

Introduction to Scarborough's BAP

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Scarborough's Biodiversity Action Plan



Tree at Throxenby Lane:
(Photograph by Steve Wilson)

Summary

If keeping Scarborough rich in wildlife is important to you, then you can find out how it is planned to care for our special habitats and the species associated with them, in the following pages. It is not just the rare and threatened wildlife that this plan seeks to protect, commoner wildlife is important too. Around our towns, villages and homes wildlife contributes greatly to the quality of our lives.

The BAP is based around 12 Habitat Action Plans and 11 Species Action Plans although others may be added when the BAP is reviewed. Each action plan considers conservation issues and suggests conservation measures through a series of targets and quantifiable actions. A partnership of organisations as well as Scarborough residents can work together to deliver these measures. The table listing the selected habitats and species is given on page 16.

What is Biodiversity?

Biological Diversity, shortened to Biodiversity, means simply, the whole variety of life within the natural world which both surrounds and sustains us.

It does not just include rare species of animal and plant life but encompasses the entire spectrum of life, including:

- All animals, plants and organisms from the smallest microbe to the Blue Whale and from toadstools and lichens to the biggest Oak.
- Habitats incorporating the wide variety of aquatic and land masses and the atmosphere.
- The variation between and within populations of organisms.
- The interrelationships of species and communities operating jointly to produce habitats and ecosystems.

THIS ALSO INCLUDES US.

Why is Biodiversity Important?

Biodiversity is vital to life and, in its simplest terms, enables life to exist on the earth. The air we breathe, the food we eat, the water we drink, are all linked together in a complex web, every plant and animal having its own small part to play. Even the places we know and the livelihoods that people have are largely dependent on the rich diversity of life around them and together give that sense of place that makes Yorkshire different from Essex or Gristhorpe different from Hunmanby.

Scarborough Borough has a very rich and varied biodiversity and landscape, ranging from magnificent coastal zones to the similarly impressive upland moors. With this comes a wealth of habitats and species, some of which are of national and international significance. This variety contributes to and enriches our everyday lives, perhaps without our noticing. It also contributes significantly, along with farming, fishing, tourism and industry, to our local identity, culture and economy. As such, action is needed to conserve and enhance these assets to allow them to continue to enrich both our lives and those of future generations.

Change though is a natural and important part of the natural world and development is both inevitable and necessary. It is therefore imperative that such development pays respect to the biodiversity of the region and seeks to maintain and enhance it for our future generations. This is what sustainability is all about.

This Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) seeks to conserve what we have whilst providing a framework for guiding change and is aimed at protecting and improving our natural world for the benefit of all forms of life.

The National and Regional Framework.

As a result of the Rio Earth Summit in 1992, many countries agreed to take action to arrest the loss of biodiversity on a world wide scale. The UK was included within this group of nations who pledged to take action and as a result a nation-wide initiative to enhance biodiversity was first published in 1995 by the Government. The UK BAP¹ covers a wide range of species and habitats with its prime objectives

Golden-shelled Slug: (Photograph
by B.Cockerill)



being to conserve and enhance the range of wildlife and their habitats within the UK. It specifically targets both species and habitats that have seen a decline in quantity or quality in recent times. As the UK BAP targeted the entire country it could not be used to promote or put into action plans at a local level. The UK BAP therefore encouraged the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) of which there are 163 across the country. To conserve biodiversity though, you need to know what you have.

At a regional level a biodiversity audit has been completed (Selman ²) which was the first comprehensive review of the most important habitats and species in the Yorkshire and The Humber Region. It pulled together information from a wide range of sources and experts. A list of species and habitats were derived from work on national priorities produced by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group, which was set up to oversee the biodiversity conservation process on behalf of Government.

The regional audit asks the questions "what relevance does the national biodiversity action process have for the region?" and also "what can our region best contribute to the national biodiversity action plans for the UK?".

The answers the audit arrived at were that BAPS aid and inform the work of planners and policy and decision makers, focusing available resources onto those species and habitats in the region which nationally are scarce and declining or for which the UK has an international obligation to protect.

Further to the audit the Yorkshire and Humber Biodiversity Forum is currently working on the preparation of Regional Biodiversity Indicators (Headley ³).

So, what is a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and why does Scarborough need one?

Biodiversity Action Plans are important tools for assisting in the protection and enhancement of selected habitats and species that have been identified as being of significant importance.

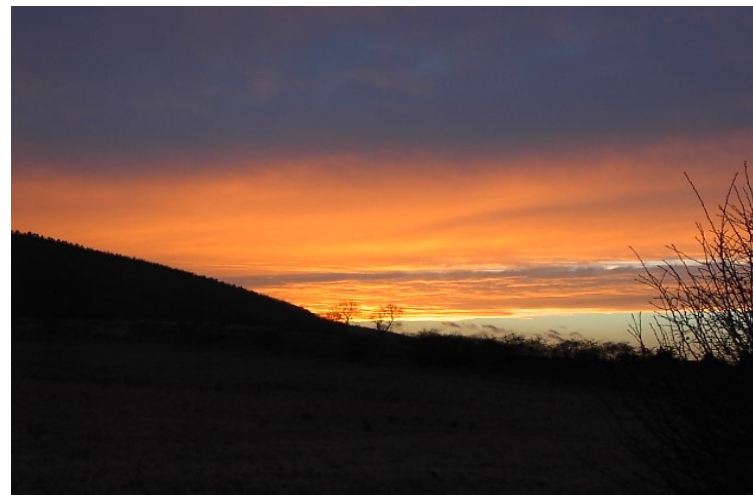
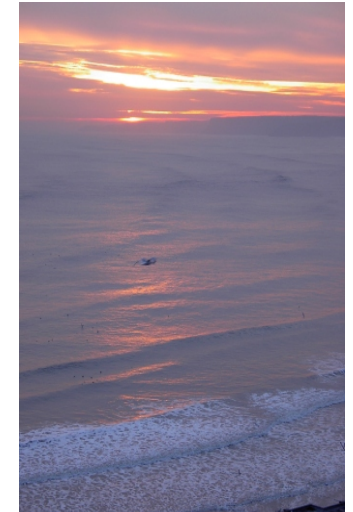
They can play a central role both in the conservation and enhancement of local biodiversity. Scarborough Borough, like most places in the UK

has suffered from a decline in the variety and quality of species and habitats, often as a result of human intervention and development. The aim of the LBAP is therefore to:

- Translate national guidance within the UK BAP to action at a local level;
- Identify locally important habitats and species;
- Develop local partnerships to help maintain and improve
- Raise local awareness of biodiversity and its importance; and
- Set up effective monitoring systems.

Other benefits of the LBAP will be to inform and influence planning decisions, both to avoid harming wildlife and habitats and to encourage and pro-actively seek the restoration of habitats through the use of planning conditions.

It is, though, only a starting point. It is the first attempt at drawing together all the information that we have, assessing what needs the most attention and where we can help the most. It is not based on all that is known because there is a large amount of information, held by local people, that is not easily accessible. It is hoped that this report will stimulate the interest of everyone in getting involved and to help review and refine the Action Plan so that it helps maintain what everyone values most in their local environment.



Above: Sunrise Over Scarborough Bay.
Left: Sunset over Flixton Brow -
Photographs by Steve Wilson