

# User guide for conservation professionals

This document sets out the highest priorities for action to conserve Northamptonshire's most threatened and declining habitats and species.

It attempts to set out a strategic framework and give guidance on priorities and how these might be achieved. It should therefore be used as a reference when planning projects and other related work.

This document does not set out an exhaustive list of all aspirational actions and targets to conserve biodiversity in Northamptonshire. Instead, only those highest priority actions and targets, which are realistic and achievable by BAP partners, are included. This is because resources are in short supply and difficult to obtain, so partners must focus efforts for BAP delivery and biodiversity conservation, alongside other priorities in the county.

## Aims of the BAP

The Northamptonshire Biodiversity Action Plan sets out how the government's Biodiversity 2020 targets will be delivered at a local level. The aim of the BAP is to provide guidance on Northamptonshire's conservation priorities, how to achieve them and who should, and could, be involved.

The BAP provides a baseline, targets and an action plan up to 2020 for each habitat and associated species.

## Structure of the BAP

The BAP was developed by the Northamptonshire Biodiversity Partnership. It reflects collective priorities for conservation and agreed actions to halt wildlife and habitat losses in Northamptonshire up to 2020.

- **Introduction:** includes a background to BAPs, the state of wildlife in the county and the principles for its future conservation. It also identifies priority habitats and species in each of Northamptonshire's Natural Character Areas.
- **General Action Plans (GAP):** these seven plans cover general strategies, targets and actions for conservation. They apply to all habitats and areas of the county.
- **Habitat Action Plans (HAP):**
  - provide a description and baseline for each priority habitat, along with a list of priority areas and a general strategy for conservation
  - set out SMART targets for the conservation of each priority habitat focussing on what proportion should be managed, restored and created by 2020
  - identify priority species associated with each habitat.

**Appendices:** includes a list of all BAP species occurring in Northamptonshire and the habitats with which they are associated. Most species will be protected through conservation of the priority habitats, however in some cases additional conservation actions are also included.

## How to use it

The BAP:

- should be used to help plan landscape-scale and other conservation projects.
- provides an evidence base for funding bids for heritage and nature conservation.
- provides a source of information on priority habitats and species in the county, their rarity and the areas where their conservation, restoration and creation is most important.
- provides targets for habitat creation, to guide restoration schemes so they include habitat features most appropriate to the local landscape.
- Provides links to habitat opportunity mapping in the Nene Valley and Rockingham Forest.

## Monitoring and feedback

The BAP process only works if all partners communicate what actions they have achieved and what targets they have met.