

Wetlands Biodiversity Delivery Group

Draft Implementation Plan Framework

2006- 2009

For Wetland Biodiversity Delivery Group

November 2006

## **Introduction**

The Wetland Biodiversity Delivery Group addresses the following priority habitats in Northern Ireland which are the subject of Habitat Action Plans (HAPs); Fens, Reedbeds, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Aquifer fed naturally fluctuating water bodies, Eutrophic Standing Waters, Mesotrophic Lakes, and Marl Lakes. It also covers the broad habitat of rivers and streams. Further details of the groups remit and membership is specified in the terms of reference.

There is a great deal of on-going work especially in the area of eutrophication control and agri-environment schemes being carried out by the Water Management Unit (EHS) and the Department of Agriculture. It was decided that to develop a manageable work programme for this group that many of the on-going areas of work would be omitted from this plan. We strongly acknowledge the positive contribution that this work provides to the improvement in water quality in Northern Ireland.

There are a number of other stakeholder groups set up to deliver the requirements of the WFD but this group will focus on biodiversity delivery. This work programme will focus on work that can be carried out at a partnership level promoting good practice, encouraging participation and raising awareness.

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## Site designation

**Objective 1:** Ensure that all priority wetland habitats that meet the scientific criteria required for ASSI designation are designated by 2015 and that all locally important sites are identified and protected.

Key Action 1.1: Designate all priority wetland habitats that meet the scientific criteria required for ASSI designation, by 2015.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
1.1.1	Review the coverage of wetland habitats within the SAC/ASSI/NNR series and initiate a programme for designating additional wetland sites.	<b>EHS</b>	2007	
1.1.2	Produce conservation objectives for all designated sites.	<b>EHS</b>	2006	

Key Action 1.2: Protect locally important sites by identifying them in Area Plans and in Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
1.2	Identify wetland SLNClS in Development Plans and in Local Biodiversity Action Plans.	<b>Planning Service</b> EHS NGOs District Councils	Ongoing in line with Area Plans	

## Special Management of designated sites

**Objective 2:** Work to maintain favourable condition or improve the conservation condition towards favourable, of 95% of the features underlying the designation of internationally important wildlife sites and Areas of Special Scientific Interest by 2013.

**Key Action 2.1:** Monitor and report on the condition of designated freshwater and wetland sites and associated species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
2.1	Monitor and report on the condition of freshwater and wetland SACs/ASSIs	EHS, DCAL, Loughs Agency, Rivers Agency.	2007	

**Key Action 2.2:** Identify ASSI/SAC in unfavourable condition and initiate and implement site management plans for restoration for identified sites by 2010.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
2.2.1	Identify and Initiate a programme to restore wetland SACs/ASSIs which are not in favourable condition.	EHS, FCB, Loughs Agency, Rivers Agency, Water Service, DCAL		
2.2.2	Ensure that agri-environment schemes and MOSS are used effectively to deliver wetland management and restoration.	<b>EHS, DARD</b>	Ongoing	
2.2.3	Fisheries to continue to carry out monitoring and restoration work.	<b>DCAL</b>	Ongoing	

## Management of designated sites, priority habitats and species.

**Objective 3:** Maintain the current extent and overall distribution of wetlands currently in favourable condition and improve the condition of those areas, which are degraded but readily restorable by 2010 and introduce management regimes to improve the condition of the remaining areas by 2015.

The Reviewed targets for Northern Ireland freshwater and wetland HAPs.

Habitat	Target unit	Maintenance	Achieve condition by 2015	Condition (%)	Restoration by 2015	Restoration (%)	Expansion by 2015	Expansion (%)
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Hectares - ha	4,782	2,152	45%	50	1%	50	1%
Fens	Hectares - ha	3,000	2,700	90%	50	2%	-	
Wet reedbeds	Hectares - ha	3,200	2,880	90%	-		150	5%
Aquifer-fed fluctuating water bodies	Sites (s)	3	3	100%	-		-	
Eutrophic standing waters	Site(s)	No data	-		-		-	
Mesotrophic lakes	Site(s)	No data	-		-		-	
Marl lakes	Sites (s)	No data	-		-		-	
Rivers and Streams	Km (s)							

**Key Action 3.1:** Maintain the extent and condition of wetland sites and the distribution and population of key species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.1.1	Collectively ensure that PPS2 adequately protects and promotes wetland habitats biodiversity.	ALL	2006	
3.1.2	Monitor and control the impact of invasive species as a result of the risk assessment process and consider impacts on management schemes.	EHS NPWS DCAL Loughs Agency	2007	
3.1.3	Produce guidance to ensure that wetland management and restoration plans are incorporated into Local Biodiversity Action Plans.	EHS, District Councils	2007	
3.1.4	Ensure that the agricultural related grant schemes are used effectively to positively deliver wetland management.	DARD, EHS		

3.1.5	Ensure that recreational activities, for example, boating, fishing or water sports take account of wetland habitats or species.	DCAL, EHS, Waterways Ireland, District Councils, Loughs Agency	Ongoing	
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Key Action 3.2: Compile an inventory on priority wetlands habitats in Northern Ireland.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.2.1	Develop an inventory of the extent, location and condition of wetland habitats.	EHS	2009	
3.2.2	Establish a method to collate all freshwater monitoring data into the existing GB lake inventory, identifying Tier 1, Tier 2 and Tier 3 sites.	ALL		
3.2.3	Collect information on salmonid habitats.	DCAL	Ongoing	
3.2.4	Produce habitat classifications, definitions and indicators for wetland habitats.	EHS	2007	

Key Action 3.3: Monitor the condition of wetland habitats and species in the wider countryside.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.3.1	Review the current monitoring of priority habitats in the wider countryside and identify gaps.	EHS, DARD, DCAL.		
3.3.2	Develop a programme for monitoring the condition of priority wetland habitats and species in the wider countryside.	EHS, DARD		
3.3.3	Produce definitions for “favourable condition”, “unfavourable condition” and “unfavourable recovering” for wetland habitats in the wider countryside.	DARD EHS	2006	
3.3.4	Monitor the distribution and population of priority species.	EHS	2008	

Key Action 3.4: Carry out a strategic review of restoration opportunities for wetland habitats.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
3.4.1	Produce a Restoration Strategy for the prioritisation of wetland restoration in Northern Ireland.	EHS, DARD, NGOs, Rivers Agency, DCAL	2009	
3.4.2	Promote and develop demonstration sites for the management and restoration of wetlands.	EHS DARD Rivers Agency	2009	
3.4.3	Initiate restoration of the priority sites identified in the Restoration Strategy.	EHS, DARD, Forest Service, District Councils, Rivers Agency	2009	
3.4.4	Ensure an integrated and effective approach to funding for management of wetland habitats.	EHS DARD District Councils	2009	

## River Basin Management Planning

**Objective 4:** Ensure that all wetlands are fully incorporated into River Basin Management Plans by 2009.

**Key Action 4.1:** Ensure that wetlands are properly recognised and managed through River Basin Management Plans.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
4.1.1	Ensure that all Natura 2000 are included in the WFD Protected Areas Register.	EHS	2007	
4.1.2	Collate details of wetland habitats and conservation objectives into a GIS format to inform the river basin management planning process.	EHS	2009	
4.1.3	Include consideration of wetlands in the Significant Water Management Issues report.	EHS , DARD, DCAL, District Councils	2007	
4.1.4	Ensure that WFD protected areas are monitored through the requirements of the Habitats Directive and the WFD.	EHS DCAL Loughs Agency	2008	
4.1.5	Set clear objectives for wetlands in River Basin Management Plans with adequate provision of resources for their management and restoration.	EHS Rivers Agency, DCAL, DARD	2009	

# Research

**Objective 5:** Initiate and support research to advance the implementation of this work programme.

Key Action 5.1: Continue to carry out research as necessary to improve our understanding of wetland distribution, function, management and associated species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
5.1	Continue to carry out and support research to help develop our understanding and management of wetland habitats e.g. inventory work, definitions.	DARD EHS DCAL	2006	.

## Education and Awareness

**Objective 6:** Encourage active participation and increase the awareness and understanding of wetland issues amongst the public, landowners and stakeholders.

Key Action 6.1: Promote access to wetlands and raise awareness of wetland habitats and species.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
6.1.1	Develop a wetland awareness programme.	<b>EHS</b> , DENI Forest Service DARD, L.A, BREA.	2007	
6.1.2	Provide appropriate access, interpretation and educational provision on key wetland sites.	EHS, DARD Forest Service District Councils, Loughs Agency	2007	

Key Action 6.2: Develop good practice for wetland management.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
6.2.1.	Review relevant guidelines and materials on wetland management and produce a directory of best examples.	EHS DARD Rivers Agency	2006	
6.2.2	Ensure that those providing wetland management advice to landowners are consistent and fully informed.	DARD EHS Rivers Agency	2007	
6.2.3	Provide management advice to wetland landowners and managers.	EHS, DARD, Rivers Agency, DCAL	2008	
6.2.4	Arrange workshops / conferences	<b>ALL</b>	Annually	

## Implementation

**Objective 7:** Ensure that this work programme is implemented and review progress by 2010.

Key Action 7.1: A Wetland Biodiversity Delivery Group, led by EHS, including Government, NGOs and businesses, will help implement this work programme.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
7.1.1	Review work programme and progress on an annual basis.	<b>ALL</b>	Annually	
7.1.2	Review terms of reference on an annual basis.	<b>ALL</b>	Annually	

Key Action 7.2: Further develop links with Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

Key Tasks		Partners - Lead Partner(s) in <b>bold</b>	Timeframe	Comments/Update
7.2	Further develop links with the UK, the Republic of Ireland and International organisations on wetland and species management.	<b>ALL</b>	Ongoing	