



Kent Biodiversity 2020 and beyond – a strategy for the natural environment 2015-2025

Introduction

Action for the natural environment in Kent and Medway will be delivered by many organisations and individuals across all sectors. The Kent Nature Partnership, advised by all partners involved in delivering action, identifies the priorities for the natural environment in Kent and Medway, co-ordinates, facilitates and supports work that contributes to the objectives of the Strategic Framework for the Natural Environment, and ensures that this work is reported to capture the contribution that is being made in Kent and Medway to the England Biodiversity Strategy.

A Vision for Biodiversity in Kent and Medway

By 2050 our land and seas will be rich in wildlife, our biodiversity will be conserved, restored, managed sustainably and be more resilient and able to adapt to change and will be enjoyed and valued by all, underpinning our long-term economic, social and personal wellbeing

Our Biodiversity 2020 Mission

To halt overall biodiversity loss in Kent and Medway, and to contribute to the conservation of national and global biodiversity, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people.

This will be achieved through the delivery of four outcomes.

Outcome 1 – Habitats and ecosystems on land (including freshwater environments)

By 2020 measures will be in place so that biodiversity is maintained and enhanced, further degradation has been halted and where possible restoration is underway, helping deliver more resilient and coherent ecological networks, healthy and well-functioning ecosystems, which deliver multiple benefits for wildlife and people. This includes:

- **1A.** Better wildlife habitats in the county, with 70% of Local Wildlife Sites in favourable condition and at least 90% of Local Wildlife Sites in favourable or recovering condition, at least 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition, while maintaining at least 95% in favourable or recovering condition.
- **1B.** More, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats of 10,260 ha.
- **1C.** By 2020, at least 17% of land and inland water, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, conserved through effective, integrated and joined up approaches to safeguard biodiversity and ecosystem services, including through management of our existing systems of protected areas and the establishment of nature improvement areas.
- **1D.** Restoring at least 15% of degraded ecosystems as a contribution to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

Outcome 2 – Marine habitats, ecosystems and fisheries

By 2020 we will have put in place measures so that biodiversity is maintained, further degradation has been halted and where possible restoration is underway, helping deliver good environmental status and our vision of clean, healthy, safe productive and biologically diverse oceans and seas. This will be underpinned by the following:

- **2A.** By the end of 2016 in excess of 25% of waters around Kent and Medway will be contained in a well-managed Marine Protected Area network that helps deliver ecological coherence by conserving representative marine habitats that are nationally and internationally important. This target should not include the area already covered by the Outer Thames SPA.
- **2B.** By 2020 we will be managing fish stocks sustainably and harvesting fish in a non-environmentally damaging way.
- **2C.** By 2022 the marine plans for Kent and Medway's marine area will include policies that ensure the sustainable development of our seas, integrating economic growth with social need and ecosystem management.

Outcome 3 – Species

By 2020, we will see an overall improvement in the status of our wildlife and will have prevented further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species. This includes:

- **3A.** Fewer species on Kent’s red list: 10% of species on Kent’s red list removed as they are no longer under threat of extinction.
- **3B.** More, bigger and less fragmented areas for key species of conservation concern in Kent; with no net loss of habitat that supports priority species and an increase in the overall extent of such habitats.
- **3C.** By 2020, landscape scale initiatives that address the conservation of key species, through effective, integrated and joined up approaches including through management of our existing systems of protected areas and the establishment of nature improvement areas, in place on 17% of land and water.

Outcome 4 – People

By 2020, significantly more people will be engaged in biodiversity issues, aware of its value and taking positive action. This includes:

- **4A.** An increase in the number of people engaging in health initiatives that bring them into contact with the natural environment.
- **4B.** Steps have been taken to put the value of nature at the heart of decision making in Kent and Medway, reflecting the economic value of the natural environment in the decisions that each of us – businesses, government and individuals – make.
- **4C.** An increase in the number of people volunteering to take action that benefits biodiversity.

Priorities for the Natural Environment in Kent and Medway

There are 35 habitat types that are in urgent need of conservation in Kent and Medway, all of which are nationally important and some of which are rare and threatened on a global scale. Objectives and targets for their conservation are set out in Appendix I.

A Spatial Plan for Delivery

Figure 1 provides an overview of the spatial plan for the delivery of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy, which will establish resilient ecological networks in Kent and Medway, on land and sea. The plan indicates where the delivery of Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets should be focused in order to secure the maximum biodiversity benefits. The darker areas show the existing extent of priority habitat; this is Kent and Medway's core biodiversity and the aim in these areas is to manage sites better, so that they support the best biodiversity possible. Restoring and creating habitat in the shaded areas around these will extend and buffer the core areas, creating bigger, more resilient areas of habitat. Managing land in the shaded area to benefit biodiversity, alongside the existing land use, will help to link habitats and create ecologically functioning networks.

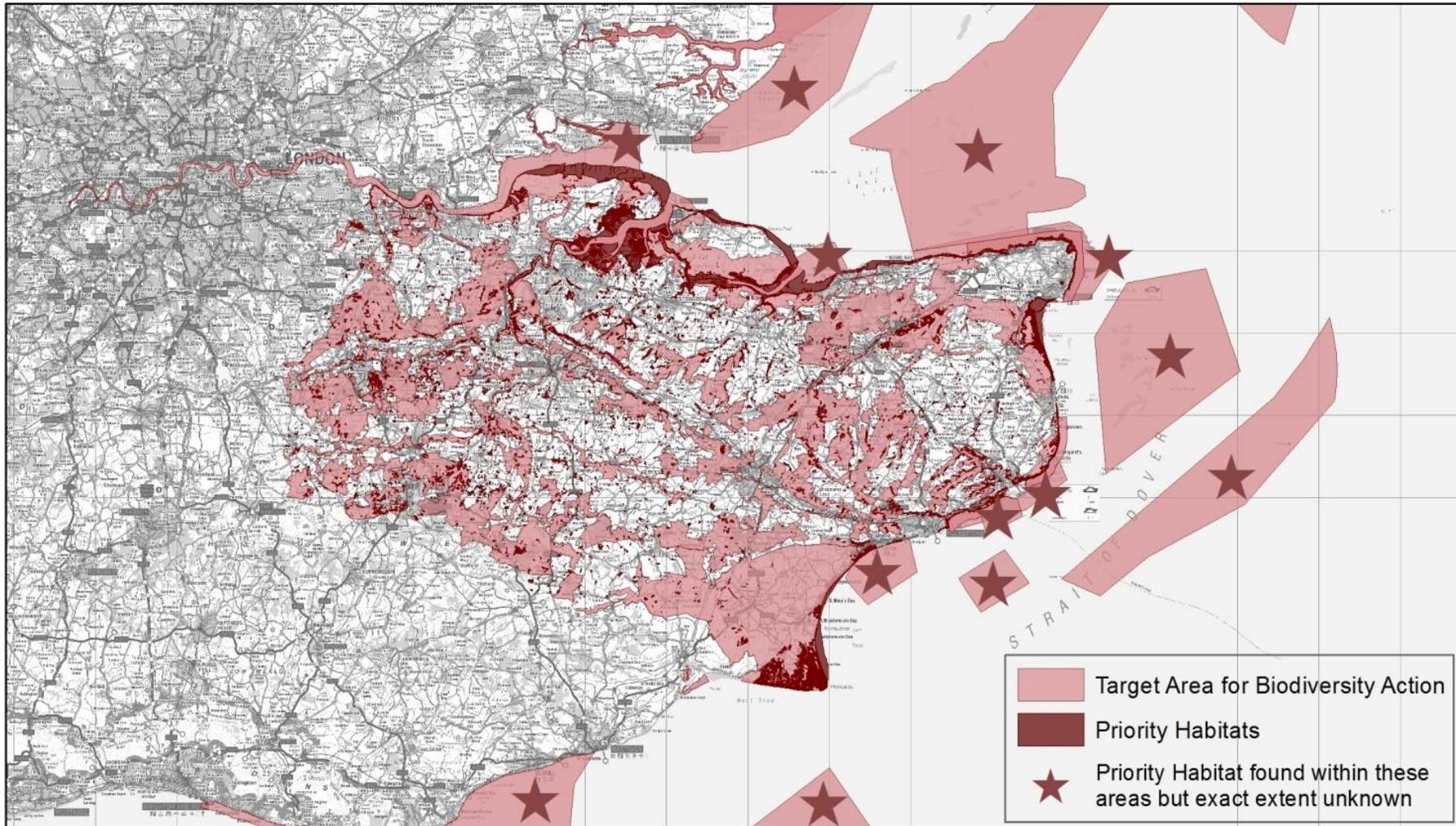
In the marine environment, our knowledge of habitat extent is less advanced. Priority habitats (features of conservation interest) are known to occur throughout these areas, although detailed mapping is still to be completed. The priority for these areas is protection of the habitat.

The terrestrial network has been divided into sections, known as Biodiversity Opportunity Areas. Targets have been set up to 2015 for maintaining, enhancing, restoring and creating habitats occurring in each Biodiversity Opportunity Area and for species conservation. Targets to 2020 are currently being reviewed and updated.

This map should not be seen as a planning constraint map. It is not intended or proposed that nature conservation becomes the primary land-use within the target areas, so long as the targets and objectives for each area can be met. Development of any kind is not precluded; however, consideration might in some cases need to be given to ensuring that development within the network did not significantly increase the fragmentation of wildlife habitats within target areas or neutralize significant opportunities for habitat restoration or recreation.

The areas outside the identified network still have substantial biodiversity interest. Although the focus of most biodiversity action should be within the network, it will still be necessary to maintain, enhance, buffer and extend areas of wildlife habitat outside the mapped areas in order to maintain the wildlife interest and richness of the wider countryside. Not all targets in the Strategy are easily spatially defined, and the Biodiversity Opportunity Area targets should be used in combination with targets for more widespread action.

Kent Biodiversity Strategy



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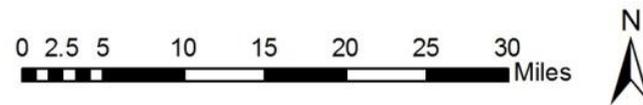


Figure 1. Kent Biodiversity Strategy: spatial plan for delivery

Updated 6.3.15

Appendix I

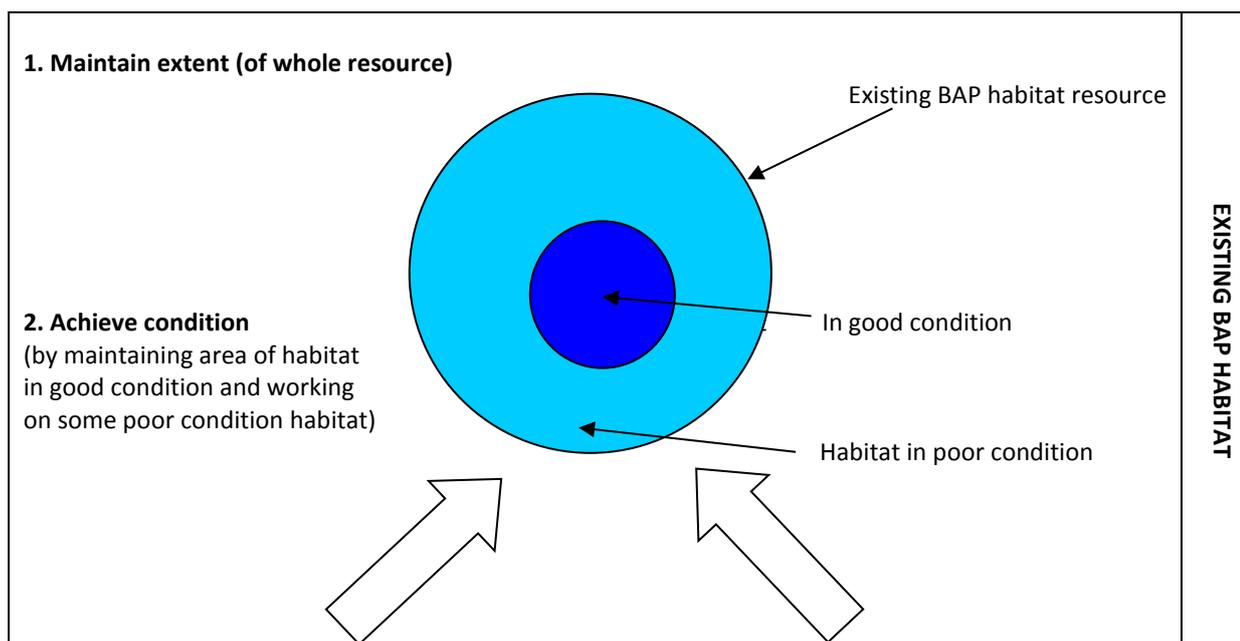
UK Priority habitats occurring in Kent

Targets are set for 2020, as Kent and Medway's contribution to the England Biodiversity Strategy (B2020). As recommended in the England Biodiversity strategy, targets for conservation of Kent's priority habitats are expressed as:

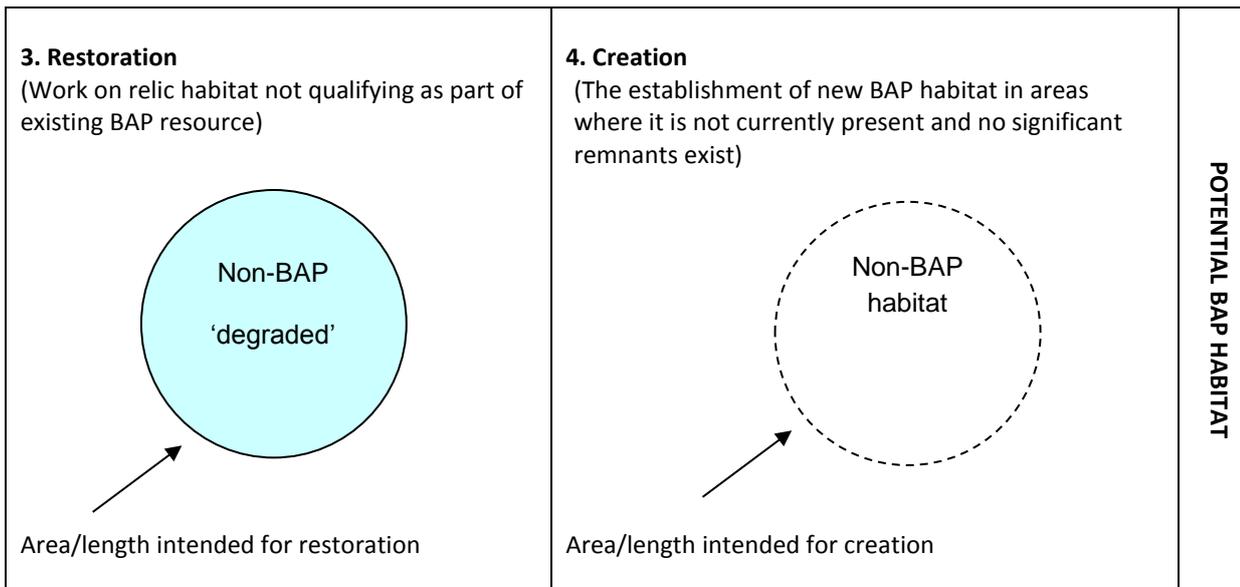
- maintaining the extent and achieving good condition of existing habitat,
- restoring degraded habitat to meet the criteria for the BAP priority habitat description¹ and
- creating new habitat (Figure 2).

Targets will be reviewed and revised in 2020, but as this process is complex, requiring reflection of national biodiversity strategy as well as input from a wide partnership, it can take a long time. Therefore continuation targets, to 2025, are provided in this document in order to bridge any gap between strategies.

Figure 2 Diagrammatic explanation of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat targeting. See Appendix II for further details.



¹ UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Priority Habitat Descriptions. BRIG (ed. Ant Maddock) 2008. (Updated 'HF 201) JNCC



Extent (i.e. baseline) is that recorded during the Kent Habitat Survey 2012 unless otherwise stated. For this survey, analysis of aerial photography was combined with field survey to define the habitats found within the county.

Targets set to maintain or achieve favourable or recovering condition are based on the extent of habitat found within designated sites: 100% of that found in SSSI, as there is a statutory obligation to implement conservation management on such sites, plus, by 2020, 25% of the habitat found in Local Wildlife Sites, as mechanisms exist for encouraging landowners to manage these sites for biodiversity. 2025 targets are calculated assuming that 100% of the habitat found in SSSI, plus 50% of that found in LWS, plus the extent of degraded habitat restored in the previous period, will be managed to achieve favourable or recovering condition.

Priority habitats are complex, and it may take many years for newly created habitats to meet the criteria that define BAP quality, therefore habitat creation targets cannot be reliably incorporated into future extent figures.

TERRESTRIAL HABITATS

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (Champion = Forestry Commission)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		153 ha	176 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		109 ha	143 ha
Restore		23 ha	11 ha
Create		12 ha	6 ha
Rationale to be added by Forestry Commission			

Wet Woodland (Champion = Forestry Commission)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		662 ha	761 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition of		253 ha	409 ha
Restore		99 ha	49 ha
Create		53 ha	26 ha
Rationale to be added by Forestry Commission			

Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland (Champion = Forestry Commission)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		613 ha	705 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		298 ha	428ha
Restore		92 ha	46 ha
Create		49 ha	25 ha
Rationale to be added by Forestry Commission			

Wood Pasture and Parkland (Champion = Forestry Commission)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		3176 ha	3652 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		501 ha	1105 ha
Restore		476 ha	238 ha
Create		254 ha	127 ha
Rationale to be added by Forestry Commission			

Traditional Orchard (Champion = Kent Countryside Management Partnerships)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		1676 ha	1692 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		8 ha	39 ha
Restore		16 ha	8 ha

Create	134 ha	67 ha
Rationale to be added by KCMP		

Hedgerows (Champion = Kent Countryside Management Partnerships)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		11,734 km	14,734 ha
Maintain in favourable condition		11,734 km	13,234km
Restore		1500 km	750 km
Create		1500 km	750 km
It can be interpolated from Kent Habitat Survey data 2012 that there are some 14,905 km of hedgerows and lines of trees habitat (combined) in Kent. Earlier studies from UKBAP in 2007 have determined that 42% of hedgerows <u>may</u> be Species Rich and Ancient. Therefore if just hedgerow data (LF11) are used this equates to 11734km of hedgerow in Kent			

Arable Field Margins (Champion = Natural England)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		2,751 ha	
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition of		1,993 ha	x ha
Restore		x ha	x ha
Create		x ha	x ha
Rationale and targets to be added by NE			

Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land (Champion = KWT)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent Baseline <i>data not available</i>		Extent identified and biodiversity value reflected in decision making	Biodiversity value reflected in decision making
Restore		Management in place on 50% key sites	Management in place on 75% key sites
Create		Allow new habitat to establish to replace sites lost to development	Allow new habitat to establish to replace sites lost to development
The extent of this habitat is not known and a large area of the habitat is found on sites allocated for development, making targets to maintain it unrealistic and contentious. It is therefore proposed that the biodiversity of this priority habitat be conserved through qualitative actions, and progress on these actions reported through a "Red, Amber, Green" system.			

Lowland dry acid grassland (Champion = KWT)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		261 ha	300 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		145 ha	200 ha
Restore		39 ha	19 ha
Create		21 ha	10 ha
<p>Targets set for 2010 were not achieved. There has been a net loss of around 10% of this habitat since 2003. The 2020 target to maintain condition includes all of that found in SSSI and 25% within Local Wildlife Sites. Restoration targets will extend the total resource by 15% and creation targets will extend the total resource by a further 8%. The 2025 target to maintain condition includes all that found in SSSI and 50% of that within Local Wildlife Sites. The 2025 restore and create targets are cumulative, extending the current resource by a further 5% and 4% respectively. These targets do not include past, unrealised targets, but are based on current extent. Exceeding the targets is desirable.</p>			

Lowland meadow (Champion = KWT)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		457 ha	526 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		112 ha	267 ha
Restore		69 ha	34 ha
Create		37 ha	18 ha
<p>Targets set for 2010 were not achieved. There has been a net loss of around 17 % of this habitat since 2003. The 2020 target to maintain condition includes all of that found in SSSI and 25% within Local Wildlife Sites. Restoration targets will extend the total resource by 15% and creation targets will extend the total resource by a further 8%. The 2025 target to maintain condition includes all that found in SSSI and 50% of that within Local Wildlife Sites. The 2025 restore and create targets are cumulative, extending the current resource by a further 5% and 4% respectively. These targets do not include past, unrealised targets, but are based on current extent. Exceeding the targets is desirable.</p>			

Lowland Fen (Champion Kent Countryside Management Partnerships)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		12 ha	17 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		12 ha	17 ha
Restore		5 ha	3 ha
Create		1ha	No net loss

Rationale to be added by KCMP

Lowland calcareous grassland (Champion = NE)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		1159 ha	1623 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		544 ha	1111 ha
Restore		464 ha	232 ha
Create		232 ha	116 ha
Previous targets for extension were exceeded, but this was offset by habitat loss. The 2012 survey shows that whilst 20% gains were achieved, 10% of existing habitat was lost, giving a net gain of around 10%.			

Lowland heathland Including Purple moor grass and rush pasture (Champion = KWT)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		74 ha heathland, 11 ha purple moor grass and rush pasture	103 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		40 ha	70 ha
Restore		18 ha	9 ha
Create		7 ha	11 ha
Previous targets were exceeded, with significant restoration recorded. The 2012 habitat survey shows a net gain in heathland of 32%. The 2020 target to maintain condition includes all of that found in SSSI and 25% within Local Wildlife Sites. Restoration targets will extend the total resource by 25% and creation targets will extend the total resource by a further 10%. The 2025 target to maintain condition includes all that found in SSSI and 50% of that within Local Wildlife Sites. The 2025 restore and create targets are cumulative, extending the current resource by a further 10% and 5% respectively.			

Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh (Champion = RSPB)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		14,174 ha	16300 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition of		9,764 ha ¹	10,050 ha ²

Restore	500 ha ³	1,500 ha ⁴
Create	0 ⁵	0 ⁵
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Total area of SSSI grazing marsh is 10,050 ha. 7,589 ha are presently in Favourable condition. An additional 2,175 is in Unfavourable Recovering condition. The sum of these two condition assessment makes a reasonable target for 2020. 2. 100% of the SSSI area in favourable condition by 2025. 3. This figure comprises the habitat restoration that is realistic between now and 2020. This includes habitat creation at Higham Marsh, Harty Marshes, Lydden Valley, Seasalter Levels and the EA FCRM programme. 4. A realistic figure for habitat restoration between 2020-2025. 5. The most likely opportunities up to 2025 will be restoring existing grazing marsh. 		

Reedbeds (Champion = KWT)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		545 ha	736 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition of		401 ha	608 ha
Restore		191 ha	95 ha
Create		109 ha	ha
<p>Differences in survey methodology make comparison difficult. 20 ha of habitat was lost whilst 61 ha were gained, over half of which can be attributed to habitat creation. However, this falls far short of the target to extend the habitat by 190 ha by 2010. The 2020 target to maintain condition includes all of that found in SSSI and 25% within Local Wildlife Sites. Restoration targets will extend the total resource by 35% and creation targets will extend the total resource by a further 20%. The 2025 target to maintain condition includes all that found in SSSI and 50% of that within Local Wildlife Sites. The 2025 restore and create targets are cumulative, extending the current resource by a further 5% and 10% respectively. These targets do not include past, unrealised targets, but are based on current extent. Exceeding the targets is desirable.</p>			

Rivers, including chalk rivers (Champion = EA)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		6,592 ha	6592 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		434 ha	455 ha
Improve condition		21 ha	10 ha
Restore		No net loss	No net loss
Definitive Targets to be set once draft River Basin Management Plans are published			

Ponds	2020	2025
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(Champion = EA)			
Maintain current extent		Baseline <i>data to be compiled</i>	
Of this, maintain in favourable or recovering condition		tba	tba + 350
Restore		350 ponds	175
Create		300 ponds	150
Aligns with targets of Pond Conservation Trust.			

Maritime cliffs and slopes (Champion = NE)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		221 ha	257 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		184 ha	221 ha
Restore		36 ha	18 ha
Create		No net loss	No net loss
Rationale to be provided by NE			

Coastal sand dunes (Champion = NE)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		455 ha	476 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		434 ha	456 ha
Restore		21 ha	10 ha
Create		No net loss	No net loss
Rationale to be provided by NE			

Coastal vegetated shingle (Champion = NE)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		2,104 ha	2261 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		1907 ha	2101 ha

Restore	157 ha	78 ha
Create	No net loss	No net loss
Rationale to be provided by NE		

LITTORAL HABITATS

Coastal saltmarsh (Champion = EA)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		1338 ha	1392 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		1284 ha	1348 ha
Restore		54 ha	27 ha
Create		50 ha (shared with intertidal mud)	No net loss
Rationale to be provided by NE			

Intertidal mudflats (Champion = EA)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		10,078 ha	11713 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		8035 ha	9688 ha
Restore		1635 ha	817 ha
Create		50 ha (shared with saltmarsh)	No net loss
Rationale to be provided by EA			

MARINE HABITATS

Intertidal and sub tidal chalk (Champion = NE)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		415 ha intertidal + ? subtidal, (data still to be compiled)	
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition of,	Of this,	350 ha	350 ha

Rationale to be provided by NE		

Seagrass beds (Champion = EA)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		29 ha	30 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition		29 ha	30 ha
Restore		1 ha	1 ha
Create		No net loss	No net loss
Rationale to be provided by EA			

Intertidal Underboulder communities (Champion = KWT) Peat and Clay Exposures with Piddocks Champion = KWT)		2020	2025
Identify extent	In all designated and recommended MPAs		Key areas outside MPAs
Maintain extent Xin known locations	Maintain extent in MPAs		
Restore	100% in MPAs to be managed to allow recovery and expansion (where appropriate)		
Action for marine biodiversity lags behind that achieved on land: there are fewer protected areas providing a statutory mechanism for restoration (recovery) and information about distribution and status is incomplete, . It is therefore proposed that the biodiversity of this priority habitat be conserved through qualitative actions, and progress on these actions reported through a “Red, Amber, Green” system.			

Saline lagoons (Champion = RSPB)		2020	2025
Maintain current extent		286 ha	319 ha
Maintain in favourable or recovering condition of		253 ha	289 ha
Restore		33 ha	30 ha
Create		No net loss	No net loss
Rationale to be provided by RSPB			

Sheltered muddy gravels Subtidal sands and gravels (Champion = EA)		2020	2025
Identify extent	Maintain extent in MPAs		
Restore	100% in MPAs to be managed to allow recovery and expansion (where appropriate)		
Action for marine biodiversity lags behind that achieved on land: there are fewer protected areas providing a statutory mechanism for restoration (recovery) and information about distribution and status is incomplete, . It is therefore proposed that the biodiversity of this priority habitat be conserved through qualitative actions, and progress on these actions reported through a “Red, Amber, Green” system.			

<i>Sabellaria spinulosa</i> reefs (Champion = NE and/or KWT)		2020	2025
<i>Sabellaria alveolata</i> reefs (Champion = EA)			
Identify extent	In all designated and recommended MPAs	Key areas outside MPAs	
Maintain extent in known locations	Maintain extent in MPAs		
Restore	100% in MPAs to be managed to allow recovery and expansion (where appropriate)		
Action for marine biodiversity lags behind that achieved on land: there are fewer protected areas providing a statutory mechanism for restoration (recovery) and information about distribution and status is incomplete, . It is therefore proposed that the biodiversity of this priority habitat be conserved through qualitative actions, and progress on these actions reported through a “Red, Amber, Green” system.			

Blue Mussel Beds on Sediment (Champion = tba)		2020	2025
Identify extent	In all designated and recommended MPAs	Key areas outside MPAs	
Maintain extent in known locations	Maintain extent in MPAs		
Restore	100% in MPAs to be managed to allow recovery and expansion (where appropriate)		
Action for marine biodiversity lags behind that achieved on land: there are fewer protected areas providing a statutory mechanism for restoration (recovery) and information about distribution and status is incomplete, . It is therefore proposed that the biodiversity of this priority habitat be conserved through qualitative actions, and progress on these actions reported through a “Red, Amber, Green” system.			

Fragile Sponge and Anthozoan Communities on Subtidal Rocky Habitats (Champion = KWT)		2020	2025
Identify extent	In all designated and recommended MPAs	Key areas outside MPAs	
Maintain extent In known locations	Maintain extent in MPAs		
Restore	100% in MPAs to be managed to allow recovery and expansion (where appropriate)		
Action for marine biodiversity lags behind that achieved on land: there are fewer protected areas providing a statutory mechanism for restoration (recovery) and information about distribution and status is incomplete, . It is therefore proposed that the biodiversity of this priority habitat be conserved through qualitative actions, and progress on these actions reported through a “Red, Amber, Green” system.			

Appendix II HABITAT TARGET TYPES

Target type	Definition
<p>1. Maintain extent</p>	<p>Maintain current extent of resource.</p> <p>Aim: no reduction in the area of habitat that qualifies as the BAP type, based on the Kent Habitat Survey 2012.</p> <p>Maintenance entails securing the ecological function of the habitat, and this may involve some change in the habitat distribution over time (e.g. on a dynamic coast, or due to climate change). Hence, for certain habitats a maintenance target can be met without every occurrence of the habitat being retained provided there is no net loss and its overall integrity is sustained.</p> <p>Maintenance may therefore represent “<u>no net loss</u>” or “<u>no loss</u>” for the habitat</p>
<p>2. Achieving condition</p>	<p>Maintain or improve condition within existing resource.</p> <p>Aim: to maintain the condition (where it is good), and improve the condition (where it is poor) of the existing BAP habitat resource, compared to the baseline i.e. the amount of the resource currently in good condition.</p> <p>The target value is the sum of the area that is already considered to be in favourable condition and the area proposed to be in favourable condition following appropriate conservation action.</p>
<p>3. Restoration</p>	<p>Improve the condition of relict habitat so that it qualifies as BAP habitat.</p> <p>Aim: to restore areas of degraded habitat or remnant elements to a state where it is considered to be BAP habitat in good condition. This leads to an expansion of the extent of the BAP habitat and ultimately an increase in the area in good condition.</p> <p>Restoration should be where substantial effort is needed to bring a site with relict features (or historically former habitat) into consideration as part of the BAP resource.</p>
<p>4. Creation</p>	<p>Increase the extent of the resource</p> <p>Aim is to establish BAP habitat on land where it is not present and where no</p>

	significant relicts of the BAP habitat currently exist.
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- 1.1** It is useful to consider “Maintaining extent” and “Achieving condition” as activity on the existing BAP resource, while “Restoration” and “Expansion” represents activity on areas that do not currently qualify as BAP (i.e. the potential BAP resource), as shown below.

- 1.2** Wherever possible, quantitative targets have been set. If there are insufficient data to be able to provide a quantitative target, a textual target is provided.