

LIFE Natura 2000 Programme for Wales



Newsletter 3
June 2014

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme is producing a strategic plan for the management and restoration of all Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) in Wales, both on land and at sea, for the period 2014 to 2020 and beyond. The project is run by Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and is financially supported by the EU LIFE+ fund.

Themed Action Plans

Thematic Action Plans are to be prepared setting out strategic actions to deal with the major issues affecting Natura 2000, namely:

- Air pollution
- Diffuse water pollution
- Flood/coastal management
- Grazing and livestock management
- Freshwater fisheries
- Marine fisheries
- Marine litter
- Invasive species
- Woodland management
- Access and recreation
- Changes to hydraulic conditions
- Climate change
- Habitat fragmentation

The plans will set out the scale of the issues external drivers and pressures and identify the key actions which are required to address problems at a strategic level, along with costings and funding options where available.

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme is inviting experts in these areas within Natural Resources Wales and partner organisations to become involved in the drafting process. Please contact us if you are interested.

Prioritised Improvement Plans (PIPs)

The creation of Prioritised Improvement Plans is now well underway. The PIPs will set out prioritised, costed actions for every Natura 2000 site in Wales with the aim of restoring these prime wildlife sites and bringing their designated species and habitats into favourable condition.

The PIPs require significant input from the NRW site conservation officers and other specialist staff, and the LIFE N2K coordinators are currently travelling the length and breadth of the country, conducting an in-depth review for all sites; interviews have now been carried out for 40% of SAC/SPAs.

Jennifer Kelly said: "We really appreciate the time and effort staff are taking to contribute to the process. Without their invaluable knowledge and expertise this work would not be possible. The information they provide will facilitate better funding and management for our Natura 2000 sites in the future. "

The coordinators hope to finish the majority of interviews by the end of July, to allow the completion of the PIPs by September. This will be followed by a period of data review, database inputting and consultation with internal and external partners, as well as finalisation of costings.



Royal Welsh Show

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme will be hosting an event on Monday 22 July in the Natural Resources Wales marquee at the Royal Welsh Show in Builth Wells.

It will be chance to hear an update on progress, prioritisation and take a look at external funding options. If you would like to attend this event then please contact us as soon as possible using the details below, as there are a limited number of



YouTube Videos

The LIFE Natura 2000 Programme is planning a series of bilingual videos to promote the Welsh network of European protected sites. They will highlight the challenges facing Natura 2000 and show how conservation management measures can restore the condition of the habitats and species.

We hope to include sites from across Wales, showcasing the variety of rich marine, coastal, freshwater, upland and lowland ecosystems and how people benefit from them.

There is only a modest budget so any contributions from partners would be valuable, such as existing footage or stills, suggestions for good filming opportunities or filming/editing skills. It is a good chance to promote your site or project to a wider audience.

If you can help, then please contact us using the details below.

Marine Update

Marine Site Management Schemes for Natura 2000 (where they exist) will be integrated with the work of the LIFE N2K Programme. The integration has been developed in collaboration with NRW Site Officers, European Marine Site Officers and Relevant Authority Groups, and will facilitate more consistent management of marine sites in the future.

Climate Change Assessments - Work has begun to harmonise marine climate change vulnerability assessments with the 'Climate Vulnerability Assessment of Designated Sites in Wales'. This will give us a complete and complementary assessment of the vulnerability of all N2K features in Wales.

Actions Database

The LIFE N2K Programme will be inputting data from the PIP interviews into the NRW Actions Database in the near future. Existing content for N2K sites will be revised, updated and expanded.

Associated improvements to the Actions Database are nearly finished, with the addition of new fields to hold PIP data, and the creation of a report to allow the PIPs to be generated automatically from the database.

Additional new reporting capabilities are also being developed to allow the data to be queried for a variety of purposes. Please contact us if you have any reporting needs which you would like us to consider as part of this work.

Water Framework Directive

The LIFE Natura 2000 team are working closely with the NRW Water Framework Directive officers who are in the process of producing draft 2nd cycle River Basin Management Plans ready for internal and external consultation. RBMPs include measures needed to bring Natura 2000 features into favourable conservation status so it is important to share and rationalise data between the two initiatives. Because the timetables differ, initial RBMP consultation will include older Natura 2000 data, however this will be updated as and when the LIFE N2K work is ready.

Flutter your wings for Natura 2000



Staff in Maes y Ffynnon, Bangor showing their support for Natura 2000 day on 21 May by fluttering their hands to signify butterfly wings

Type "21st of May European Natura 2000 Day" into YouTube for further information on Natura 2000 day.

Focus on Features

Get to know the protected habitats and species in Wales' Natura 2000 network.



Common name: Great Crested Newt
Scientific name: *Triturus cristatus*

Key Facts

- Length: 15cm
- Life span: 6 years on average (max 15 years)
- Location: Across most of Wales except Pembrokeshire and Ceredigion.
- Our largest and most threatened species of newt.
- During the breeding season, the males develop a crest between their head and tail, and a silver streak along the middle of their tail.
- The female lays around 250 eggs in winter, wrapping each egg individually with a leaf.

Contracts

Several external contracts are underway or due to be let shortly.

- Major funding contract to appraise current and potential funding options for N2K management.
- Identification of eco-system services and economic benefits of N2K habitat and species features.
- Collation of datasets showing the spatial distribution of N2K features in Wales.
- Study of non-financial constraints which act as barriers to achieving favourable condition.

IPENS

Our sister project, the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites (IPENS) is run by Natural England and also funded by LIFE+. They are busy developing Site Improvement Plans (SIPs) for English Natura 2000 sites, which are similar to the PIPs. The two projects have collaborated closely over the cross-border sites, an agreed procedure is in place and most of the PIPs for these sites are underway.

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ipens2000



Publication of Reports

LIFE Natura 2000 Programme has produced three reports describing the findings of the data analysis and workshops carried out during 2013.

The Challenges Facing Welsh Natura 2000 Habitats and Species. Results showed that 91% of features are adversely affected by a total of 44 different issues which act as barriers to achieving favourable condition. However, a relatively small number of issues, connected to pollution and waste, agricultural management, water management and invasive species account for the most of the pressures.

Addressing the Challenges on Natura 2000 Sites in Wales looks at the available mechanisms for dealing with issues and risks. While 90 mechanisms were identified, around two thirds of actions are addressed by just a small number of mechanisms including NRW management agreements, direct action, review of discharge consents, changes to policy and legislation and to a lesser extent agri-environment schemes. Investigations are required for around a fifth of logged actions, indicating a lack of information in many cases.

New Solutions for Natura 2000 in Wales considers under-used alternative mechanisms and novel approaches to address issues and risks to Natura 200 sites, which are being used or trialled elsewhere. 89 new solutions were identified, for example, better integration of N2K needs into existing strategies, plans and projects, issue-specific management plans, targeted education initiatives, marketing of produce accreditation schemes, visitor payback initiatives, payment for ecosystem services and developer contributions.

The reports describe the results of the research only and do not represent the recommendations or policy decisions of the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme or Natural Resources Wales. They will be available shortly on our website.

Wales Biodiversity Partnership : Outcome 21 Group

This group, which brings together key organisations with responsibilities for taking action on protected sites on land, will be meeting in June. On the agenda will be an update on the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme and an opportunity to discuss the most effective ways for organisations to contribute to, and agree to take forward the actions in the Prioritised Improvement Plans.



To contact the LIFE Natura 2000 Programme, for more information on any of the items in the newsletter, or to join our mailing list, please email hayley.macdonald-jones@cyfoethnaturiolcymru.gov.uk. Alternatively go to our website:

<http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/our-work/about-us/nrw-funded-projects/life-natura-2000-programme-wales>



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