

Policy Context

The Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan 2016 – 2026 has been developed to contribute to the delivery of Scottish, UK and European policies, plans and strategies. This section will be updated in 2020 but as at publication the following will be taken into consideration:

UK Biodiversity Framework

The UK Biodiversity Framework has succeeded the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and there is now a strong National level focus. The Scottish Biodiversity List contributes to the overall 'All UK BAP Species' list.

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy – The 2020 Challenge

Aichi Targets set in 2011 by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity aim to halt the loss of biodiversity and to restore the essential services that healthy ecosystems provide. Scotland's response to the EU's Biodiversity Strategy for 2020 is the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy '2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity'.

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004

The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a duty on public bodies to further the conservation of biodiversity, not just in specific protected sites, but connecting people with the environment and managing biodiversity in the wider environment around us. The Act also increased protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), amended legislation on Nature Conservation Orders, required the preparation of a Scottish Fossil Code (published 2008) and strengthened wildlife enforcement legislation.

The Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan is a means to fulfilling the statutory duty placed by the Act on all public bodies in encouraging staff to further the conservation of biodiversity by positively managing their environment and interaction with biodiversity.

Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011

The Scottish Government enacted the WANE Act to make the law on wildlife and the natural environment more efficient, effective and proportionate. The Act supports animal welfare issues, the management of invasive non-native species, the administration of species licensing, and sustainable economic activity, particularly in the countryside.

The WANE Act also introduced a requirement for all public bodies to make publicly available a report on their compliance with the Biodiversity Duty which was enshrined in the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. The reports are to be prepared every three years; the first reports were made available online in January 2015.

The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010

Competing demands on Scotland's seas led to the enactment of the Marine (Scotland) Act which places a duty to protect and enhance the marine environment. Marine conservation is a key measure which aims to improve marine nature and historic conservation with new powers to protect and manage areas of importance for marine wildlife and habitats.

Statutory Designated Sites

Tayside is home to many designated sites. Qualifying features, which can be habitats or species, are protected through a range of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Natura sites which are a network of European protected areas – Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Water Framework Directive

The EU legislative Water Framework Directive (WFD) came into force in 2000 to improve and protect the water environment with a focus on catchment-scale systems. The WFD required the production of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) covering all types of water body. The Tay RBMP is integral to the area covered by the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan and a second, and possibly third RBMP will come into force during the lifetime of this Plan.

Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

Climate change is a recognised threat to biodiversity and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act has set Scotland's targets to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 80 per cent by 2050. There is an interim target of 42 per cent by 2020. Adaptation is central to the delivery of strategies to limit biodiversity loss.

Scottish Land Use Strategy

The Scottish Land Use Strategy 2016-2021 is a key commitment of Section 57 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. It will be reviewed every five years and provides a strategic framework that addresses how we can sustainably manage land in Scotland. Public sector bodies are expected to take a leading role by developing and

implementing plans and strategies that utilise its core principles. Partnership working is seen as key and the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan will be the main driver of biodiversity action in relation to the Strategy.

Scottish Forestry Strategy

The core principles of the Scottish Forestry Strategy are based on sustainable development and social inclusion, achieved through a culture of 'forestry for and with people' and delivered in well-managed forests and woodlands that integrate effectively with other land uses and businesses. The Scottish Forestry Strategy Implementation Plan 2015-18 includes background details to the Forestry Indicators and their progress.

Scotland Rural Development Programme and Agricultural Policy

Funding opportunities identified in the 2014-2020 SRDP and any subsequent programmes may provide opportunities to deliver Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan project work - particularly in upland and farmland settings. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has wide-ranging benefits to Scotland and our rural communities, and may support habitat creation and enhancement as well as species conservation.

National Outcomes – The Scottish Government

There are a series of National Outcomes which help sharpen the focus of government and provide a clear structure for delivery. Three Outcomes relevant to the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan include the built and natural environment, local and global environmental impact, and strong, resilient and supportive communities. Many of the 55 National Indicators are also relevant. Delivering the Tayside Biodiversity Action Plan will directly contribute to the delivery of Scottish Government and Local Outcome Improvement Plans (currently being developed to supersede local Single Outcome Agreement).

The Scottish Biodiversity List

The Scottish Biodiversity List is a spreadsheet of species and habitats that Scottish Ministers consider to be of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland. It has been updated to take into account the review of the original UKBAP Priorities list. The purpose of the list is to help public bodies undertake their Biodiversity Duty but it is also a useful source of information for anyone interested in nature conservation in Scotland.

A spreadsheet containing a simple listing of the habitats and species is available on the Scottish Government website:
<http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Environment/Wildlife-Habitats/16118/Biodiversitylist/SBL>. This includes land and freshwater species; land and freshwater habitats; marine species and habitats.

A version which includes Categories of Action is currently being prepared by Scottish Natural Heritage:

- Conservation action needed (which includes the habitats and species in most urgent need of conservation action);
- Avoiding negative impacts: this includes three categories - protected species or habitats, rare or restricted distribution, and significant decline;
- Watching brief only which includes two categories - on the UKBAP list but not considered to be at particular risk in Scotland; species with international obligations not picked up in the other categories for action.

It is hoped a Tayside version will also become available during the life of this Action Plan. There is the original Tayside Priority Species list in the 1st Edition, but the data has not been updated since the 1999 Tayside biodiversity audit. Working with our Partners and the Tayside Recorders' Forum a Tayside Biodiversity List will be prepared in the short-term and featured on the website.