collaboration with developing countries to allow the benefits of biotechnology research and development to be shared on an ongoing basis. Examples of these initiatives include the International Science Partnerships Fund and the Global Challenges Research Fund. Furthermore, the UK operates domestic legislation enacting the Nagoya Protocol on ABS (see Target 13).

Progress: The UK is on track to achieve Target 17, having fully implemented biosafety measures and legislation governing the use and release of living modified organisms (LMOs), in line with the Cartagena Protocol. Relevant competent authorities within the UK manage and control the potential risks of using LMOs and ensure compliance with relevant biosafety legislation. Risk assessments on food and feed authorisations are published on the Biosafety Clearing House as required by the Cartagena Protocol. The UK Biological Security Strategy (2023) reinforces these commitments to protect the UK from potential risks. The UK has invested £119 million in the International Science Partnerships Fund to foster global collaboration on biotechnology and innovation, alongside funding through the Global Challenges Research Fund. These initiatives enable equitable access to biotechnology benefits for developing countries, with projects mainstreamed into national development plans. Overall, the UK demonstrates comprehensive legislative coverage, robust implementation, and significant international engagement, ensuring biosafety and fair distribution of biotechnology benefits.

3.18 Target 18: Contribute to reducing incentives harmful for biodiversity by at least $500 billion per year and scale up positive incentives for biodiversity

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK is taking steps towards understanding and reforming harmful incentives, with the most progress made to date in agriculture. In England, the ELM schemes are replacing area–based payments, backed by over £7 billion for nature recovery, including tree planting and peatland restoration. Wales launched its new Sustainable Farming Scheme in 2026. Scotland's Agri-Environment Climate Scheme and biodiversity audits are driving similar changes, while Jersey's Rural Support Schemes and the Isle of Man's Agri-Environmental Initiatives Scheme are phasing out crop–based and pesticide subsidies. Northern Ireland has launched the Sustainable Agriculture Programme and Farming with Nature Package to restore habitats and improve connectivity. Internationally, the UK's Nature Positive Economy programme with United Nations Development Programme Biodiversity Finance Initiative is helping eight countries repurpose harmful subsidies and scale up positive incentives.

Progress: The UK has developed a screening methodology to identify harmful subsidies and applied it across multiple sectors, with interim results suggesting positive progress has been made in the last two years to reduce harmful spend via subsidies (Headline Indicator 18.2: Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity)). However, there are known data gaps that require further development. Regarding positive incentives, there has been an overall decrease in the number of active policy instruments that represent positive incentives to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity (Figure 14). However, we know

not all schemes are captured by the indicator currently, and further work is needed. The most measurable gains are in agriculture, where uptake of new schemes is high. Internationally, UK-backed programmes are embedding subsidy reform into national plans in several countries. While these steps mark significant progress, full identification and reform of harmful incentives across all sectors is still underway.

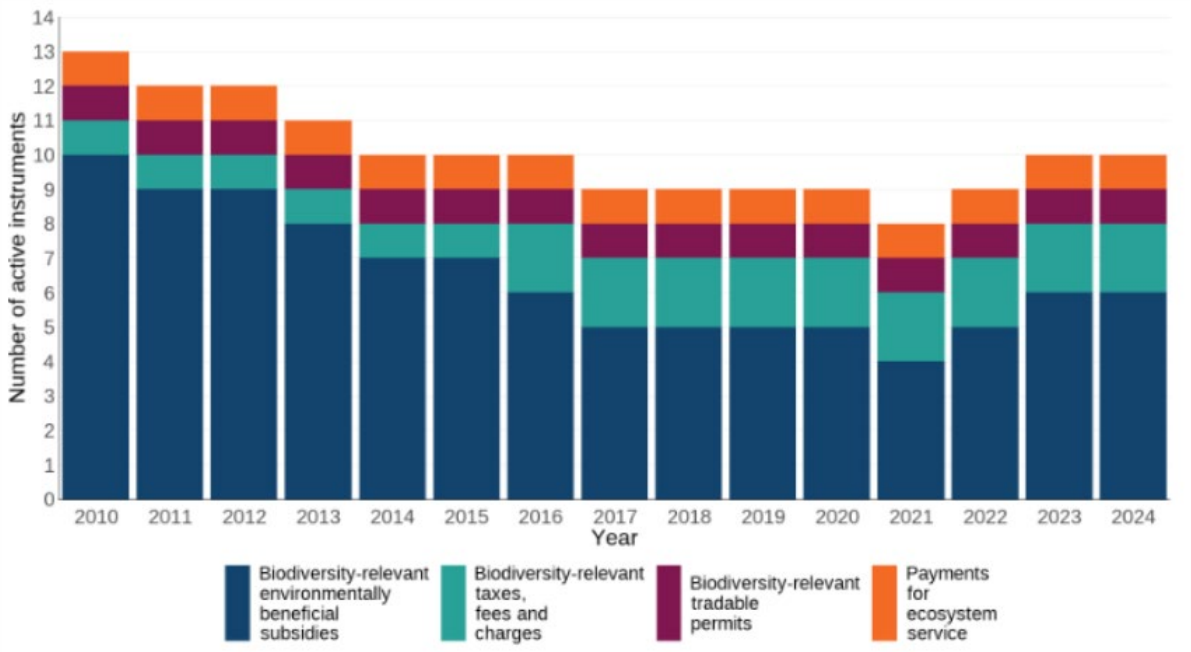

Figure 14: Number of active instruments in the UK per year that represent positive incentives to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, 2010 to 2024 (Source: Headline Indicator 18.1: Positive incentives in place to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Positive incentives in place to promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable use)).

3.19 Target 19: Contribute to mobilising $200 billion per year for biodiversity from all sources, including $30 billion from developed to developing countries

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK has increased financial resources through public, private, and international sources to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans and contribute to the global targets. Domestically, major public investments include over £7 billion committed in England by 2030 for nature recovery. Scotland's Nature Restoration Fund has delivered over £55 million to more than 230 projects since its launch in 2021, while Wales established the Ministerial Portfolio for Change with an annual £2 billion budget to support net zero and tackle biodiversity loss. Northern Ireland launched the Environment Fund and Farming with Nature Transition Scheme, allocating £4.84 million to support habitat restoration. Private finance mobilisation is advancing through measures like Biodiversity Net Gain/Net Benefit in England and

Wales, the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland, and blue investment initiatives in Wales. Internationally, the UK committed £3 billion of International Climate Finance for nature (2021–2026), including £1.5 billion for forests, and funds programmes such as the Darwin Initiative, PROBLUE, and the Global Fund for Coral Reefs. These efforts collectively aim to scale biodiversity finance and deliver global targets.

Progress: Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK reached approximately £1.07 billion in 2023/2024, representing a real-term increase of 210% since the time-series began in 2000/2001, of 77% since 2019/20 and 14% in the latest year, demonstrating an improving trend in both the short-term (2018/2019–2023/2024) and long-term (2000/2001–2023/2024) (Figure 15). Funding made available to farmers and land managers under agri-environment schemes is one of the major sources of public sector funding for biodiversity and makes up almost half of the total spend in 2023/2024.

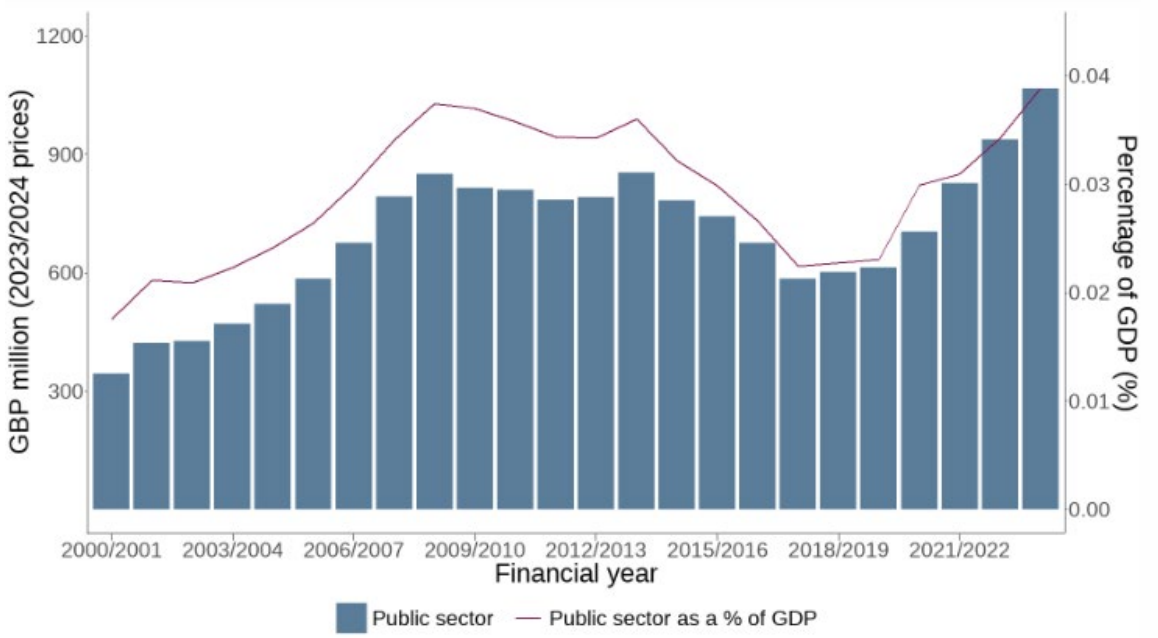

Figure 15: Public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, 2000/2001 to 2023/2024. (Source: Headline Indicator D.2: Domestic public funding on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Domestic public funding on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems)).

Non-governmental organisation and private sector expenditure also grew to £452 million in 2023/2024, a 92% real-term increase since the time-series began in 2010/2011, of 37% since 2019/20 and 12% in the latest year, again demonstrating an improving trend in both the short-term (2018/2019–2023/2024) and long-term (2010/2011–2023/2024) (Figure 16).

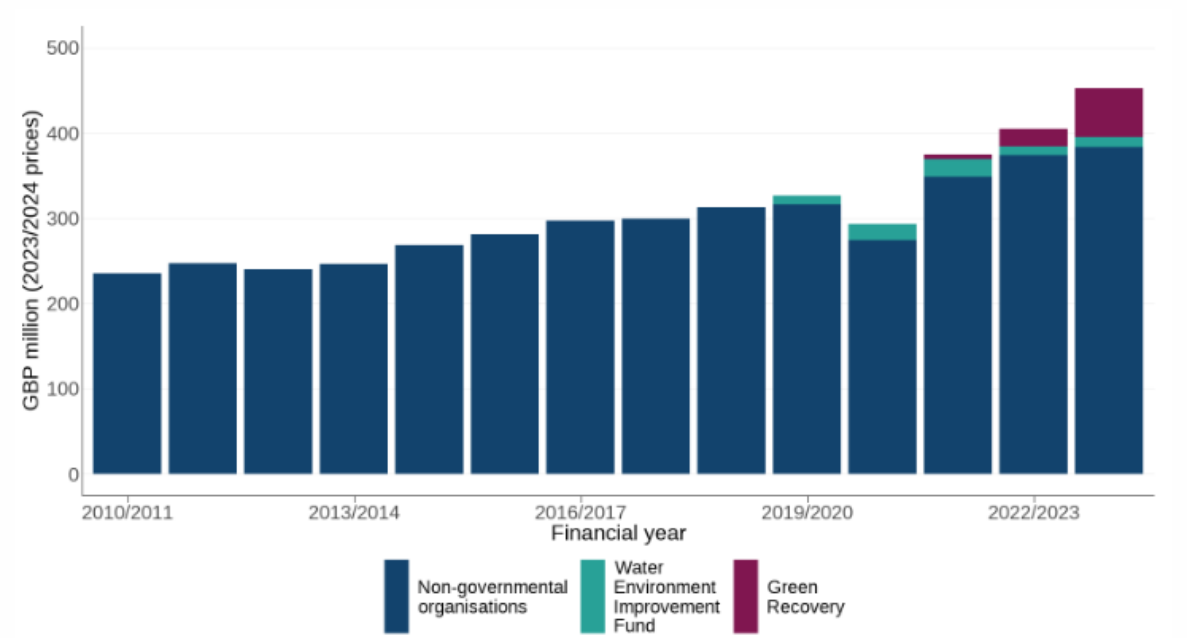

Figure 16: NGO and private sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, 2010/2011 to 2023/2024 (Source: Headline Indicator D.3: Private funding (domestic and international) on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Private funding (domestic and international) on conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems)).

Internationally, UK public sector funding for biodiversity totalled £560 million in 2023/2024, up 134% since the time-series began in 2013/2014, with real-term increases of 37% over the last five years and 39% in the latest year (Figure 17). Annual changes in this measure are influenced greatly by the irregular fluctuations in the timing of: contributions to the Global Environment Facility; and other official development assistance (ODA) funding.

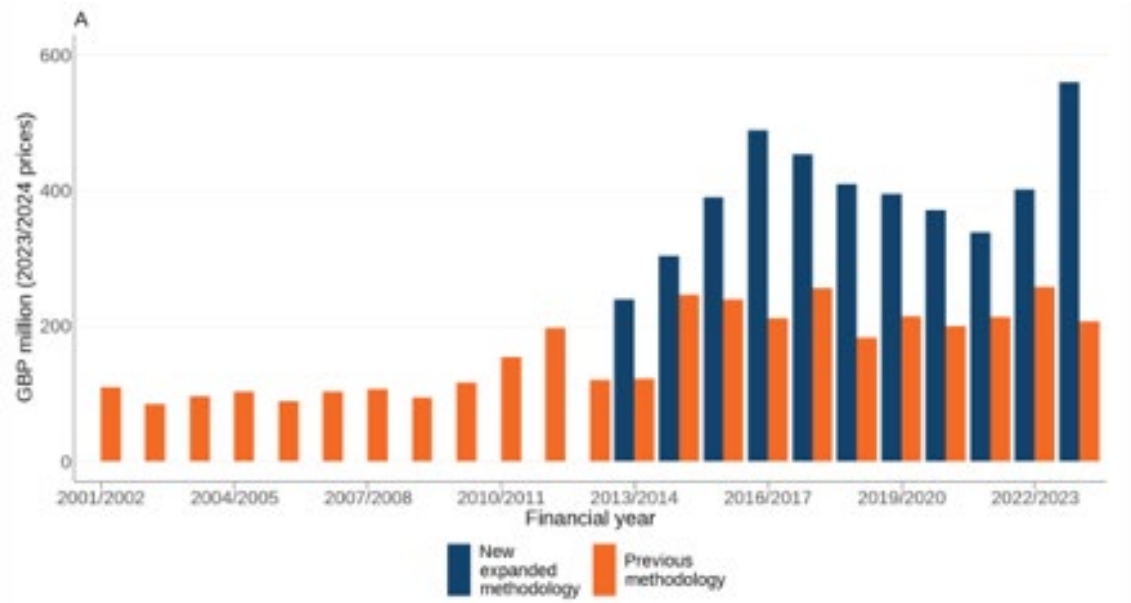

Figure 17: UK public sector expenditure on international biodiversity, 2001/2002 to 2023/2024, based on the previous methodology for this measure, and using a new expanded methodology that includes alternative and additional data sources (Source: Headline Indicator D.1: International public funding, including Official Development Assistance for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems (UK Biodiversity Indicator – International public funding, including Official Development Assistance for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystems)).

3.20 Target 20: Strengthen capacity building, technology transfer, and scientific and technical co-operation for effective implementation and biodiversity

Progress Score – On track to achieve target

Actions: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs are strengthening capacity-building and development through a variety of domestic initiatives. Skills England aims to strengthen science and technology skills in England by developing expertise and talent pipelines across schools, universities and research institutions. Training and research programmes are being delivered by institutions like the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh in Scotland. The Coasts and Seas Partnership Cymru in Wales is establishing and delivering a national ocean literacy framework at local and national levels, and Northern Ireland is creating a “Living map” of habitat and land cover that aims to increase capacity for evidence-based environmental policymaking. Further, in the UKOTs, the new UK Overseas Territories biodiversity strategy focuses on skills development and regulatory frameworks, and the Darwin Plus programme funds programmes that strengthen conservation capacity, overall ensuring long-term sustainability.

Internationally, the UK has worked extensively through international partnerships and Official Development Assistance (ODA)-programmes to build global capacity and strengthen technology transfer for KMGBF implementation. For example, the Darwin Initiative expands skills and scientific capability through training sessions, mentorship programmes and knowledge-sharing initiatives and enhances transfer of technologies such as Geographic Information Systems, remote sensing, drones, camera traps and DNA technology. The UK also carries out actions domestically and internationally to promote scientific and technical cooperation, foster joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes and to strengthen scientific research and monitoring capacities, for example through UK investment in Artificial Intelligence (AI), extensive UKOTs research partnerships, UK association with Horizon Europe (the world's largest research cooperation programme) and major global coalitions such as the UK-led Global Ocean Alliance (GOA) which supports its members to implement the KMGBF and continued advocacy for ocean action.

Progress: The UK has made strong progress towards this target, particularly in supporting other countries in developing their capacity through a variety of funding schemes and international partnerships. For example, the Global Centre on Biodiversity for Climate has awarded £20 million to more than 30 projects, generating 31 case studies and 75 policy-relevant outputs. Work has been underway to strengthen access to and transfer of technology and to promote development of and access to innovation. In January 2025, the UK Government released an AI Opportunities Action Plan to support the UK's role in shaping the AI revolution, and three major technology companies have committed £14 billion of investment to build the AI infrastructure the UK needs to harness the potential of the technology. The UK has established partnerships to foster joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and to strengthen scientific research and monitoring capabilities. For example, the UK supported the Global Plastic Action Partnership, which brings together governments, businesses and civil society to tackle plastic pollution, with 12 grants awarded to local organisations in the informal waste sector to improve health, safety and livelihoods.

3.21 Target 21: Ensure that knowledge is available and accessible to guide biodiversity action

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK is taking action to ensure the best available biodiversity data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision-makers, practitioners and the public. This includes developing new UK Biodiversity Indicators aligned with KMGBF goals and re-launching the UK's Clearing-House Mechanism to improve access to CBD-related information. Further, open-access platforms such as the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) provide high-quality terrestrial data, while marine data are made available through the Marine Environmental Data and Information Network

(MEDIN). Key actions to strengthen communication, awareness and education on biodiversity include hosting the twelfth session of the Plenary of the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES-12) in Manchester in February 2026, developing a new GCSE in natural history for England to deepen young people's understanding of the natural world and Northern Ireland's Eco-Schools programme which promotes public engagement and awareness of biodiversity. The UK is strengthening biodiversity monitoring, including through national schemes such as the Breeding Bird Survey, Seabird Monitoring Programme, and UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme, which provide robust, long-term data, supported by citizen science and non-governmental organisation partnerships. Research and knowledge management is also being strengthened for example through the UK Science and Technology Framework, which sets out a systems-level approach to embed science and technology across government policy, including through research and development (R&D).

Progress: The UK supports knowledge generation, dissemination, education and communication through knowledge exchange, research, monitoring, and innovation, and regularly publish environmental data and indicators. Over recent decades, biodiversity records have been accumulating increasingly rapidly. The number of records in the NBN Atlas accessed by users increased by 50% between 2019 and 2024, with over a billion records downloaded in 2024 – an increase from 688 million records in 2019 (Figure 18). Progress has been made in communication and education, with initiatives such as England's National Education Nature Park which has engaged 7,000 education settings. Investment in monitoring is increasing, with £12 million (2024–2027) being invested by Defra and the UK Research & Innovation under the Innovation in Environmental Monitoring programme to develop sensor and systems-based approaches. Further, work is being undertaken to strengthen research and knowledge management through various initiatives such as the KMGBF Modelling and Scenarios research project, including approaches to analyse policies needed to achieve Goals A and B. The UK does not have indigenous peoples or local communities as defined under the CBD but remains committed internationally to ensuring their effective participation and that traditional knowledge is accessed only with free, prior and informed consent.

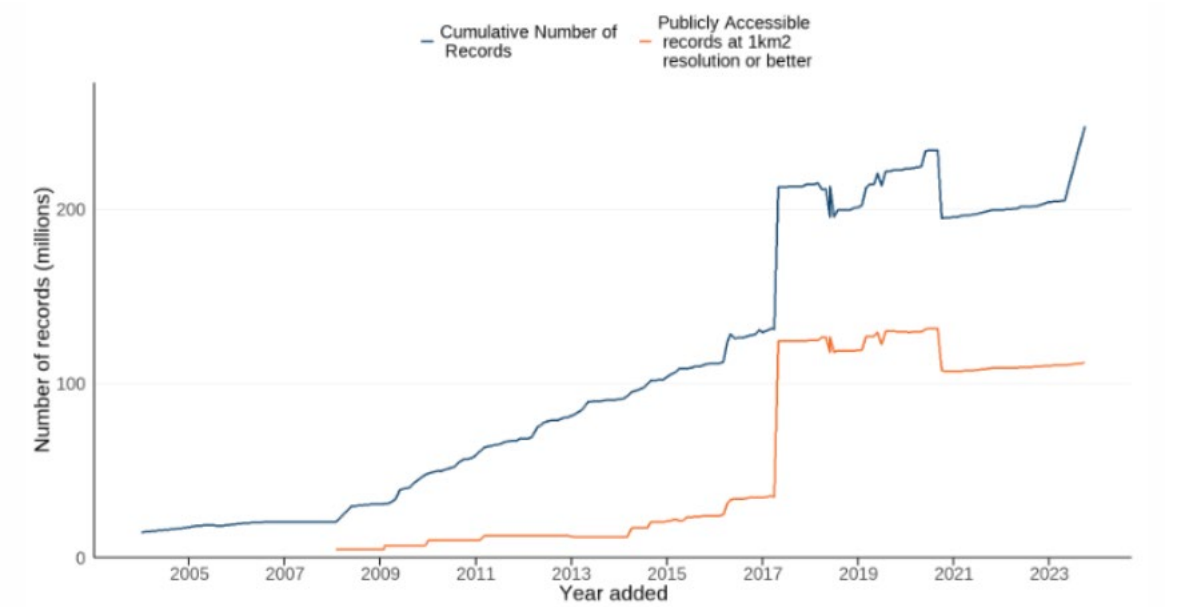

Figure 18: Records added to the National Biodiversity Network, 2004 to 2023 (Source: Headline Indicator 21.1: Indicator on biodiversity information for monitoring the global biodiversity framework (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Indicator on biodiversity information for monitoring the global biodiversity framework)).

3.22 Target 22: Ensure participation in decision making and access to justice and information related to biodiversity for all

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Action: The four countries of the UK and the UKOTs and CDs have a range of legislation and other measures in place to ensure inclusive, gender-responsive participation in biodiversity decision-making by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities. The UK guarantees access to biodiversity-related information through the Environmental Information Regulations 1992 and 2004, which require public authorities to provide environmental data. Access to justice is ensured via judicial review for challenging breaches of environmental law, supported by the Human Rights Act 1998, which incorporates the right to a fair trial under the European Convention on Human Rights. An independent judiciary upholds impartiality in these processes. Further, the UK promotes inclusive, rights-based participation of Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities (IPLCs) in biodiversity decision-making through international leadership and targeted programmes. For example, the UK was the first Government to endorse the Principles for Inclusive Nature Action at United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) COP30, supporting gender-responsive, locally led approaches. The UK also protects environmental human rights defenders through legislation and international mechanisms.

Progress: Domestically, legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 and Human Rights Act 1998 underpin equality and access to justice, while oversight is provided by bodies such as the Information Commissioner's Office and Office for Environmental Protection. Representation is supported through initiatives such as Scotland's National Biodiversity Forum, which includes youth networks, and Wales' Breaking Barriers scheme, which engages underrepresented communities through tailored support and outreach. Internationally, UK guidelines on Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion apply across climate and biodiversity finance, with programmes like the Darwin Initiative and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund using frameworks to promote equitable involvement. The UK has also undertaken action to ensure the full, equitable, and inclusive representation and participation of IPLCs in decision–making processes, particularly through the UK's ODA initiatives. For example, from April 2022 to March 2024, 48,396 people benefitted from tenure or access rights through ODA initiatives funded by Defra. Further, the UK Government supported the creation of a rapid response mechanism to protect environmental defenders (as defined in Aarhus Convention Decision VII/9) during the 7th Meeting of the Parties to the Aarhus Convention in 2021. Whilst good progress has been made against this target, a lack of monitoring means there is little information available on the outcomes of these efforts.

3.23 Target 23: Ensure gender equality and a gender-responsive approach for biodiversity action

Progress Score – Progress made but at an insufficient rate

Actions: The UK is committed to ensuring gender equality in the implementation of the framework and in all areas of public and private life as set out in the Equality Act 2010. In Great Britain, the Public Sector Equality Duty requires public bodies, including biodiversity agencies, to consider equality of opportunity. Internationally, the UK has integrated Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion into International Climate Finance (ICF), to ensure that the ICF delivers positive outcomes for women and girls. The UK ensures gender equality in rights to land and natural resources through robust legal frameworks, with key measures including the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010, which prohibit discrimination. Internationally, through its ODA, the UK supports the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure, which promote women's rights to land, fisheries, and forests and encourage inclusive governance and legal reforms. Further, the UK promotes the full and equitable participation and leadership of women and girls in biodiversity-related decision-making. The Equality Act 2010 prohibits sex discrimination and mandates gender pay gap reporting for large employers, supporting equitable representation in organisations influencing biodiversity policy.

Progress: The UK has made progress towards gender equality in biodiversity governance. Legal frameworks such as the Equality Act 2010 and Land Registration Act 2002 fully protect women's rights to land and natural resources. The UK has

some mechanisms for facilitating the full participation and leadership of all women and girls in biodiversity-related policy and decision-making. Representation of women in environmental policymaking is increasing, with higher proportions of women in leadership roles across Defra and statutory nature conservation bodies, and a rise in women's representation in the House of Commons (Component Indicator 23.CT.1 – Proportion of seats held by women in (a) national parliaments and (b) local governments). Workforce data from Defra and NatureScot also show growing female representation at senior levels. Despite these advances, challenges remain, including limited sex-disaggregated data and the absence of gender-specific biodiversity policies, highlighting the need for stronger mechanisms to embed gender-responsive approaches in biodiversity planning and implementation.

4 Progress towards the KMGBF 2050 Goals

The KMGBF has set four long-term goals for 2050 related to its 2050 Vision for biodiversity. A summary of progress against each goal is provided below.

4.1 Goal A: Protect and Restore

Although the UK is making progress towards the targets that contribute to Goal A of the KMGBF, biodiversity decline persists. Statutory planning systems and marine plans are in place across all four countries, with initiatives such as Wales's Resilient Ecological Networks and England's Local Nature Recovery Strategies supporting ecosystem integrity. However, assessments show most ecosystems remain threatened (Table 2), and only 24% of land is covered by natural ecosystems (Table 3). Restoration efforts are underway, however, the effectiveness of these efforts and their contribution to enhancing the integrity, connectivity and resilience of ecosystems remains uncertain.

MPAs now cover 33.8 million hectares or 38.2% of UK inshore and offshore waters, surpassing the coverage target of 30%. In contrast, terrestrial protected sites cover only 10.6% of land and freshwater in the UK (Figure 1). Action being taken to protect and conserve species has led to the improved status of some species in both the marine and terrestrial environments, demonstrating that management actions can aid recovery. While the overall risk of extinction of species in the UK is decreasing, the overall trend in status for many wild species in the UK is declining or not improving. The relative abundance of priority species decreased on average by 62% since 1970 (Figure 2).

Native species in the UK are under increasing pressure from invasive and non-native species (INNS). Approximately three new INNS become established in Great Britain annually (Figure 6).

Regarding genetic diversity, 64% of assessed wild species are meeting the minimum population size threshold considered necessary for maintaining genetic diversity (Figure 3) and regarding maintenance of genetic diversity in domestic livestock, there has been little to no change in the proportion of local breeds classified as being at risk, from 87% in 2000 to 89% in 2025. However, amongst the at–risk breeds, several groups are experiencing declines in effective population size, especially over the most recent five years (National Indicator 4.e: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Animal genetic resources – effective population size of Native Breeds at Risk).

Overall, while frameworks and actions exist, the outcomes of these will take time to materialise due to inherent lag periods and further work is required to address key gaps in halting species decline, improving ecosystem resilience, and safeguarding genetic diversity in the UK.

4.2 Goal B: Prosper with Nature

The UK is making progress towards the targets that contribute to Goal B of the KMGBF. Statutory planning systems integrate biodiversity across all UK land areas, and sustainable farming practices are expanding. Other measures, such as banning lead shot in England, Scotland and Wales is expected to reduce risks to over one million birds. 44% of forestry woodlands are certified as sustainable managed (Figure 10). Protection in the marine environment of seafloor habitats has strengthened through targeted restrictions on damaging fishing practices in MPAs, but overall disturbance of the UK's seafloor habitats is still above levels required to achieve Good Environmental Status. 73% of UK marine fish stocks are now considered to be sustainably harvested within safe limits (Figure 4). However, bycatch of marine mammals and birds in marine fisheries remain a key challenge.

Restoration efforts are underway, including peatland, woodland, and marine projects, yet their effectiveness is uncertain due to inherent lag periods. There is some evidence that actions being taken are leading to progress towards ensuring that nature's contributions to people are being restored, maintained or enhanced. For example, ecosystem service values have risen by 12% since 2014 (Table 5), greenhouse gas emissions are now 53% lower than in 1990 (National Indicator 8.a: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Statistics), and large-scale tree planting and soil health initiatives are currently underway.

Despite these actions, ecosystem functions and services remain under pressure. For example, in UK freshwater systems, only 33% of terrestrial water bodies were in good or high or good ecological status in 2024 and showed "little or no overall change" since 2009 (National Indicator 7.c: UK Biodiversity Indicator – Surface water status). While there are indications that the use of biodiversity is becoming more sustainable, information is not currently available on how this is helping people in terms of improving food security, nutrition, livelihoods, and other benefits.

4.3 Goal C: Share Benefits Fairly

The UK is making strong progress towards the targets that contribute to Goal C of the KMGBF through the delivery of several Access and Benefit-Sharing (ABS) policy measures. The UK has fulfilled its obligations of the Nagoya Protocol through implementing the UK ABS Regulations and by playing a key role in ensuring an agreement on a multilateral benefit sharing mechanism under the CBD, including the Cali Fund. As a Party to the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture, and through the implementation of the BBNJ Agreement, the UK is also making good progress implementing ABS measures beyond the CBD and Nagoya Protocol.

4.4 Goal D: Invest and Collaborate

The UK is making progress towards the targets contributing to Goal D of the KMGBF in mobilising public and private finance for biodiversity, building domestic and international capacity, advancing technology transfer and technical/scientific cooperation and in reforming harmful incentives and promoting nature-positive financial flows.

Public sector expenditure on biodiversity reached over £1 billion in 2023/2024 (Figure 15), non-governmental organisation and private sector expenditure also grew to over £450 million in 2023/2024 (Figure 16), and internationally, UK public sector funding for biodiversity totalled £560 million in 2023/2024 (Figure 17). The UK is taking steps to address harmful subsidies (Headline Indicator 18.2: Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity (UK Biodiversity Indicator – Value of subsidies and other incentives harmful to biodiversity)) and increase positive incentives (Figure 14), with the most progress made to date in agriculture.

The UK is strengthening domestic capacity-building and development through a variety of initiatives and, internationally, the UK has worked extensively through international partnerships to build global capacity and strengthen technology transfer for KMGBF implementation. The UK is also taking action to ensure the best available biodiversity data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision-makers, practitioners and the public.

The UK is working to address some key challenges that remain in delivering elements of Goal D, for example, in the identification and elimination of harmful subsidies, and in scaling up private finance.

UK Government

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Department of
Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government