

13. Awareness, understanding and support for conservation

Type: Response indicator

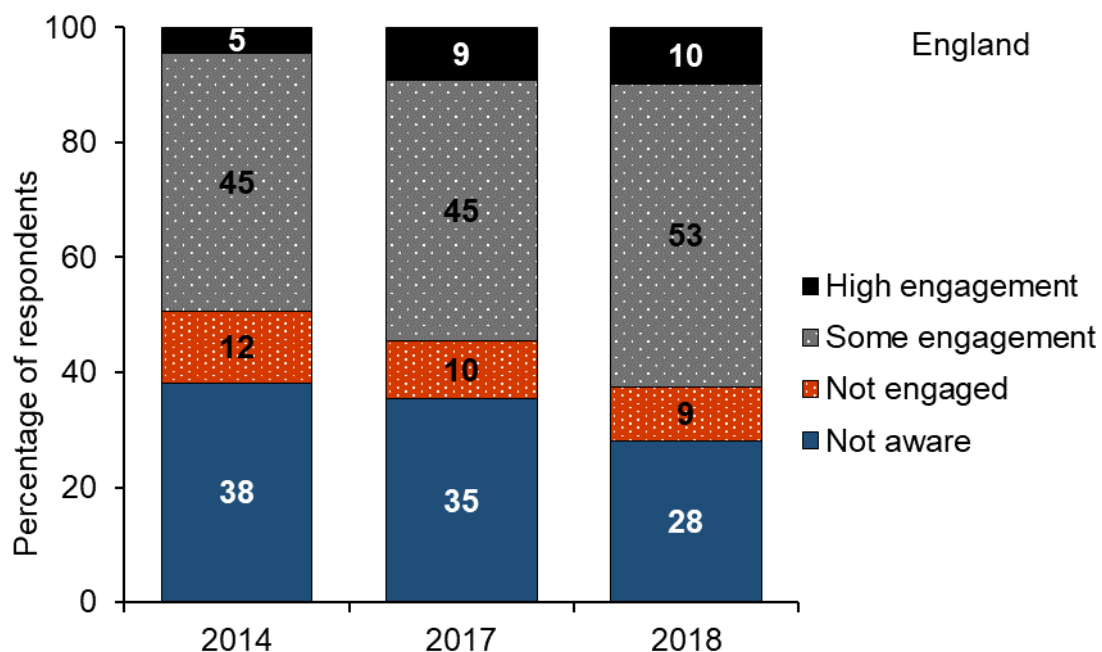
Indicator short description

This indicator addresses people’s awareness of biodiversity and understanding of its value, concern about biodiversity loss, as well as support for performing actions that can help to conserve biodiversity. The indicator groups people according to the extent to which they are aware of the threat to biodiversity in England, their level of concern about the loss of biodiversity and the number and type of actions they take to support and protect it.

No update since previous publication.

The data used to produce this indicator previously came from the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey (MENE). This survey was replaced by the People and Nature Survey, which started data collection in 2020, and there is not yet sufficient data to update the indicator for the 2021 publication.

Figure 13.1: Public engagement with biodiversity loss: awareness, concern and action, 2014, 2017 and 2018



Notes:

1. Groups are defined as: ‘not aware’; ‘not engaged’; ‘some engagement’; and ‘high engagement’, according to responses to survey questions described in the background section below.
2. The results of this indicator differ from the indicator published in the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment by Natural England as the latter relates to levels of awareness and concern rather than awareness and engagement.

Source: Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment Survey (MENE), (Natural England).

In 2018, 10% of people in England were highly engaged with the issue of biodiversity loss compared with 5% in 2014. These are people who are aware of the threat to biodiversity in England, are concerned about the loss of biodiversity and take actions to support and protect biodiversity, including some actions requiring higher effort.

In 2018, 53% of people in England showed some engagement with the issue of biodiversity loss compared with 45% in 2014. These are people who are aware of the threat to biodiversity in England, are concerned about the loss of biodiversity and take some 'day-to-day' actions to support and protect biodiversity. In 2018, 9% of people were aware of the threat to biodiversity but not concerned about it compared with 12% in 2014. In 2018, 28% of survey respondents stated that they were not aware of the threat to biodiversity in England compared with 38% in 2014.

Indicator assessment

Assessment of change in the percentage of people highly engaged with the issue of biodiversity loss in England

Long term: Insufficient data; Short term: Insufficient data; Latest year: Not assessed.

Note: There are currently insufficient data points available for this indicator to carry out any assessments. See [Assessing Indicators](#).

Relevance

Public understanding and opinion on the value of biodiversity has strong implications for the acceptance and adoption of conservation measures. People value the natural environment in different ways and for different reasons. They may simply value it for its own sake, because it makes our local environment more attractive, or because they enjoy experiencing nature-rich green places for recreation. Regular opportunities to experience the natural environment are known to have positive impacts on human health and well-being.

This indicator is relevant to outcome 4 in [Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services](#) (see Annex A). The indicator is also relevant to international goals and targets (see Annex B of the aforementioned publication).

Background

In May 2013, Defra published a research report titled *Engaging people in biodiversity issues*. In this study, a system was defined with a set of evidence-based criteria and decision rules that can be used to assign people from the general population into 5 discrete groups, based on their responses to a survey developed as part of the study. The system reflects different levels of awareness of, and engagement in, biodiversity issues. The definitions of the 5 groups developed give internally consistent findings in terms of attitudes and behaviours. Within the research, the groups were of sufficient size to allow further analysis and policy targeting. This study, which captured all parts of the awareness, concern and action spectrum, has been used as a template for the development of the indicator presented here.

The indicator groups respondents as follows:

- Group 1: Does not anticipate a loss of biodiversity in England
- Group 2: Believes there will be a loss of biodiversity in the future but is not concerned about the loss of biodiversity

- Group 3: Believes there will be a loss of biodiversity, is concerned about a loss of biodiversity and performs 0 to 2 'day-to-day' actions to support and protect biodiversity
- Group 4: Believes there will be a loss of biodiversity, is concerned about that loss and performs all 3 'day-to-day' actions or 1 to 2 'day-to-day' actions and at least one 'higher effort' action
- Group 5: Believes there will be a loss of biodiversity, is concerned about that loss and performs all 3 'day-to-day' actions as well as 1 to 2 'higher effort' actions

Respondents that fall into group 1 are labelled as 'not aware', respondents in group 2 are labelled as 'not engaged', respondents in group 3 are said to show 'some engagement' and respondents in group 4 or group 5 are combined and said to show 'high engagement'.

A 'higher effort' action is a behaviour that has the capability to persuade others and lead to changes that might impact on biodiversity loss at a national level. Higher effort behaviours require the participant to act outside the realms of regular daily life and are adopted by only a niche group of people. The higher effort actions asked about in the questions used to inform this indicator are; volunteering with a project or organisation to help protect the environment/wildlife; and signing of a conservation petition or participation in a conservation campaign (online or other).

'Day-to-day' behaviours are more a measure of engagement rather than of behaviours that will actually prevent biodiversity loss. The day-to-day behaviours asked about in the questions used to inform this indicator are: wildlife gardening; green consumerism; and membership of an organisation that helps to look after wildlife or the natural environment.

Questions on awareness of, concern for, and actions taken to prevent biodiversity loss, which were based on questions used to define the 'Public Engagement with Loss of Biodiversity' system in the Defra Engaging people in biodiversity issues report, have been incorporated into the Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment (MENE) survey. More information about the MENE survey, including sample size, and the exact wording of the questions, can be found in the technical background paper. The MENE survey will be replaced by a new people and nature survey. This data will be collected by Natural England and will begin fieldwork in 2020. This will build on MENE and incorporate feedback from stakeholders as part of a strategic review.

Web links for further information

Defra Awareness research: [Engaging people in biodiversity issues](#)

Natural England: [Monitor of Engagement with the Natural Environment, People and Nature Survey for England](#)

Last updated: October 2020

Latest data available: 2018