

NRW B B 43.15 Annex 1 SoNaRR SNAPSHOT REPORT - MAIN FINDINGS SUMMARY

This report is designed to start the discussion and process of how we can improve the evidence base to inform the preparation of the State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR).

It is available via the NRW's Internet Homepage:

<http://naturalresources.wales/our-evidence-and-reports/a-snapshot-of-the-state-of-wales-natural-resources/?lang=en>

It has been prepared to inform the passage of the Environment Bill (Welsh Government) through the National Assembly. The report provides a snapshot of the main challenges that we will need to address if we are to achieve the goals of managing our natural resources sustainably and reversing the decline in our biodiversity by maintaining and enhancing healthy and resilient ecosystems.

We will publish the first full State of Natural Resources Report report in autumn 2016.

Main findings

- 57% of the Welsh landscape is outstanding or high landscape quality
- There are around 95,000ha of ancient woodland in Wales
- 50% of butterflies have decreased over the past 10 years
- Private residential gardens provide 21% urban tree cover
- 6.7 million trees are infected with larch disease in Wales
- The environment contributes over 8.8 billion to the Welsh economy
- 40.6% of surface water bodies were in good or better ecological status in 2014
- All 102 bathing waters complied with the minimum requirements of the EC Bathing Water Directive in 2014
- Flood protection in 2035 may require 3 times the level of investment

Climate Change (Pg 34)

BENEFITS:

- Some areas under conifer plantations and improved grassland offer very significant opportunities for restoration, which would result in reduced soil emissions of greenhouse gases.

- Peat land and other habitats such as woodland are able to deliver carbon sequestration and storage, removal of emissions from the air and regulation of runoff to streams and rivers. This all contributes to counteracting climate change.

RISKS:

- Our natural resources are vulnerable to the changing pressures with around a third of the services provided by ecosystems in the UK currently declining with many others in a reduced or degraded state.
- Climate change poses a threat and emphasises the need for action. The two main consequences of climate change, that are also a threat to coastal habitats and species, are considered to be sea-level rise, currently thought to be accelerating, and changes to the condition of waves, with storminess thought to be increasing. Work is ongoing to improve understanding of vulnerability to climate change and to inform an adaptive approach.
- Increased storminess can mean severe storms and wetter summers and winters leading to increased flood risk. Welsh terrestrial environments and species are sensitive to extreme weather events and climate change. For example, peat lands, bats, breeding birds, mosses and liverworts have all shown changes in their distribution and abundance according to the effects of climate change.