



Internal Drainage Boards and Biodiversity

Rob Cathcart
Senior Specialist Freshwater and Wetlands
Natural England

SSSIs



- Government PSA target for SSSIs
- Priority WLMP Programme
 - 104 Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- IDBs lead operating authority
 - 38 priority WLMPs
- IDBs restoring 6817 hectares of wetland SSSIs
- Review plans with Natural England
- Costed Action Plans

Wider Biodiversity Framework



- Legislative compliance: WFD Good Ecological Status
- Policy goals: Making Space for Water, CFMPs, SMPs
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006: public authorities conserving biodiversity
- Flood and Coastal Defence Funding Review
- DEFRA Review of IDBs
- Flood and Coastal Risk Management Zero-Based Review

UK Biodiversity Action



- Rio Convention on Biological Diversity
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- Action plans and targets for:
 - priority habitats
 - priority species
- Local BAP – LBAP partnerships
- Organisation BAPs: water companies, British Waterways, Environment Agency

IDBs and Biodiversity

- One of UK's biggest wetland habitat managers
- Thousands of miles of IDB watercourse – wildlife potential
- Scores of BAP priority species sustained by IDBs
- IDB water level management supports distinctive wetland habitats and characteristic landscapes
- European sites, SSSIs, local nature reserves – all in drainage districts
- Biodiversity as a key measure of sustainability



Conservation history



- Wetland restoration – Woodwalton
- Management best practice
- *Nature Conservation & the Management of Drainage Channels*
- ESA schemes
- Partnership working: IDBs, landowners and conservation agencies
- Habitat and species recovery

IDB Review Biodiversity Working Group



Key elements:

- Appropriate and feasible IDB contribution to the environment and biodiversity
- SSSI protection and UK BAP targets
- Appropriate resources, skills and capacity
- Framework for setting biodiversity objectives, targets and recording progress
- Platform for demonstrating IDB contribution

Biodiversity Objectives for IDBs



- Contribute to UK BAP targets
- Integrate biodiversity into management and activities
- Use biodiversity-friendly techniques to enhance habitats
- Increase biodiversity knowledge of drainage network
- Promote conservation awareness among staff, contractors, and partners
- Co-operate with landowners and local partners



IDB Biodiversity Action Planning

1. Conduct Biodiversity Audit – collate existing information
2. Produce Biodiversity Action Plan
 - Prioritise habitats and species
 - Set objectives and targets
3. Implement – integrate actions into existing work programmes
4. Monitor – measure simple indicators of progress
5. Review and Report Progress – update plan, share information and publicise



Developing IDB BAPs



- BAP guidance and templates November
- Training events December/January
- Support from LBAPs and BAP Regional Co-ordinators
- *Nature Conservation & the Management of Drainage Channels* 2008
- IDB Biodiversity Audits 2008
- IDB Biodiversity Action Plans 2009