

STATE OF NATURE

A SUMMARY
FOR THE UK



NATURE PROVIDES LIBERATION FROM THE HUSTLE OF MODERN SOCIETY, ALLOWING OUR ATTENTION TO SHIFT AWAY FROM OURSELVES AND FOCUS ON THE GLORIOUS AND THE SUBLIME. FOR ME IT IS NOT A SUPPLEMENT, IT IS A NECESSITY.”

**BELLA LACK, 15
YOUNG CONSERVATIONIST**

READ MORE IN THE *STATE OF NATURE 2019* REPORT

www.nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019

#STATEOFNATURE

THE STATE OF NATURE 2019: A SUMMARY FOR THE UK

The *State of Nature 2019* report presents an overview of how the nation's wildlife is faring, looking back over 50 years of monitoring to see how nature has changed in the UK. As well as this long-term view, the report focuses on what has happened in the past decade, and whether things are getting better or worse for nature. In addition, we have assessed the pressures that are acting upon nature, and the responses being made, collectively, to counter these pressures.

The State of Nature partnership consists of over 70 partners drawn from conservation NGOs, research institutes, and the UK and national governments. We have worked together to assess the state of the UK's wildlife, and to understand this in the light of the pressures on nature and the responses being made to recover our natural heritage.

The *State of Nature 2019* report uses data collected by tens of thousands of expert volunteers, analysed using rigorous statistical methods

to report on the state of nature across the UK and in the UK's Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories and at the scale of the UK's constituent nations. Here, we summarise the report's findings for the UK.

Further information on the state of nature in the UK, including details of the data and analyses underpinning our findings, can be found in the UK *State of Nature 2019* report:

 www.nbn.org.uk/stateofnature2019

KEY FINDINGS

The indicator for 696 terrestrial and freshwater species shows a significant decline of 13% in average abundance since 1970, and has fallen by 6% over the past 10 years.

Within this indicator, more species have decreased than increased. Since 1970, 41% of species have decreased and 26% have increased in abundance, with the remaining 33% showing little change. Over the past 10 years, 44% of species have decreased and 36% have increased in abundance, with 20% showing little change. The UK's wildlife is undergoing rapid changes in abundance; the proportion of species defined as showing strong changes in abundance – either increases or decreases – rose from 33% over the long term to 53% over the past 10 years.

Long-term decreases in average abundance in butterflies since 1976 (16%) and moths since 1970 (25%)

have not slowed. The mammal indicator shows little change since 1994; while an increase of 43% in the bird indicator has been driven by recovery of some species from very low numbers, conservation successes and colonising species, as well as increasing numbers of wintering waterbirds. These increases mask abundance declines in common and widespread breeding species; the total number of breeding birds in the UK fell by 44 million between 1967 and 2009.

Our indicator of average species' distribution, covering 6,654 terrestrial and freshwater species over a broad range of taxonomic groups, has fallen by 5% since 1970. Because species tend to decline in abundance before they disappear from a site, this change could reflect more severe underlying abundance declines that we are currently unable to quantify.

Within this indicator, more species have decreased than increased. Since 1970, 27% of species have decreased and 21% have increased in distribution, with 52% showing little change. Over the past 10 years, 37% of species have decreased and 30% have increased in distribution, with 33% showing little change. The UK's wildlife is undergoing rapid changes in distribution; the proportion of species defined as showing strong changes in distribution – either increases or decreases – rose from 17% over the long term to 39% over the past 10 years.

Of the 8,431 species that have been assessed using the IUCN Regional Red List criteria, and for which sufficient data were available, 1,188 (15%) are currently threatened with extinction from Great Britain and 2% are already extinct.

HEADLINES

It is widely accepted that the UK's biodiversity had been massively depleted by centuries of habitat loss, management changes, development and persecution before State of Nature's 1970 baseline.

Our statistics demonstrate that the abundance and distribution of the UK's species has, on average, declined since 1970. Many measures suggest this decline has continued in the most recent decade. There has been no let-up in the net loss of nature in the UK.

The UK Government's own assessment indicates that, although progress has been made, the UK will not meet

most of the global 2020 targets it committed to through the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The pressures that have caused the loss of biodiversity over recent decades continue to have a negative effect. The *State of Nature 2019* report highlights agricultural management, climate change, hydrological change, urbanisation, pollution, woodland management and invasive non-native species as among the most significant of pressures acting upon terrestrial and freshwater wildlife. At sea, climate change and fishing are having the most significant impact upon marine biodiversity.

The *State of Nature 2019* report showcases a wide range of exciting conservation initiatives, with partnerships delivering inspiring results to secure a brighter future for the UK's nature. Public support for conservation continues to grow, with NGO expenditure up by 26% since 2010/11 and a 40% increase in time donated by volunteers since 2000. However, public sector expenditure on biodiversity, as a proportion of GDP, has fallen by 42% since a peak in 2008/09, although the UK's expenditure on international biodiversity has grown.

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PARTNERSHIP

The State of Nature 2019 report is a collaboration between the conservation and research organisations listed below:

