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State of Nature Report 2019

Friday 4th October 2019

Report shows dramatic decline in UK wildlife with 1 in 7 species threatened with extinction

No let-up in net loss of Wales' nature

The UK's wildlife continues to decline according to the State of Nature 2019 report. The latest findings show that since rigorous scientific monitoring began in the 1970s there has been a 13% decline in average abundance across wildlife studied and that the declines continue unabated.

Following the State of Nature reports in 2013 and 2016, leading professionals from more than 70 wildlife organisations have joined with government agencies for the first time, to present the clearest picture to date of the status of our species across land and sea.

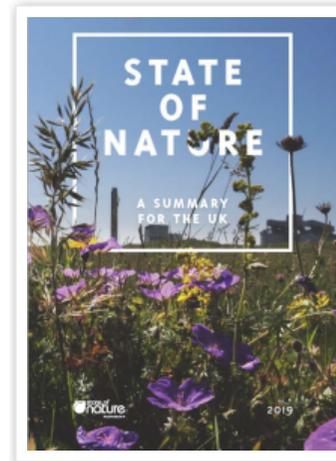
The State of Nature 2019 report reveals that one in six species assessed in Wales are at risk of extinction, this shocking finding can only be addressed through immediate action on a significant scale. The report also reveals that 41% of UK species studied have declined, 26% have increased and 33% shown little change since 1970, while 133 species assessed have already been lost from our shores since 1500.

Much is known about the causes of decline and about some of the ways in which we could reduce impacts and help struggling species. The evidence from the last 50 years shows that significant and ongoing changes in the way we manage our land for agriculture, and the ongoing effects of climate change are having the biggest impacts on nature.

Pollution is also a major issue. Whilst emissions of many pollutants have been reduced dramatically in recent decades, pollution continues to have a severe impact on the UK's sensitive habitats and freshwaters, and new pollutant threats are continuing to emerge.

Daniel Hayhow, lead author on the report, said: "We know more about the UK's wildlife than any other country on the planet, and what it is telling us should make us sit up and listen. We need to respond more urgently across the board if we are to put nature back where it belongs. Governments, conservation groups and individuals must continue to work together to help restore our land and sea for wildlife and people in a way that is both ambitious and inspiring for future generations"

"In this report we have drawn on the best available data on the UK's biodiversity, produced by partnerships between conservation NGOs, research institutes, UK and national governments, and thousands of dedicated volunteers. It's through working together that we can help nature recover but the battle must intensify."



by 40% since 2000. However, public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, as a proportion of GDP, has fallen by 42% since a peak in 2008/09.

Rachel Sharp, CEO of Wildlife Trusts Wales said "Nature is in big trouble but we know how to bring it back. We need to invest in nature's recovery, restore natural habitats and join up our last remaining wild places by creating vital new habitats in our towns, cities and countryside. It's also time to make nature a normal part of childhood again and restore wildlife so it can recover and thrive across urban jungles and the countryside once more – where it can be part of people's daily lives."

We need to work with Welsh Government to ensure the following urgent actions are taken to restore nature in Wales:

- Put nature at the heart of Government
As well as increasing direct investment in nature conservation, reversing nature's collapse will require government departments and public bodies working together to change systems and ensure all sectors take action. We know the Welsh Government is taking steps in this direction and hope to see evidence of how biodiversity recovery is included in Welsh Government's budget later this year.
- Retain and enhance environmental protections derived from the EU – We are looking to Welsh Government to continue to show leadership on the global stage, through delivering and bolstering its unique environment and sustainability laws. This means making sure Brexit doesn't leave the environment poorer by ensuring environmental protections are maintained and enhanced, and by creating a strong watchdog to champion and enforce delivery. It also means legislating for binding nature targets at home, to ensure the current and future Welsh Governments take transformative action to drive nature's recovery.
- Ensure our land is managed to support nature's recovery -

The State of Nature 2019 report is clear that agricultural land-use change has been a key driver of nature's decline, and farmland wildlife is among Wales' most vulnerable. Urgent action is needed to save iconic species such as the curlew and black grouse, and Welsh Government's current work to design a new system of farm support presents a unique opportunity to reverse these declines. It's a chance to replace inadequate policies of the past with something that will help Welsh farmers and other land managers respond to today's environmental challenge and contribute to the well-being of our own and future generations. We believe that using taxpayers' money to pay farmers and land managers for delivering public goods like clean water, clean air, carbon storage and wildlife, while supporting sustainable food production, is critical to turning around nature's decline.

• Invest in nature conservation on land and at sea:– the State of Nature 2019 report highlights that public sector expenditure on biodiversity in the UK, has fallen by 34% since 2008/09. In Wales funding in the form of grants from public bodies for biodiversity interventions has been dramatically reduced or where available has become more competitive and more challenging to obtain. We need to see an upscaling of direct conservation action, such as the designation, monitoring and management of our protected sites on land and at sea. These are some of the jewels in the crown for nature but recent reports show that many are degraded (e.g. the 2016 State of Natural Resources Report showed that roughly three quarters of habitats within Special Areas of Conservation were in unfavourable condition). They need to be better protected and managed, as well as expanded and connected so that they provide the foundation of resilient ecological networks. Improving the condition of terrestrial and marine habitats is not only a critical step in reversing nature's decline, but also in addressing the climate emergency – as healthy habitats store more carbon

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Filename	File size
summary_uk_son_report.pdf	1.87 MB
summary_wales_son_report.pdf	1.27 MB
son_wales_infographic.pdf	362.41 KB



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