

Observatory monitoring framework – indicator data sheet

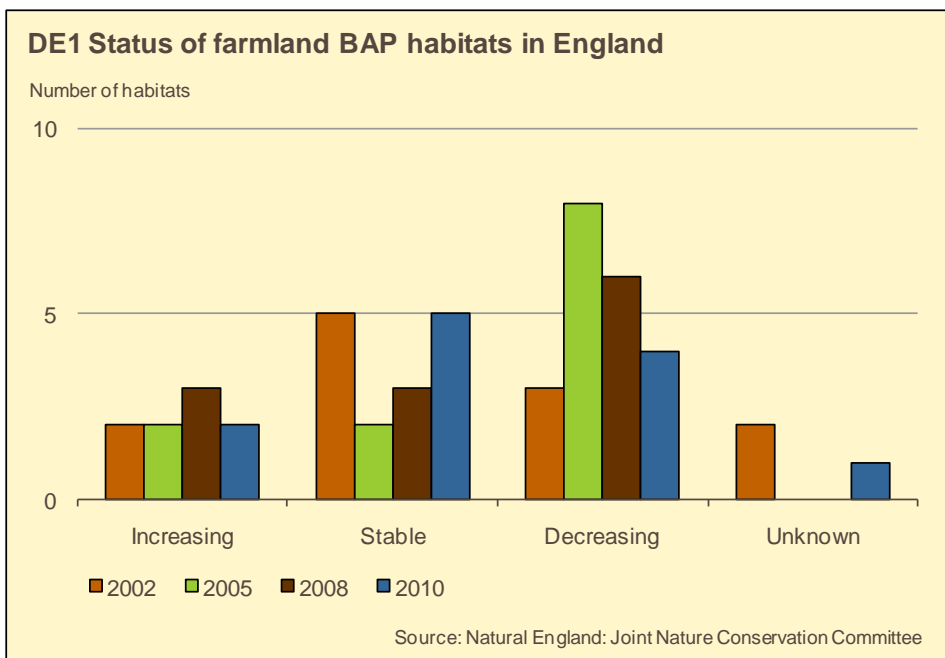
Environmental impact: Biodiversity

Indicator DE1: Status of farmland UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats in England

This is an interim indicator and will be replaced with an indicator that reflects new reporting commitments for priority habitats under [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#).

Of the 56 priority habitats occurring in England, 12 are classified as being predominantly agricultural. However, farming practices also affect a range of other habitats such as wetlands. Each habitat contains features for a wide range of flora and fauna.

Important threats to priority habitats include atmospheric, land and freshwater pollution arising from agricultural nutrient enrichment and other agro-chemicals. Other main agricultural threats include: conversion to arable land; over and under-grazing and drainage. There are also threats from natural causes such as coastal erosion, drought, storms, flooding, natural succession and global warming (sea level change). A wide range of other threats cause habitat loss or degradation, such as infrastructure development, aggregate extraction and other human disturbance.



The chart shows the change in extent, of farmland UKBAP habitats in England as assessed in 2002, 2005, 2008 and 2010. The priority habitats comprise specific areas within overarching “broad” habitats.

The 2010 assessment showed that:

- There has been a net increase in the number of priority farmland habitats assessed as stable or increasing.
- The extent of arable field margins and lowland heathland continued to increase.
- In 2010, the extent of 5 priority farmland habitats were classified as stable: upland heathland; limestone pavement; lowland dry acid grassland; lowland calcareous grassland; purple moor grass and rush pastures. The latter 3 habitats were previously declining.
- In 2010 the extent of 4 habitats were classified as decreasing: hedgerows; blanket bog; upland hay meadows; lowland meadows (slow declining).

This indicator was updated in January 2013. It will next be updated when a new indicator has been developed under Biodiversity 2020.

Further information and contact

Background information can be found in the accompanying fact sheet.

For further queries or information on this indicator contact Defra's Observatory team on +44 (0) 1904 455229 or email Observatory@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Observatory monitoring framework – indicator fact sheet

Environmental impact: Biodiversity

Indicator DE1: Status of farmland UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats in England.

<i>Indicator</i>	Status of farmland UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) priority habitats in England.
<i>Data</i>	The latest England trend of the priority habitats as identified in the UKBAP triennial reporting round, and the area of all broad habitats.
<i>Geographic coverage</i>	England
<i>Years</i>	2002, 2005, 2008 & 2010
<i>Source</i>	Natural England, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)
<i>Origin of data</i>	Natural England assessment
<i>Updates</i>	This indicator was updated in January 2013. It will be updated when a new indicator has been developed under Biodiversity 2020.
<i>Background</i>	<p>Changes in the status of the UK BAP priority habitats are a measure of the state of biodiversity. The UK BAP was published in 1994 in response to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Through a series of individual action plans it established recovery targets for semi-natural habitats that are either in serious decline and/or are important for key species assemblages. These habitats are termed BAP “priority habitats”.</p> <p>The UK BAP was replaced in 2011 with a UK framework, with priorities set at Country level, for example through Biodiversity 2020: a strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services.</p> <p>Further development planned</p> <p>The outcomes in <i>Biodiversity 2020</i> require the extent of priority habitats across England, their condition and how this is changing to be reported. An England-wide sampling framework is proposed to enable monitoring activity to contribute to an assessment of habitat condition and trends at different geographic scale and across habitats. By repeating the sample surveys, provided the sample is of sufficient size, it would be possible to assess changes in extent (proportion of parcels now meeting/no longer meeting the priority habitat definition), condition and appropriate management. Sample surveys would not pick up habitat creation, which would need to be picked up through other mechanisms.</p>
<i>Statistical & methodological information</i>	<p>The data for the UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat status in England are collected as part of a triennial UK-wide BAP reporting round, by Natural England and the JNCC. The full list of farmland habitats and their condition are listed in the Excel spreadsheet with the background data. In each reporting round, the status is derived from the latest England-wide survey for each habitat, i.e. the indicator is based on the change between the ‘earliest available assessment’ and the ‘latest available assessment’, and is based on the premise that if an assessment is not available for an assessment round it will be reasonable to assume the same status as determined in the next available assessment round (see link to technical note).</p> <p>The number of habitats assessed has changed over time. In 2008, the number of</p>

farmland habitats increased to include lowland heathland and limestone pavements. Assessments for these 2 habitats were included retrospectively. In 2010, the number of farmland habitats increased to 12.

*Further
information*

This is also a Biodiversity Strategy indicator. Information on the priority habitats in the English Biodiversity Action Plan can be found at:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/environment/biodiversity/england-biodiversity-indicators/>

Technical note on change in the status of Priority Habitats:

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/statistics/files/Technical-Background-Priority-habitat-and-species-.pdf>

Information on Natural England can be found at:

<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/>

Information on the UKBAP can be found at at:

<http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/>