

# UK Biodiversity Indicators 2023

This document supports:

E2. Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity

**Technical background document:  
Public sector and non-governmental organisation  
expenditure on UK and international biodiversity**

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Biodiversity Indicators Production Team (Defra)

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**Section 1** of this document describes the methodology used in determining estimates of UK public sector spending on biodiversity in the UK and the rest of the world. The indicators are based on a combination of estimates and expert opinion with judgment employed to finalise some components of the total. The figures should be taken as approximate.

**Section 2** describes the methodology used to determine estimates of spending by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), with a main focus on biodiversity and/or nature conservation, in the UK. The indicators are based on a combination of published and unpublished estimates, with judgment employed to finalise some components of the total. The figures should be taken as approximate.

### Section 1: UK public sector spending

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### Methodology

All total expenditure figures in this indicator are presented as financial year data and 2021/2022, for example, refers to the period April 2021 to March 2022.

Two main sources are used to obtain information for the indicators from a wide range of government organisations; departmental annual reports; and expert contacts in the relevant organisations.

Spending on biodiversity is disaggregated where possible between:

- Spending directly on nature reserves and conservation measures;
- Related spending on administration and training;
- Relevant research and development; and
- Transfer payments to other organisations (in order to remove double counting of financial flows).

Direct conservation consists of activities that directly protect and promote variety among living organisms. However, direct action is often ineffective unless supported by a range of other activities such as research and development, education and publicity, or even simply administration. Sources of information may not always distinguish between these elements and it is necessary to exercise judgment as to when an item should be included or not, or whether the relevant component relating to direct action should be estimated by expert judgment or by reference to other information. For simplicity, the staff costs associated with implementing biodiversity focused programmes within large organisations are not included.

In practice, because biodiversity spending is not always separately identified within the available sources, or if a single expenditure item includes biodiversity and non-biodiversity elements, an aspect of judgment is sometimes required. One particular example is the treatment of expenditure through the four countries' (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) agri-environmental schemes, where an estimate is made of the proportion of total scheme spending that is biodiversity-related.

Given the large number of UK public sector organisations funding activities related to biodiversity and the complexities involved in both defining and identifying relevant expenditure, the figures presented in this indicator are likely to be an underestimation of total biodiversity spend by the UK public sector. They do however provide a clear trend of expenditure on biodiversity since the beginning of 2000/2001 (domestic) and 2001/2002 (international). The time series for the international measure was shortened by one year during the 2019 update of this indicator. This was because the limited availability of Official Development Assistance (ODA) data for 2000/2001 was leading to issues of discontinuity.

A further difficulty is that many expenditure items are designed to meet more than one policy objective: an example is tree planting, which promotes biodiversity but might be largely driven by a demand for landscaping. In practice, the assessment by relevant experts of the appropriate share of any spending which can be

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attributed to biodiversity needs to take into account issues such as the quality of conservation measures and the original intentions of the expenditure.

Finally, given the time period covered by this indicator, it is inevitable that government organisations will be restructured, funding streams will change, projects will come to an end and/or new projects will begin and some biodiversity related expenditure will be outsourced to external organisations. Therefore, although every effort is made to consistently report annual expenditure, there are likely to be some differences in the coverage of the indicator from one year to the next.

### Definitional issues concerning spending on biodiversity in the UK

#### *Access to the countryside*

Expenditure on providing access to the countryside has generally been regarded as being for the benefit of society rather than in support of biodiversity. An exception is made for spending on nature reserves, which will include spending on visitor centres and footpaths, but which can be regarded as being for educational and fund-raising purposes. Where expenditure on access is identifiable (for example, expenditure by the Forestry Commission which is specifically allocated to access but not to nature reserves) this is excluded.

#### *Expenditure on National Parks*

Much of the spending by the 15 National Parks in England, Scotland and Wales is geared towards services for the public, including access, landscaping etc. However, some specific expenditure in the form of contributions to Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) and other activities has been identified. There is also some relevant expenditure that is funded by the agriculture departments in each country. It has not been possible to gather biodiversity-related expenditure from the majority of National Parks due to various reasons but expenditure on agri-environment schemes within National Parks by each country's relevant departments is captured.

#### *Natural resource management*

The following spending is excluded on the grounds that it is aimed at managing the use of the environmental assets for the economy, rather than for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity:

- Spending by the Environment Agency on water abstraction licenses
- Spending by the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) on the management of the fishing industry, and
- Spending by the Forestry Commission on the management of commercial forests.

#### *Forestry Commission expenditure*

Gross expenditure by the Forestry Commission is included, in respect of the broad objective that includes biodiversity in the annual accounts for the Forestry

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Commission in England, Wales and Scotland; each includes a diverse range of activities in addition to the biodiversity-related activities outlined below. A typical activity is the expansion of native woodland, as this is an important habitat to native animal and plant species. Other activities include management of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), creating linkages to isolated woodland remnants and woodland glade management for key moth and butterfly species living in the forests.

### *Road schemes*

Biodiversity protection expenditure has not in the past been separately estimated by the Highways Agency (for the Department for Transport). However, since 2005/2006 the Agency has had a separate budget specifically allocated to the overall achievement of the Biodiversity Action Plan targets. It is believed that prior to 2005/2006, the (unallocated) spending on biodiversity was significantly lower. No estimates have been made for these years, therefore some discontinuity will occur.

### *Landscape*

Estimates of expenditure on land management regarding SSSIs, National Nature Reserves and other protected land areas are included. However, wherever possible expenditure relating to landscaping is excluded, as the main focus of this activity is for aesthetic reasons.

## Definitional issues concerning spending on international biodiversity

### *Spending in the UK's Overseas Territories*

Public sector spending on international biodiversity includes spending by the UK in the Overseas Territories. Spending on the Overseas Territories Environmental Programme (OTEP) is provided by the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), whilst other spending is carried out by Defra, Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

### *Wildlife trade and international wildlife crime*

Estimates of departmental costs involved in monitoring and controlling the trade in endangered species (CITES) are included.

### *Spending on international aid as part of wider initiatives*

A number of relevant programmes have been identified and allocated to biodiversity. These schemes include Darwin and Darwin Plus (Defra), the Flagship Species Fund (Defra), the Global Opportunities Fund (FCO) and ODA by way of contributions to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (DfID and since 2017/2018, Defra and since 2021/2022 FCDO). Given the broad coverage of the latter, an assumption is made that 33% of the payments relate to biodiversity. The irregular timing of payments to the GEF also mean that the values reported in this indicator can vary considerably from one year to the next. There are years where no payments are reported and there are years where two payments are reported. Elsewhere within this indicator, payments such as these would be allocated to the

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appropriate year on an accruals basis, thereby smoothing out any peaks and troughs. Payments to the GEF, however, are recorded with HM Treasury as ODA at the time they are made rather than the period they relate to so it is not possible to apply an accruals approach here.

### *Spending by police forces on Wildlife Crime Units*

The only Wildlife Crime Units are the National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit in the National Criminal Intelligence Service, mainly funded by Defra, and the Wildlife Crime Unit in the Metropolitan Police.

Other police forces do have individuals who are wildlife crime leads in their area; in some cases these may be referred to as units. Some officers work full time as wildlife crime officers, others incorporate wildlife crime duties in with work on other crime issues. No estimates of these costs are made.

Spending by the Metropolitan Police is difficult to capture as no separate budgets for wildlife crime were allocated until 2004/2005. Costs noted are estimated staff costs supplied by the Metropolitan Police. Spending in earlier years is assumed to be negligible on the understanding that prior to 2004/2005 much of the work was either carried out in the individuals' own time or while they were engaged in other duties.

## Financing issues

### *EU funding of UK biodiversity*

Financing from the EU, for example, funding to agri-environment schemes, is included in this indicator so total figures are for spending on UK biodiversity irrespective of which public body the money comes from.

### *National Lottery funding*

National Lottery funding from both the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the Big Lottery Fund is classified as government spending on the grounds that government bodies decide who and what to fund. The People's Postcode Lottery is not currently included.

## Areas of expenditure on biodiversity in the UK not currently included in this indicator

There are a number of areas where funding for biodiversity in the UK is not currently included in this indicator. Examples of this include spending on local nature reserves and nature conservation by local authorities. Where gaps are identified, they can only be resolved if robust data from reliable sources are available across the entire time series for that particular funding stream, otherwise the trend assessment (particularly over the long term) will be affected.

### Areas of expenditure on international biodiversity not currently included in this indicator

The 2023 iteration of this indicator captures the international financial flows most closely associated with the conservation of biodiversity. However, there are additional funding streams that contribute to the achievement of Aichi targets that have not been captured to date. For example, the UK is a world leader in research including that on the natural environment. Whilst this research demonstrates progress towards target 19 as well as underpinning action to achieve the Aichi targets more broadly, not all of it is captured within the figures. The UK is currently reviewing its reporting of international biodiversity financial flows, and aims to provide this additional information in future reports. Again, omissions from the international indicator can only be resolved if robust data from reliable sources are available across the entire time series for that particular funding stream.

### Assumptions and adjustments made to the data

Where the relevant data are available, expenditure figures relating to biodiversity protection are separated out from general environmental spending. When this breakdown is not possible, estimates are made as to how much of the total spending can be attributed towards biodiversity protection. These estimates are mostly made through contacts within the organisations concerned, ideally by the person responsible for the relevant programme.

Although this process should mean that all relevant spending is captured, it does mean that we are sometimes dependent upon expert judgment which can have limitations. The process by which experts arrive at their judgment may not be documented, and subsequent assessments may not be made on a consistent basis. Also, these experts may have a different view of what constitutes spending on biodiversity and hence the estimates they supply may not always be directly comparable. We do try to maintain consistency by asking experts to explain/justify the reasons for any change in the estimated proportion of spend going on biodiversity.

There are a few cases where it has not been possible to obtain an expert view of the biodiversity-related proportion of the total spend of a scheme. In these cases, a judgment has been made based on the description of the scheme's priorities.

Where possible, the data included in this indicator are reported on a financial year basis; however, contributions to the GEF and other ODA expenditure are reported by calendar year. For the purpose of this indicator, they have been allocated to the financial year beginning in each relevant calendar year, for example, 2021 data are included in 2021/2022.

### Indicator assessment

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator is a measure of general inflation in the domestic economy – it captures the price changes over a period of time. The deflator is expressed in terms of an index number. It is used here to convert historic prices into constant prices, thereby adjusting for the effects of inflation and allowing



meaningful comparisons to be made between biodiversity expenditure in different years. The base year is always set to the most recent year of data available in the time series, therefore, data presented in the current publication are not directly comparable to those in previous publications because a new deflator is used to prepare each annual update.

Once the time series for each UK public sector spend indicator (domestic and international) has been deflated, assessments are made by comparing the difference between the value of the measure in the base year and the value in the end year against a 3% 'rule of thumb' threshold. A 3-year average is used to calculate the base year, to reduce the likelihood of any unusual year(s) unduly influencing the assessment.

Where the indicator value has changed by less than the threshold of 3%, the traffic light will be set at amber, otherwise it will be set at either red (decreasing) or green (increasing). The choice of 3% as the threshold is arbitrary but is commonly used across other government indicators; the use of this approach will be kept under review.

The traffic lights only reflect the overall change in the measure from the base year to latest year and do not reflect fluctuations during the intervening years. Two assessment periods have been used for both UK public sector expenditure measures:

1. Long-term – an assessment of change since the earliest date for which data are available (2000/2001 for the domestic measure and 2001/2002 for the international measure), and
2. Short-term – an assessment of change over the latest five years.

The public sector expenditure indicators also have a third marker showing the direction of change in the latest year. This period is too short for any meaningful assessment to be made. However, when the change exceeds a 1% threshold, the direction of this change is given simply as an acknowledgement of very recent trends and as a possible early indication of emerging trends.

### Indicator revisions: UK

#### *The Community Forests*

The expenditure on biodiversity by the Community Forest that was previously included in the domestic measure was removed from the entire time series as part of the 2019 update. This was due to concerns over the continuity of reporting across all years. Compared to the figures reported in 2018 and those that would have been reported at the time, this revision resulted in real-term reductions to reported annual expenditure of between £19.2 million in 2000/2001 and less than £1 million in 2015/2016 to 2017/2018 (all figures given in 2017/2018 prices).

#### *Agri\_environment schemes*

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Historical funding made available to farmers and land managers in the UK through agri-environment schemes was revised during the 2019 update. The percentage of this funding that is considered to be of benefit to biodiversity was also revised. Funding through these schemes in the four countries is now more closely aligned with the figures reported in '[Agriculture in the United Kingdom](#)' although some inconsistencies still exist because of differences in reporting years (financial in the Biodiversity Indicators and calendar in Agriculture in the United Kingdom); the treatment of payments for capital items; and the proportions of this funding considered to be of benefit to biodiversity.

Up to and including the 2018 indicator publication, the percentage of funding made available through agri-environment schemes in England that was considered of benefit to biodiversity and hence included in this indicator was 70% between 2000/2001 and 2010/2011 and 55% between 2011/2012 and 2016/2017. These estimates were revised during the 2019 update and the 70% assumption is now applied consistently across the entire time series from 2000/2001 through to the current publication.

At the time these changes were made, they resulted in real-term increases in the indicator of between £4 million and £9 million in the earlier years of the time series (2000/2001 to 2005/2006); £6 million and £33 million in the middle years (2006/2007 to 2010/2011) and £71 million to £99 million in the later years (2011/2012 to 2016/2017) when compared to the figures reported in the 2018 publication (all figures given in 2017/2018 prices).

### Indicator revisions: international

#### *ODA funding for projects of benefit to biodiversity and forestry*

Additional ODA funding for projects of benefit to biodiversity and forestry were included in the international measure for the first time during the 2019 update of this indicator. Given the length of the time series, figures for annual expenditure on these projects were gathered from different sources: first, from data submitted to the OECD for 2002 (2002/2003) to 2005 (2005/2006) and second, from the figures reported to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) for 2006 (2006/2007) to 2016 (2016/2017). Data for 2002 to 2005 were sourced in US dollars and converted in to pounds sterling using mid-year exchange rates from HM Revenue & Customs. Some judgement was employed in order to identify the relevant biodiversity and forestry related elements of the total ODA expenditure. Estimates based on the mean of 2002 to 2005 data were used in 2001 (2001/2002) and the time series was shortened by one year in order to overcome the issues of missing data in 2000 (2000/2001). ODA expenditure for 2017 that were due to be reported to the CBD in the final quarter of 2019 were also included in the indicator for 2017/2018.

ODA funding for biodiversity and forestry related projects shows considerable year-on-year variation and given the magnitude of these payments, has a noticeable knock-on effect on the final indicator values. One reason for this is that ODA funding reported in a particular year may relate to multi-year projects. Elsewhere within this indicator, payments such as these would be allocated to the appropriate

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year on an accruals basis, thereby smoothing out any peaks and troughs. However, like GEF funding, other ODA payments are recorded with HM Treasury at the time they are made rather than the period they relate to, so it is not possible to apply an accruals approach here either.

At the time, compared to the 2018 publication, including this additional ODA funding resulted in real-term increases in the total figures for expenditure on international biodiversity across the entire time series. The magnitude of these increases ranged from £13 million in 2008/2009 to £143 million in 2015/2016 (in 2017/2018 prices). While temporarily put on hold for the 2020 and 2021 updates, it is hoped that future development work will lead to improvements in the overall accuracy of these estimates.

### Latest year's change in indicator value: UK

Public sector spending on UK biodiversity increased from £306 million in 2000/2001 to a peak of £757 million in 2013/2014 (in 2021/2022 prices) (Figure E2i). The figure then fell over the next four years to a low of £518 million before increasing again to £729 million in 2021/2022 real-term prices. This latest figure is 41% higher than it was in 2017/2018 and more than twice the level of spending in 2000/2001 when the time series began.

Funding made available to farmers and land managers under agri-environment schemes account for 52% in 2021/2022 of annual public sector spending on biodiversity in the UK and in 2021/2022, total expenditure apportioned to this indicator under these schemes increased by £21 million. This increase reflects the increases seen in the number of agreements and area of land under agri-environmental schemes.

The remainder of the observed increase in this year's indicator is largely due to increased contributions from the Forestry Commission. The Forestry Commission's expenditure on biodiversity accounted for 20% of annual public sector spending on biodiversity in the UK, and in 2021/2022, total expenditure increased by £21 million.

### Latest year's change in indicator value: international

Real-term public sector spending on international biodiversity increased from £176 million in 2020/2021 to £225 million in 2021/2022 (in 2021/2022 prices), a latest-year increase of 28%. Annual changes in this measure are influenced greatly by the irregular nature of (i) contributions to the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and (ii) other Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. As previously noted, it is not possible to apply the accruals approach here because of the way that these payments are recorded with HM Treasury as ODA at the time they are made rather than the period they relate to.

### Bibliography

Environmental expenditure statistics, General Government and Specialised Producers data collection handbook, 2007 edition. Eurostat Methodologies and Working papers.

### Further information

Further details on the methodology used for this indicator are available from Defra Environment Statistics: [enviro.statistics@defra.gov.uk](mailto:enviro.statistics@defra.gov.uk). The lead statistician is Clare Betts (Defra).

Email: [clare.betts@defra.gov.uk](mailto:clare.betts@defra.gov.uk)

Phone: 020 8026 3984

### Glossary

Cefas	The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
DfID	Department for International Development
FC	Forestry Commission
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office
FCO	Foreign and Commonwealth Office
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
MOD	Ministry of Defence
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OTEP	Overseas Territories Environmental Programme
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

### Organisations included in the public sector indicators

Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs – Northern Ireland

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

Environment Agency

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

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Forest Research

Forest Service – Northern Ireland

National Lottery Heritage Fund

Highways Agency

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Royal Botanical Gardens, Kew

Landfill Tax Credit Scheme

Met Police Wildlife Crime Unit

Ministry of Defence

Natural England

Natural Resources Wales

NatureScot

Northern Ireland Environment Agency

Royal Botanical Gardens Edinburgh

Scottish Environment Protection Agency

Scottish Government

The Big Lottery Fund

Welsh Assembly

## Section 2: Non-governmental organisation spending

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### Background

Prior to 2014, the expenditure indicator included in the Biodiversity Indicators publications only covered public sector expenditure, and so did not fully represent total expenditure on biodiversity. In 2014, Defra statisticians developed an additional measure of non-governmental organisation (NGO) spend on biodiversity (net of government funded spend). NGO support for and action on biodiversity is vitally important; capturing the contribution of NGOs is a key element of tracking the UK's conservation efforts. In addition, this new measure is likely to account for a large part of the funding from businesses and private individuals that is channelled through the NGOs. Including this source of expenditure will give a more complete picture of spending on UK biodiversity.

### Methodology

All total expenditure figures presented in this indicator are financial year (that is, April to March) data.

#### *NGO selection*

NGOs with a primarily biodiversity or nature focus were selected for inclusion in this indicator. Many of the NGOs selected are members of the organisation Wildlife and Countryside Link. Link is an umbrella body, whose purpose is to bring together voluntary organisations in the UK to protect and enhance wildlife, landscape and the marine environment. Focusing on Link members gives a suite of significant NGOs pre-selected for their focus on biodiversity and nature protection. In addition, 13 of the 47 Wildlife Trusts with the highest annual turnover in England and Scotland have been included in this indicator, as well as NGOs that are not

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members of Link, but have a biodiversity and/or nature focus (British Trust for Ornithology, The British Association for Shooting and Conservation and the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust).

A full list of organisations included in the indicator can be found at the end of this section. Organisations that focus on animal welfare or conduct the bulk of their work abroad are included, however expenditure by the three NGOs in the indicator providing the greatest financial contributions to biodiversity in other countries (RSPB, WWF-UK and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL)) has been adjusted accordingly.

### *Data collection*

To avoid placing reporting burdens on NGOs, data is collated predominantly from NGO published annual accounts/financial reports. Almost all of the NGOs included in this indicator are registered as charities and detailed annual financial reports are published on the [Charity Commission website](#). In a small number of cases data, or a more refined estimate of expenditure, is collected from the organisation directly, examples of this include the estimates used to apportion spend by the RSPB, WWF-UK and ZSL between work in the UK and work abroad.

For consistency with the public sector stream, staff costs associated with administrating biodiversity focused programmes are not included.

For the majority of NGOs, the total amount of money spent on 'Charitable Activities', documented in the 'Resources Expended' section of the 'Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities' (present in each NGO annual report) is used as a first estimate of annual biodiversity spend.

In practice, because biodiversity spending is not always separately identified within the available sources, or if a single expenditure item includes biodiversity and non-biodiversity elements, an aspect of judgment is sometimes required.

A further difficulty is that many expenditure items are designed to meet more than one policy objective: an example is tree planting, which promotes biodiversity but might be largely driven by a demand for landscaping. In practice, the assessment by relevant experts of the appropriate share of any spending which can be attributed to biodiversity needs to take into account issues such as the quality of conservation measures and the original intentions of the expenditure.

If organisations fail to supply data in a given year, estimates are made based on the mean of the previous three years data. For the 2023 publication, two organisations failed to supply data/apportionment of expenditure for 2021/2022: British Association of Conservation and Shooting and the ZSL.

### *Avoiding double counting of public sector grants*

It is necessary to avoid double counting of grants and other payments (for example, research contracts) coming from the government to NGOs, as these are already accounted for in the public sector stream of the indicator. Many NGOs list grants received and the value of these grants in their statement of financial

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activities. Where this is the case, it is possible to identify grant providers that are already in the public sector indicator and calculate the proportion of a NGO's total income that is from these organisations. The first estimate of the NGO's expenditure on biodiversity is multiplied by the proportion of total income not from these organisations in the appropriate year. This gives a final estimate of biodiversity expenditure funded from non-government sources for each NGO.

Itemised grants are not always available in the published accounts. In most of these cases, no correction is made to the NGO estimate of total expenditure as the contribution of the particular individual NGO to the total NGO spend is very small. In cases where the contribution of an NGO without grant information to the overall indicator is significant (more than 1% of the total expenditure), that organisation is contacted directly to obtain grant information, in order that their estimates of expenditure can be refined.

It has been assumed that grants and expenditure relate to the same time period.

### *Calculating total NGO expenditure*

Total NGO expenditure on biodiversity in the UK is calculated as the sum of the individual estimates of expenditure for all of the NGOs included in the indicator. At present, we have estimated NGO expenditure on biodiversity for 12 years, 2010/2011 through to 2021/2022. In keeping with the public sector strand of this indicator, final estimates of total NGO expenditure are deflated using the UK Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Deflator to ensure spend is expressed in real terms.

Given the time period covered by this indicator, it is inevitable that organisations will be restructured, funding streams will change and projects will come to an end and/or new projects will begin. Therefore, although every effort is made to consistently report annual expenditure, there are likely to be some differences in the coverage of the indicator from one year to the next.

Finally, given the limited number of NGOs included within this measure and the complexities involved in both defining and identifying relevant expenditure, the figures presented in this indicator are likely to be an underestimation of total biodiversity spend by UK NGOs. They do however provide a clear trend of expenditure on biodiversity in the UK since the beginning of 2010/2011

### *Spending on international biodiversity by NGOs*

Due to internal resource constraints, this work has been limited to domestic biodiversity expenditure in the first instance.

### **Indicator assessment**

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) deflator is a measure of general inflation in the domestic economy – it captures the price changes over a period of time. The deflator is expressed in terms of an index number. It is used here to convert historic prices into constant prices, thereby adjusting for the effects of inflation and allowing meaningful comparisons to be made between biodiversity expenditure in different



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years. The base year is always set to the most recent year of data available in the time series, therefore, data presented in the current publication are not directly comparable to those in previous publications because a new deflator is used to prepare each annual update.

Once the time series for the NGO spend indicator has been deflated, assessments are made by comparing the difference between the value of the measure in the base year and the value in the end year against a 3% 'rule of thumb' threshold. A three-year average is used to calculate the base year, to reduce the likelihood of any unusual year(s) unduly influencing the assessment.

Where the indicator value has changed by less than the threshold of 3%, the traffic light will be set at amber, otherwise it will be set at either red (decreasing) or green (increasing). The choice of 3% as the threshold is arbitrary but is commonly used across other government indicators; the use of this approach will be kept under review.

The traffic lights only reflect the overall change in the measure from the base year to latest year and do not reflect fluctuations during the intervening years. Two assessment periods have been used for the NGO expenditure measure:

1. Long-term – an assessment of change since the earliest date for which data are available (2010/2011), and
2. Short-term – an assessment of change over the latest five years.

The NGO spend indicator also has a third marker showing the direction of change in the latest year. This period is too short for any meaningful assessment to be made. However, when the change exceeds a 1% threshold, the direction of this change is given simply as an acknowledgement of very recent trends and as a possible early indication of emerging trends.

### Latest year's change in indicator value

Spending on biodiversity in the UK by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) with a focus on biodiversity and/or nature conservation was £307 million (net of government funding) in 2021/2022. This figure represents a real-term increase of 47% since the time series began in 2010/2011, and real-term increases of 16% over the last five years and 27% in the latest year for which data have been compiled.

The observed increase in NGO spend on UK biodiversity in 2021/2022 is largely due to increases in expenditure by The National Trust and The Woodland Trust. Both organisations increased real-term expenditure in 2021/2022 due to a loosening of government guidelines around the COVID-19 pandemic. For The National Trust, real-term expenditure apportioned to this indicator increased by almost 87% (£20 million) in 2021/2022. And for The Woodland Trust, they also reported an increase in their real-term expenditure of 29% (£12 million) in 2021/2022.

### Further information

Further details on the methodology used for this indicator are available from Defra Environment Statistics: [enviro.statistics@defra.gov.uk](mailto:enviro.statistics@defra.gov.uk). The lead statistician is Clare Betts (Defra).

Email: [clare.betts@defra.gov.uk](mailto:clare.betts@defra.gov.uk).

Phone: 020 8026 3984

### NGOs included in the indicator

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust

Badger Trust

Bat Conservation trust

British Association for Shooting and Conservation

British Trust for Ornithology

Buglife

Bumblebee Conservation Trust

Butterfly Conservation

ClientEarth

Freshwater Habitats Trust

Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust

Hawk and Owl Trust

The Mammal Society

Marine Conservation Society

MARINElife

National Trust

Plantlife

People's Trust for Endangered Species

The Rivers Trust

RSPB

Salmon & Trout Association

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The Shark Trust

Whale and Dolphin Conservation

Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

The Woodland Trust

WWF – UK

Zoological Society of London (ZSL)

Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts

Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Essex Wildlife Trust

Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire & Northamptonshire

The Lancashire Wildlife Trust

Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Dorset Wildlife Trust

Surrey Wildlife Trust

Hampshire & Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

Devon Wildlife Trust

Scottish Wildlife Trust

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust

Wiltshire Wildlife Trust