

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme



Natural Resources Wales

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The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme is producing a strategic plan for the management and restoration of all Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Wales, both on land and at sea, for the period 2014 to 2020 and beyond. The project is run by Natural Resources Wales and is financially supported by the EU LIFE+ fund.



Focus on Features

Get to know the protected habitats and species in Wales' Natura 2000 network.



Common name: Bottlenose Dolphin
Scientific name: *Tursiops Truncatus*

Lifetime: Up to 40 years
Length: 2-4m
Weight: 150-650kg
Location: Cardigan Bay (Wales) and Morray Firth (Scotland)

Key Facts:

- New research has shown that bottlenose dolphins have distinctive whistles to call each other by "name".
- They live in groups called "pods" of between 10-30 animals, but groups of over 1000 have been recorded.
- They can reach speeds of up to 22mph in short bursts.
- Common issues for Bottlenose dolphins include disturbance, water pollution and prey availability.

Issues and risks to Natura sites and features in Wales and the management mechanisms used to address them

79 representatives of organisations with an interest in Natura 2000 attended a series of workshops in June at four locations across Wales. Delegates first considered which issues (pressures) and risks (threats) were most prominent for different ecosystems; then discussed the range and suitability of management mechanisms currently used to resolve them. Information from the workshop has been collated alongside a detailed quantitative analysis from other data sources.

This work has allowed us to identify major issues affecting SPAs and SACs across Wales, as well as the most common approaches for dealing with them and their limitations. The results will be available in two technical reports which will be published on our web pages shortly.

Evidence Gaps

Following valuable input from stakeholders, the project has gathered over 170 suggestions of gaps in the evidence base that currently hinder progress. The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme is now in the process letting a number of contracts to address some of the highest priority evidence gaps – with the results expected over the next 12 months.

Suggestions not funded on this occasion will be included in Prioritised Improvement Plans and will be submitted to the Wales Biodiversity Partnership's Evidence Gaps Project with the aim of obtaining funding in the future. For more information on the Partnership's Evidence Gaps project, please see the Wales Biodiversity Partnerships website.

New Web Pages

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme web pages have been re-launched on the Natural Resources Wales website. Keep up-to-date on progress, learn about up-coming events and download documents and publications. You can find our pages under "Funded Projects" in the "About Us" section of the website.

Identifying new financing and management mechanisms – September workshops

The LIFE N2K Programme completed a series of workshops to investigate new management and financing mechanisms which could have the potential to resolve problems on Natura 2000 and deliver essential actions in an innovative way.

On 12 September marine specialists met in Aberystwyth, while on 17 September the Programme led a seminar at the Welsh Biodiversity Conference in Bangor.

Finally the LIFE N2K Programme hosted the second day of the “Europe’s Special Places” conference on 26 and 27 September at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. Following a presentation by Matt Rayment of ICF GHK Consultancy, 55 delegates suggested a wide range of new approaches from around Europe and the world and discussed the benefits and constraints in two lively workshop sessions.

The first day of the conference, which was hosted by the Welsh Government and the EU Directorate-General, focused on strengthening the uptake of EU funds for Natura 2000. Presentations covered successful LIFE projects, the new LIFE regulation, Prioritised Action Frameworks and the potential for tapping into the European ‘megafunds’.

Presentation slides and a compilation of workshop findings will be emailed to delegates and available on the Programme website in the near future. A full report on new funding and management mechanisms will be produced later in the year.



Puffin on Skomer

Development of the Natural Resources Wales Actions Database

The LIFE N2K Programme is developing the Actions Database so that it can hold and manage the Prioritised Improvement Plans for all Natura 2000 sites. This will build upon the valuable data already held in the database and enhance its role as a management and communication tool.

The first phase of the development, to produce a direct link between features and the associated issues/actions, has been completed. The second phase will involve three further outputs: -

- To enable Issues to be recorded against a Site rather than just Units.
- To enable future Risks to be recorded in addition to Issues.
- To add new data fields to hold data on costings and funding.

The third phase will focus on expanding the reporting and querying functionality of the database.

Prioritised Improvement Plans

A Prioritised Improvement Plan (PIP) will be created for each Natura site in Wales. The plan will highlight the priority issues and actions required in each case, as well as itemising costs and funding sources. The team will be working with NRW site officers and external partners from October with the aim of completing the PIPs by September 2014. (NB. PIPs are the new name for site Action Plans)

To contact the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme, for more information on any of the items in the newsletter, or to join our mailing list, please email hayley.macdonald-jones@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk. Alternatively you can find further information on our website. www.naturalresources.wales/LIFEN2K

