BCP Council

Biodiversity report 2022-2025

Version: 1 Live
December 2025

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Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole: Nature Towns

BCP Biodiversity report

Foreword

This report is BCP Council's first summary of action for biodiversity. The BCP Corporate Strategy promotes the importance of connecting people and nature and across our area we have access to diverse green spaces and abundant wildlife. The Climate and Ecological Emergency declared by BCP in 2019 demands action to protect our natural environment.

This report highlights how much nature we have on our doorsteps, in our green spaces and around us in the harbours, heaths, woods and fields.

It provides a baseline as we seek to capitalise on our accreditation as Nature Towns, build on the Dorset Nature Recovery Strategy with delivery, action and new ways for our communities and individuals to help make a difference for nature.

We all need to champion the importance of nature and take every opportunity to support nature recovery.

Councillor Andy Hadley

Portfolio Holder for Climate response, Environment and Energy

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1. Introduction

The Environment Act 2021 strengthens the biodiversity duty originally set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requiring public authorities to:

- Consider what actions they can take to conserve and enhance biodiversity.
- Agree policies and specific objectives based on that consideration.
- Act to deliver those policies and achieve the objectives.

This report is the first to document actions, future plans and strategic platforms that are in place.

It provides a summary of delivery for nature recovery, key species to monitor to understand the health of biodiversity in BCP, new means of engagement with residents and action and plan.

Key elements to satisfy in the report for the Statutory Duty to Biodiversity are:

- a summary of actions taken to comply with the biodiversity duty,
- how the Council intends to comply with the biodiversity duty in the next reporting period

A separate BNG report provides:

- actions carried out to meet biodiversity net gain obligations
- and how the biodiversity net gain obligations will be met in the next reporting period

Scope

As a first report, the scope is primarily on the delivery and monitoring of wildlife undertaken by BCP Council teams, and in partnership with stakeholders and partner organisations.

Future reports ambition to be bigger/wider from more sources with new ways for residents, organisations and partners to come together to work to deliver wildlife monitoring and nature recovery.

The reporting period covers the last 3 years 2022 to November 2025. The next report is required within 5 years of the date of issue.

2. BCP a nature rich area

Whilst being a dense urban conurbation home to over 400,000 people, the BCP area is an incredibly rich and diverse place for nature.

The amount of nature and some of the species and habitats present are nationally and internationally significant.

The largest harbour in the world, Sydney, is almost entirely surrounded by the city; Poole Harbour – Europe's largest natural harbour – is extensively natural with exceptional habitat for over-wintering birds and providing opportunities for people to engage with nature on their doorsteps, such as the eye-catching White-tailed Eagle and Osprey.

The area's only Country Park at Upton, wraps around the Holes Bay linking people with nature through active travel routes through woodlands, wetland and meadow.

Bookended to the East with Christchurch harbour and adjacent cliffs and green space, BCP has a unique Coastal Nature Park offering. The cliffs and chines in between the two harbours providing spaces to connect with nature, with lizards on the walls, dune habitats and goats managing the steep cliff faces.

There is a purple wash across BCP that comes from the remaining areas of lowland Heath. Our heathlands are now heavily protected and need careful management to protect them from disturbance and the threat of wildfire.

Along the northern boundary, the Stour valley is an important corridor for people and wildlife. Otter, beavers and kingfishers can be the high-profile wildlife spotting opportunities, alongside increasing species diversity at Stour Valley water meadows SANG, and in the future on land to be set aside for habitat improvements through Biodiversity Net Gain units.

Home to all six native reptiles, with scarce and elusive bugs and birds, they provide natural and wild spaces that are also home to over 60 cattle, ponies, sheep and goats that help support the conservation and maintenance of these precious spaces.

With the Hampshire Avon, the Dorset River catchments flow into our two harbours and bring extensive partnership working to secure water quality improvements.

Alongside spaces designated for conservation, our local green spaces play a huge role where wildlife can thrive. Community parks, verges and corridors are vital spaces for the more familiar and urban animals – hedgehogs, foxes, sparrows and magpies – but they need our help and support just as much as the species living on specialist habitats.

Our gardens, allotments, cemeteries, green and blue spaces are becoming more important as acting as stepping stones for nature and to connect with larger nature reserves.

All of our green spaces are precious, and every effort is required to maximise them for the benefit of nature and people.

3. Designations and land management

For a relatively small council area BCP has many designated nature sites and extensive green space.

BCP Area: 16,132 Ha

Green Space: c. 2,500 Ha = 14%

25 Local Nature Reserves ~ local wildlife sites of special interest that make an important contribution to England's biodiversity. 505 Ha

Natural England have designated 19 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) 769 Ha ~ wildlife and geological sites of national importance.

Most of these SSSIs also have international designations of Special Areas of Conservation (2), Special Protection Areas (4) and Ramsar (3) designations.

While many of the nationally and internationally designated sites are primarily heathland, they also cover both Poole and Christchurch harbours, River Avon and areas of reedbed, salt marsh and woodlands.

8 Ancient Woodlands

67 Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) 160Ha

1 Regionally Important Geological Site

NERC 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) listed S41 species of "principal importance" for the conservation of biodiversity in England. These are species that are of conservation concern and are listed under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan or other priority species framework.

18 Section 41 habitats

191 Section 41 species

NERC 2006 places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to ensure everyone working for a public body must think about how to take care of plants, animals, and where they live and what can be done to carry out improvements for them

Agri-Environmental schemes

The BCP Countryside team manage extensive areas of BCP under agri-environmental schemes, known as Countryside Stewardship (CS) and Higher-Level Stewardship (HLS). These schemes provide financial incentives to farmers, foresters and land managers to look after and improve the environment.

Total CS Area: 865 Ha

Total HLS Area: 116 Ha

4. Current nature restoration work across BCP teams and partners

A summary of actions taken to comply with the biodiversity duty:

The BCP Countryside team provide a broad range of functions that include statutory protection and conservation management of habitats.

Typically, 700 hours per month in volunteering is facilitated; education work with schools and uniformed groups; work experience and opportunities for people with additional needs, University students and other specialist groups.

Conservation grazing includes over 60 head of cattle, along with ponies, sheep and goats that help to manage heaths, cliffs, meadows and mire to agri-environmental stewardship scheme compliance.

There are volunteers, or **'Lookerers'**, who check animal stocks and help the care of our livestock by seeking out our grazing animals every day, let us know where they are on the nature reserves and if all is well, or if an animal needs any attention.

Green space development team

deliver a capital programme of improvements across all our green spaces that will ensure nature is a feature and maximised as part of their delivery through planting, habitat creation and landscaping schemes.

Green space maintenance team

are, where practicable, promoting opportunities for biodiversity. This includes green and blue spaces such as parks, gardens, roadside verges, streams and ponds.

Working in partnership to deliver habitats regulations mitigation.

The **Dorset Heaths Partnership** provide monitoring, promotion, the Dorset Dogs initiative, close liaison with the fire service and other agencies across SE Dorset heaths.

- The arson courtroom drama presented to over 3,000 students
- Dog Control, through site specific advice and education for dog walkers, to reduce wildlife disturbance
- Supporting the fighting of over 130 heathland wildfires in SE Dorset in 2025
- Creation of a professional dog walker charter to reduce disturbance through increased education
- BBQ and wildfire messaging campaigns

Working alongside BCP heathland mitigation rangers on site to educate and, where required, enforce behaviour.

Delivery of capital projects to mitigate the impact of housing development on protected sites, through Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) and Heathland Infrastructure Projects (HIPs). These improvements enable housing development through creation or improvement of green spaces, including biodiversity measures.

The **Birds and Recreation Initiative** in Poole Harbour mitigates the impact of public disturbance on birds and delivers projects and promotion to educate people about the harbour's fantastic habitats and species.

Strength in partnerships

The Parks Foundation are an independent charity that support BCP green spaces. They activate spaces with volunteering, run park cafés that provide a warm and friendly space for park users and offer nature-based activities alongside food growing zones.

These **Green Heart Parks** have nature and access to green spaces at their core. Creating maintenance maps with our park maintenance team helps to manage spaces with a wildlife focus: planting trees, creating ponds and running walks and talks, on everything from fungi to moonlit moths to make nature accessible on people's doorsteps.

There are **Friends and residents' groups** across BCP (Appendix 3) that play a vital role for nature in caring for their local spaces. From planting and maintaining shrub beds and trees in car parks or roadside planters, to fund raising and extensive support for our grounds maintenance teams.

Special help for nature comes from many groups, not all could be mentioned here, who raise funds for maintenance and improvement of reserves, some examples are:


Friends of Stanpit Marsh who help raise funds, host walks and support volunteering across the site, and other green spaces.


Birds of Poole Harbour is a charity that aims to raise the profile of bird conservation, preservation and observation in and around the Poole Harbour area through harbour-wide partnership working, high standards of people engagement work and continuous monitoring of the harbour and its bird populations


Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG) is an independent organisation and registered charity, which is dedicated to recording, promoting and conserving the birds and other wildlife of the Christchurch Harbour area.


Transition Towns at Turners Nursery is a Community Orchard with regular monthly volunteer workdays, Started by Transition Town Poole in 2015 with food growing and caring for nature in local spaces, the group brings together people wanting to learn more about living lighter on the planet.

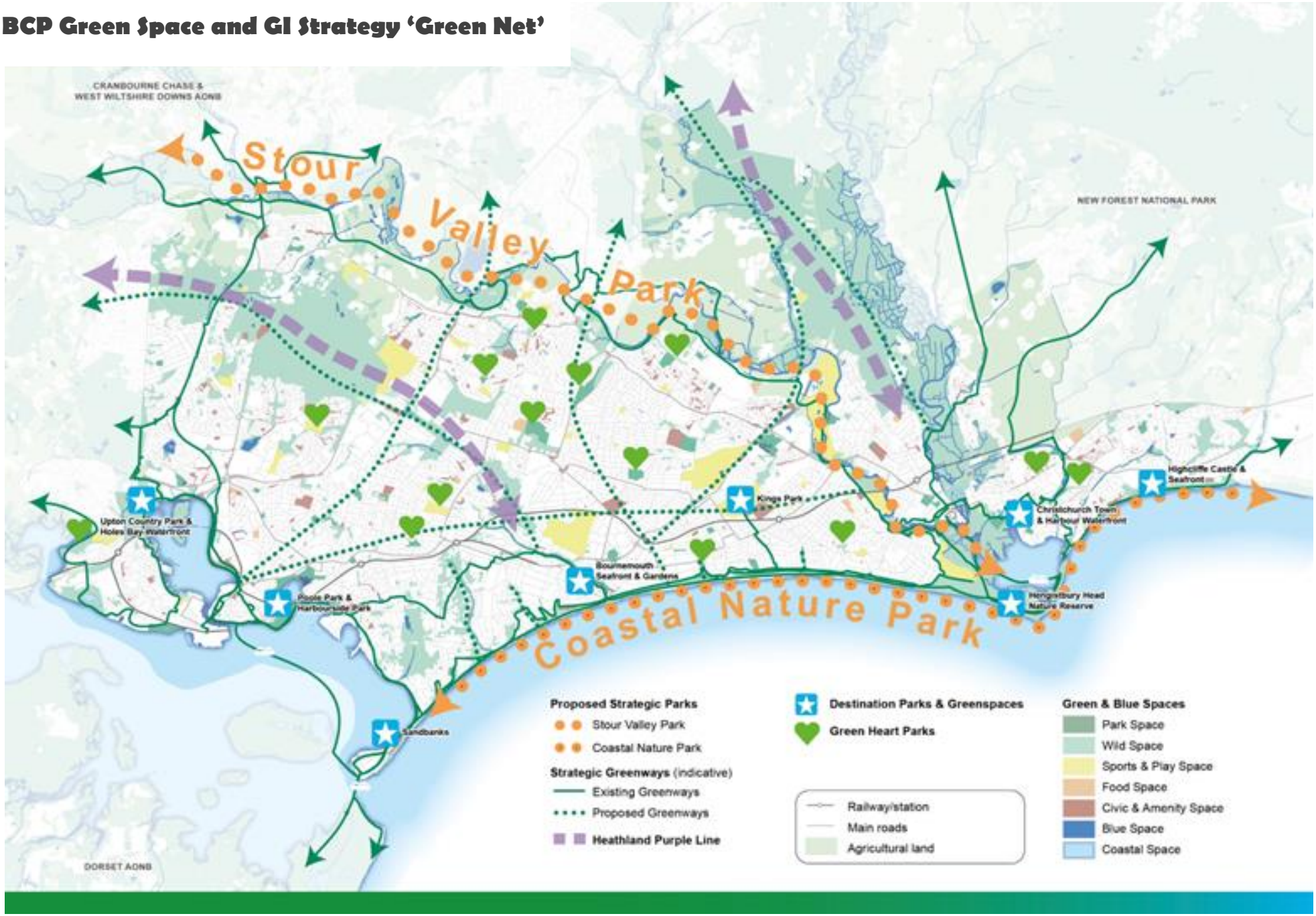

The Merley Wildlife group is a small group of residents passionate about local wildlife with an aim to get the community involved in managing wildlife habitats around them, help enhance and protect wildlife habitats.


Upton Country Park have regular conservation volunteering, host BioBlitz events surveying habitats and the team work in partnership with the Wareham Arc project and host RSPB events.


Community food growing opportunities such as allotments, garden growing projects, grow zones are supported by charities such as Grounded Communities, Transition Towns and The Parks Foundations, alongside Friends and other groups. These initiatives go hand in hand with supporting nature, for pollinators and wider biodiversity.

We encourage and work with groups across BCP that are passionate about their local natural spaces.

BCP Green Space and GI Strategy 'Green Net'



Action taken:

In the reporting years 2023-24 and 2024-25 the following action has been recorded by BCP Council teams (Appendix 2).

Future reports, and the creation of the Nature recovery delivery group will seek to collate and publish more accurate figures.

2023/24 – 2024/25:

6,576 Trees Planted

670m of Hedge planted

Meadow management. Enhanced mowing regimes in place to ensure long grass and wildflowers are left where possible.

Meadow maps published:

3.31 Ha Flower Meadow

199 Ha Grass Meadow

14 Green Heart Parks managed in partnership with The Parks Foundation

7 Site Maintenance maps written to support nature recovery interventions, parks maintenance and opportunities to volunteer.

Green spaces capital delivery >£0.5m on landscape and biodiversity projects

2025 Dorset-Wide Nature recovery Strategy published including species priority list.

8 Natterjack toad ponds maintained

2 House Martin towers

1 Swallow nesting shelter

2 Hobby baskets installed

1 Bat hibernaculum at Mudeford Woods

230 Swift boxes/bricks installed and/or provided by CHOG, Birds of Poole Harbour & Dorset Swift Network

28 Ha SANG's/HIPS created

Increase in all biodiversity markers at Throop water meadows SANG (see Appendix XX)

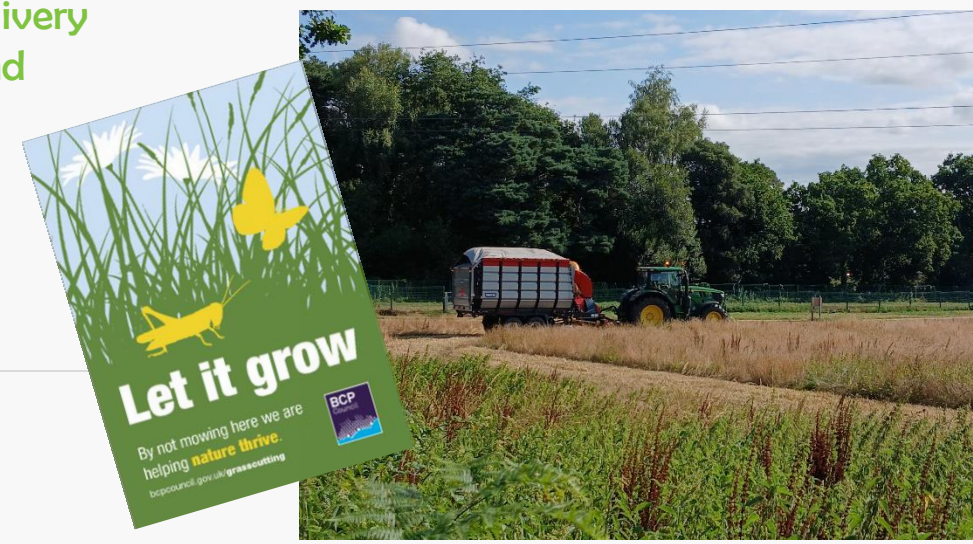
39.8% Reduction in use of Glyphosate usage for highways weed treatment 2023 – 2025

Natural Flood Management at Canford Heath through the Dorset Peat Project.

THE PARKS FOUNDATION

BCP Council

Working together



5. GI strategy overview

Nature Towns

The Nature Towns and Cities (NTC) Accreditation scheme has been developed by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, National Trust and Natural England. It is a national initiative designed to recognise towns and cities where the local authority is committed to working with communities and other partners to create greener, healthier, resilient and thriving places.

Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole: Nature Towns

BCP are the first Nature Towns to be accredited with Foundation status in the UK.

Being accredited as Nature Towns recognises that we are putting nature and green infrastructure at the heart of our place and communities.

The accreditation recognises that BCP is ambitious to deliver for nature and our natural environment. The main strategies and platforms to enable this are:

Green Infrastructure Strategy

Includes a delivery framework, identifies challenges, sets a vision, goals and principles. Supported by a large and robust evidence base for identifying opportunities to strengthen our green Infrastructure. Supported by an Urban greening design guide.

Urban Forest Strategy This also identifies priorities and uses a Tree Equity Score to evaluate and establish where our tree canopy needs to be strengthened. There is a working group for the strategy developing the first phase of delivery to establish a community tree planting programme and start to address the findings in the strategy. BCP's canopy cover is at 19% which is relatively high for equivalent council areas but is declining meaning increased tree planting and successful establishment is required across BCP.

Local Nature Recovery Strategy

(LNRS) adopted and published December 2025, the LNRS has identified a vision and strong priorities for nature recovery, working to the Lawton principles of 30% of land for nature recovery by 2030.

Priorities have been written specifically for the urban area, highlighting the role that BCP green space can support nature recovery alongside our residents where 24% of BCP land is in residential gardens.

A Dorset Council-led 'rural forum', and a BCP-led 'urban nature forum' will feed in to a new nature delivery group in 2026.

Urban greening

Co-design across council programmes to secure SuDS, tree planting and parklets on capital schemes as part of urban greening is being piloted across three wards.

These wards could be affected most by climate change, through flooding and increased summer temperatures. Making these spaces greener will improve them for people and provide more space for nature.

Draft **Natural environment policies** for the forthcoming Local plan include the use of Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework to mandate that development satisfies BNG that also delivers on urban greening.

See Background Documents and Appendices for further information.

Nature Pledge

The Nature Pledge is a list of principles that help nature thrive in our gardens and green spaces. Whether you have a window box, a small area at your workplace or a large private garden, you can use these principles to improve the habitat for wildlife and insects.

In 2019, BCP Council declared a **climate and ecological emergency** and in September 2022 adopted the Green Infrastructure strategy.

This Nature Pledge supports the Green Infrastructure Strategy and promotes the need for nature-friendly land management, with a view to generating a community of like-minded people and organisations.

The purpose of the pledge is to share simple principles, promote the need for nature friendly land management, encourage commitment to the pledge and generate a community of like-minded organisations.

Our strategic greenspaces team carried out formal engagement with the public in autumn 2022. This Nature Pledge has been created in line with the responses received.

The pledge

Help our nature thrive. Whether you have a window box, small balcony, a large private garden or a small greenspace at your place of work; join us in pledging to do things better for nature, to help bring wildlife to your home, school or workplace.

- plant **native/wildlife-friendly** tree and plant species
- collect **rainwater** for watering
- stop or **reduce chemical use** to control weeds
- only use **peat-free compost** - or make your own if you can
- allow areas to **grow naturally** without interference and leave space for wildlife
- use **natural ground cover** and not artificial/plastic products
- install **bird and bat boxes**
- **reduce mowing** to allow more nature in your garden
- manage **trees for wildlife** value, leaving deadwood and ivy where possible
- install **ponds** or encourage **wetland areas** if safe to do so
- consider **nature-friendly material** choices
- create more **food growing** spaces
- **volunteer** some time to improve nature locally

Working together

THE PARKS FOUNDATION

BCP Council

6. State of Nature

Headline data

70,000+ known species in the UK[1]

5,174 Species recorded in BCP since 2010 = 13% of UK total (for those species groups)

75% of these species were recorded within the last reporting cycle (2020-2024),

197 are listed as species of principle importance in England under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

30 are listed as priority species in the Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS).

BCP is home to:

All 6 native species of reptile

6 of the 7 UK amphibians

14 of the 18 UK species of bat

31 of the 68 other UK mammals

45% of UK bird species

40 of the 59 UK butterflies

45% of UK bird species

49% of UK moths

10% of UK true bugs

31% of UK bees, wasps and ants

20% of UK spiders

50% of vascular plants

Species monitoring

Appendix 7 shows a table of recorded species with the BCP area. This table shows the number of species recorded across different groups of plants, animals and fungi, between 2010 and 2025.

The Living Record online database is used by BCP staff, partners and individual naturalists and recorders.

There will be other records and not all data is uploaded to Living Record, so this should be understood as being a limited data set.

There has also not been time within this report writing to seek and collate additional data sources. It is hoped that future reports will be much fuller with greater partner data.

Future reports will comment on trends, use the list of 14 key species (see below) as headline indicators of the state of nature, as well as trends from wider monitoring, such as the Nature Recovery Strategy.

Credit: Birds of Poole Harbour

Credit: Birds of Poole Harbour

BCP Council Countryside team undertake or facilitate a wide range of species monitoring to inform habitat management and conservation resources.

Often working with volunteers or partner organisations, data is collected on a range of key species:

- Reptiles
- Various key bird species
- Butterflies
- Moths
- Dragonflies and damselflies
- Bats
- Otter
- Various key plant species
- Amphibians

The data represented in this first biodiversity report is not exhaustive and more a snapshot of information readily available at the time of writing.

Future reports can gather and present a much greater range of data and information from a wider group of partners.

Key organisations supporting nature recovery and recording biodiversity are:

- Dorset Heaths Partnership (DHP)
- Birds of Poole Harbour (BoPH)
- Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust (ARC)
- Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG)
- Stour Valley Supporters
- The Parks Foundation
- Upton Country Park and Holes Bay Nature Park
- British Dragonfly Society (BDS)
- Bournemouth University (BU)
- RSPB
- British Trust for Ornithology (BTO)
- Dorset Flora Group (DFG)
- Butterfly Conservation (BC)
- Dorset Bird Club
- Lytchett Bay Nature Partnership
- Dorset Bat Group (DBG)
- Dorset Moth Group

7. Future action and monitoring

This report presents a first picture of the work undertaken by BCP Council towards nature recovery. Just as importantly though, it sets out a road map for the future to do more for nature, using the platforms, strategies and partnerships that have been put in place.

The accreditation as Nature Towns provides a wrapper to this work, promoting and driving the importance of connecting people with nature.

Nature priorities:

A Green Infrastructure Action Plan

Ensuring there is investment in Green Infrastructure at all scales, from street-corners to whole landscapes, through partnership-led programmes, community engagement and a range of delivery mechanisms.

Nature recovery delivery group and urban nature forum

Facilitating local delivery through new forums and groups that focus on local action, learning, working in partnership and collaboration.

Citizen science strand to ensure the widest possible scope for data collection.

Nature dashboard and corporate policies

Using species monitoring data and the delivery of nature restoration work to create a public-facing dashboard.

BCP Council decision-making governance

Reviewing the Council corporate decision-making processes to better reflect the ecological emergency.

Develop a more robust and detailed reporting and species monitoring programme

Developed through the Nature forums, ensuring future monitoring is more representative of partners. Include mapping of survey areas and species heat maps to inform delivery and other actions that come from the delivery group and forums.

Work towards Higher level Nature Towns and Cities accreditation

Through the Green Infrastructure strategy, action plan and delivery methods develop to the higher-level status of Nature Towns, including development of work with investment partners.

8. BCP's Top 14 species

Key species have been chosen for future monitoring as a guide to the general state of nature in BCP.

These could be argued and debated as to their inclusion over other species; however, they have been chosen as they can be monitored from existing data sources, are readily surveyed and provide a range of species across different taxa.

A table (Appendix 6) provides a species profile with a summary of their habitats and other criteria for data monitoring.

The Local Nature Recovery Strategy identified 54 priority species and species assemblages in a short list, itself reduced from over 1,000 originally felt to be significant in Dorset.

Not all of those are present or relevant within the BCP area. The LNRS list identifies priority species as those requiring bespoke or targeted activity for nature restoration.

Those used in this BCP-focussed report will be used in future reports and are felt to reflect 'our' nature, and whilst they need conserving and supporting, their inclusion here is more as a barometer of the state of nature in BCP.

Future work through the nature forums may revise this list for future reports, as will the future availability of survey data and collection opportunities.

Sand Lizard

The sand lizard is one of the UK's rarest and most threatened reptiles, found in only a handful of locations across the country. Dorset is one of its last remaining strongholds, thanks to the county's rich patchwork of lowland heath—a rare habitat that provides the warm, sandy conditions essential for the lizard's survival.

These shy but charismatic creatures are most noticeable in spring and early summer, when the males develop brilliant green flanks to attract mates—a vivid display against the backdrop of purple heather and golden gorse.

The presence of the sand lizard in Dorset is not only a symbol of the county's unique natural heritage but also a testament to what focused conservation action can achieve in reversing species decline.

Trend: Sand lizard populations suffered severe declines throughout the 20th century due to widespread habitat loss, fragmentation, and changes in land use. As a result, the species became locally extinct in many areas, including some parts of southern England.

What can we do to help it? Targeted conservation efforts have helped stabilise and even increase local sand lizard numbers in recent years. Programmes have focused on habitat restoration, careful management of heathlands, and the successful reintroduction of sand lizards to areas where they had previously disappeared.

Fun fact Unlike most reptiles in the UK, sand lizards lay their eggs in warm, sandy burrows rather than giving birth to live young. They are the only native UK lizard to do so, and they rely on open patches of bare sand, which makes habitat management especially important.

European Nightjar

A summer visitor from the scrub grasslands of the Democratic Republic of Congo, with a UK population estimate of 4,600 males. The cryptic colours make this bird more likely to be heard than seen. Across much of its range, the Nightjar's breeding distribution is closely associated with rare lowland heath and consequently is mostly scattered across the southern half of Britain.

Trend: Historically, Nightjars were widely distributed throughout Britain & Ireland. A catastrophic decline was recorded between the 1968-72 and 1988-91 breeding atlases; there was a range retraction of more than 50% due mostly to loss of suitable habitat. More recently, there has been a welcome 18% range expansion in Britain from the 1988–91 to 2008–11 atlas. Nightjar is amber listed under UK birds of conservation concern.

What can we do to help it? Management, protection, restoration and creation (or re-creation) of key heathland breeding habitats remain critical for the long-term conservation of Nightjar. It is also necessary to minimise human and pet disturbance, especially during the breeding season.

Recent studies have shown Nightjars also forage in surrounding areas, like grasslands and farmland, not just their nesting sites. A wider, landscape-scale approach to habitat management, in particular retaining existing foraging areas close to the heaths, is critical.

Fun fact The Nightjar has many alternative names through folklore, one being the Goat Sucker, as it was often seen round the udders of livestock. In fact, it was just feeding on the insects that associate with these animals.

Stag Beetle

The Stag beetle is a nationally scarce species of principle importance, mainly found in south-east England, with the BCP area being the south-west limit of its main range. For Dorset the majority of records are in the BCP area.

Stag Beetles spend 3 to 4 years (but can be up to 7 years depending on temperature) as a larva (grub) in underground rotting wood, with adults emerging in late spring to mate.

Trend: declining across Europe and in the UK is mainly found in the south-east, with Dorset being the strongest western extent.

The main problems facing Stag beetles are habitat loss and a lack of rotting wood in which to lay their eggs and for their larvae to feed on. The tendency to keep parks and gardens “tidy”, including removing old tree stumps and roots.

The larvae are long-lived, and the adults do not move very far from where they emerge. Although males can fly for up to 500m, most females travel no more than 20m

What can we do to help: Avoid removal of old tree stumps, roots, dead or decaying wood habitats which takes away larval food sources.

Fun fact: Stag beetles are harmless and do not damage living wood or timber, as the larvae only feed on decaying wood.

Hedgehog

The European hedgehog is a much-loved mammal across the United Kingdom, including Dorset. Recognisable by its spines and nocturnal habits, the hedgehog plays an important role in the local ecosystem, where they act as natures' indicator.
They help control garden pests naturally, reducing reliance on harmful chemicals.

Hedgehogs are nocturnal insectivores, feeding primarily on beetles, caterpillars, earthworms, and slugs. Adults typically have between 6,000 and 7,000 spines, which also act as shock absorbers if they fall.

Trend: Hedgehog numbers have fallen significantly in recent decades, and Dorset reflects this national trend. Reasons include the reduction of hedgerows and wild spaces, lack of suitable habitat connectivity, road traffic accidents, use of pesticides and slug pellets.

What can we do to help: Conserving hedgehogs in Dorset requires an integrated approach that combines habitat management, reduction of human-induced threats, and active community involvement. Linking urban greenspaces and creating small openings in garden fences and walls; reduction of pesticide use.

Fun Fact
Despite their small size, hedgehogs can travel up to two miles in a single night while searching for food and mates. In urban settings they require access to 12 average gardens to get enough food to survive.

Green woodpecker

The green woodpecker is a large, mostly green woodpecker with a red crown and a laughing "yaffle" call. It is principally a ground-feeding species that favours mature trees for nest holes and nearby open turf or parkland for foraging across southern and central Britain.

Trend: National monitoring shows little long-term change but Bird Breeding Survey indices reported worryingly strong short-term declines in recent years.

Green woodpeckers are regularly recorded within the BCP area, especially where there are mature trees, open grassland/parkland and low-intensity greenspaces. They do not tend to move far, around 1km for adults and 3km for juveniles.

Likely causes of decline include loss of veteran/standing deadwood and suitable nest sites, pesticide use reducing ants as prey, fragmentation of parkland, and urban development.

What we can do to help: Retain and create veteran trees and standing deadwood; avoid routine removal of large branches. Reduce pesticide/insecticide use on parks, verges and golf courses to maintain ant populations.

Manage grassland as semi-natural meadow/ant-friendly patches and leave ant-rich microhabitats (bare patches/anthills). Protect and connect parkland & hedgerow networks.

Fun fact: The common name "yaffle" is onomatopoeic — it imitates the loud, ringing call that often betrays this otherwise skulking bird's presence

Heath Spotted-orchid

In June to August, the striking purple, pink, and white flower spikes of the Heath Spotted-orchid can be seen scattered across opens areas of wetland – an indication of healthy, undisturbed habitats.

Scattered by the wind, their seeds are tiny and dust-like, containing no food reserves – instead relying on fungi within the soil to provide nutrients to the germinating seedling.

The BCP populations of Heath Spotted-orchid are a vital link between the larger populations of Purbeck and the New Forest.

Trend: Populations are declining as habitats are lost through land management changes, nutrient enrichment, drainage, and development, especially across our heathlands and water meadows.

What we can do to help: Grazing is the principal intervention to preserve populations of Heath Spotted-orchid. In addition, re-wetting of habitats can be beneficial, as well as avoiding nutrient enrichment and chemical pollution of soils to promote this species and others.

Fun Fact: It's vibrant, spotted flowers are 'food-deceptive' – attracting pollinators however offering no sweet reward. This strategy relies on the curiosity and foraging behaviour of insects, particularly bumblebees, which visit the flowers expecting nectar and inadvertently assist in pollination.

Natterjack toad

The Natterjack Toad is one of our rarest amphibians, associated with sand dune and heathland sites. Within the BCP area it can only be found at Hengistbury Head, where a colony was reintroduced in the 1980s. This species has complex habitat requirements and careful and ongoing management is necessary to sustain this fragile and isolated population.

Nationally and locally there is a downward trend, which is felt to be linked to changing climate and reduction in suitable habitat.

This is a nocturnal species and can only be seen close to breeding pools at Hengistbury Head, during the spring and summer.

Natterjacks are a key positive indicator of the health of the habitats where they are found and an integral part of the food chain and through ecological interactions.

Trend: Following widespread historical decline they are only surviving thanks to interventions and dedicated habitat management. We have a moral and legal duty to prevent further declines and loss of this species.

Changing climatic conditions cause breeding ponds to dry too quickly with mild winters (and increased nitrates) allowing more vegetative growth leading to lack of open sand and short turf necessary for burrowing and feeding. There is a general need for more intensive habitat management, including grazing and scrub clearance as well as provision of artificial ponds in some circumstances.

Fun fact: The loud call of the male toad in breeding season can travel up to 2km

Silver-Studded Blue butterfly

The Silver-studded Blue is a rare butterfly found mainly on the lowland heathlands of southern England. Dorset is one of their strongholds, home to important populations which can be found across the county.

This species gets its name from the distinctive silvery-blue scales on the hindwing, which are absent in our other blue butterflies. Weak fliers and generally sedentary, they are best seen on calm, sunny days in their large colonies skirting atop the heather.

Small but mighty, the silver-studded blue is an excellent indicator of healthy, well-functioning heathland ecosystems due to its complex habitat requirements.

Trend: Listed as Vulnerable on the GB Red List, the Silver-studded blue has suffered severe recent population declines, with an estimated 80% loss in its range over the past 100 years. Habitat loss is a main driver; this species relies on a mosaic of mixed-age vegetation which deteriorates quickly without active management.

Fun fact: They have a strong mutualistic symbiotic relationship with black ants *Lasius spp.*, on which the Silver-studded blues are dependant. Laying eggs only where ant pheromones are present, the ants take the developing butterfly larvae within their nests where they feed on the sweet honeydew the caterpillar produces. At dusk, the ants escort the larvae to its favourite foodplants, protecting it from predators while it eats.

Golden-Ringed dragonfly

The Golden-ringed Dragonfly is an unmistakeable species, with its striking black body, yellow rings and bright green eyes. It is also one of the largest dragonflies in UK at 75-85mm long and a wingspan of 100mm.

On the wing from May to September. It is widely distributed but absent from central and eastern England. It can live in a stream or river for up to 5 years before emerging as an adult to live for a matter of weeks.

It is generally associated with heathlands, as it breeds in streams, rivers and bog pools with an acidic nature. Whilst it is mainly found on heathlands, it may be found hunting away from its breeding habitat indicating the importance of surrounding habitats, not just heathland.

Trend: Contrary to what is happening with the majority of dragonfly species in this country, that have benefited from a changing climate, the trend is downwards with the Golden-ringed Dragonfly dropping very slightly from 1970 to 2019.

It is a good indicator of water quality in streams as opposed to rivers as streams are more susceptible to climate change and reacts to rainfall, which affects the volume of water in streams and pools and ultimately, rivers. Pollution can have a devastating effect on this species.

Fun fact: Independent wings allow it to fly backwards and it is the punk of the dragonfly world - the female lays its eggs by pogoing up and down into the sediment at the bottom of streams.

Brown long-eared bat

While bats are hard to identify without specialist equipment, they do act as great indicator species of general health of nature.

The brown long-eared bat is medium sized and, as its name suggests has enormous ears.

BCP is in a privileged location to have Brown Long-eared and the very rare Grey Long-eared Bat. It is not always possible to tell the difference between the two, many records are recorded as long-eared bat species.

As with all bats, they are nocturnal, feeding on midges, moths and other flying insects, using echolocation to catch their prey.

Roosting in holes in trees and old buildings, showing the value of traditional building materials and leaving standing dead-wood.

They feed in parks, gardens and woodlands.

Trend: Since 1999 it has been stable, but roost counts over the last 5 years show decline

What we can do to help: leave dead wood on trees, plant hedges and food sources for moths and insects.

Fun fact: The brown long-eared bat certainly lives up to its name as its ears are nearly as long as its body

Eurasian otter

We have a population of Eurasian otters within the BCP Council area. The Eurasian otter is the most widely distributed otter, its range includes parts of Asia and northern Africa and is also spread across Europe. It inhabits unpolluted bodies of fresh water such as lakes, streams, rivers and ponds.

They mainly eat fish, but during the winter and in colder environments will feed on birds, eggs, worms, amphibians, insects and small amounts of vegetation.

Otters are very territorial, living alone most of the time. An individual's territory can vary between about 1 and 25 miles long.

They live in holes in riverbanks called holts; a holt will have a few different entrances to protect against flooding, with at least one entrance being above water level.

Trend: Currently a low population in BCP and they are very vulnerable to pollution and disturbance.

Fun fact: They have many adaptions for swimming – long streamlined bodies with strong tails, webbed feet and they can close their ears and nostrils whilst underwater. They have 2 layers of fur: a thick waterproof outer one and a warm inner one with 50,000 hairs/cm^2.

Waxcaps

Brightly coloured waxcap fungi play an important ecological role as key indicators of healthy grasslands. Their sensitivity to disturbances such as chemical inputs, air pollution, and habitat change makes them valuable biological markers of ecosystem condition.

They can be seen throughout the autumn in meadows, lawns, and cemeteries.

There are around 40 species in the UK, which is home to half the world's population. Their bright colouration, distinctive features, and specific habitat requirements means waxcaps can be easily identifiable

Trend: Britain is home to some of the world's most valuable waxcap grasslands, though many species remain rare or under threat. Over 97% of the UK's species-rich grassland has been lost in less than a century.

What we can do to help: Avoid the use of fungicides, pesticides, and proprietary lawn treatments. Remove all cut grass to ensure nutrients don't build up. Recording sightings through projects such as Plantlife's Waxcap Watch is a great way to contribute to the conservation of this species and others.

Fun Fact: Waxcap fungi develop partnerships with nearby plants, exchanging nutrients and water which enable both to thrive in places they might otherwise struggle to survive. Fungi can supply up to 80% of a plant's nitrogen requirements,100% of its nitrogen requirements, also providing water in times of drought or dormancy.

Swift

This bird is a much-loved sign of summer which overwinters in Africa and comes to the UK for a few months, just to breed.

Mainly nesting in roof eaves, it is also a bird of urban areas, feeding on mosquitoes and other aerial invertebrates.

Trend: This is a species that has suffered major declines over a relatively short period (down 66% between 1995 and 2022). Various factors have led to this, not least the loss of nest locations due to the rise of uPVC soffits and fascia boards as we seal any gaps in our rooves.

What we can do to help: We all need to support this species and encourage everyone to install boxes and bricks. Providing nesting locations is a proven way to boost populations.

We also need to encourage nature friendly practices to boost the insects which Swifts eat. Dorset Swift Network is an umbrella partnership working locally to help raise awareness and reverse declines.

Fun Fact: Swifts only land to breed, so do everything on the wing – from sleeping to drinking and even mating.

Glow-worm

The Glow-worm despite its name is not a worm but a beetle, the flightless females of which emit a yellow-green glow at night, making them unmistakable for any other beetle and captivate any observer.

The male looks like a typical beetle with hard wing cases and can fly. They are often associated with calcareous grasslands, which may include meadows, railway embankments, woodland edges and even road verges. In BCP they also occur on our lowland heaths.

Only the adult female glows brightly, caused by a chemical reaction in the last two segments of her abdomen, creating the bright glow (bioluminescence). The females live a short sedentary life, rarely moving more than 30cm from one night to the next.

They can be seen on warm nights between May and September. The glow is used to attract a mate, once mated she will turn out her light. Diet consists of small slugs and snails.

Trend: The Glow-worm shares threats with many other invertebrates, such as habitat loss and fragmentation (resulting in isolation and unsustainable populations), pesticide use, climate change and light pollution. The species is near-threatened, and the rate of decline suggests it is a species at risk of extinction in the UK.

What can we do to help it?
Survey our local Open spaces to find where they are and how many are present. Protect sites where present. They need a supply of snails and slugs and to keep spaces as dark as possible. Don't ever take them home.

Fun Fact: Mentioned by the novelist Thomas Hardy in 'The Return of the Native', first published in 1878.

Credit: Sam Deakin

9. Background Information and Appendices

Background reading and links:

- BCP Projects Website:
  - Nature Towns page and information
  - The Future Parks programme
  - Green spaces Strategies and plans
  - Let it Grow pages, with maintenance maps for selected parks
  - Download and share the Nature pledge
- The Parks Foundation website:
  - Guides to support the Nature Pledge
  - The Nature Neighbourhoods project
- The Dorset Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- Dorset-wide Habitat regulations mitigation
- The Economics of Biodiversity The Dasgupta Review: Headline Messages

List of Appendices:

1. GI Strategic Framework, Action plan and delivery model – separate document
2. BCP Nature quantitative progress report 2025
3. Friends' groups in BCP
4. Statement on Highway weed management treatment.
5. Case Studies – separate document
6. BCP's Top 14 species - Summary of species, their habitats and recording platforms/groups.
7. Species recorded within BCP
8. BCP Countryside Team and partner species monitoring 2023-2025
9. Highlighted species trends - Species lost

Appendix 2

BCP Council Nature Quantitative Progress Report - 2025				
	Measure	**unit of measurement**	**2023-24**	**2024-25**
Measure 1: designated sites	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	no. of sites	19	19
	Ramsar sites (wetlands of international importance)	no. of sites	3	3
	National Nature Reserve (NNR)	no. of sites or hectares	0	0
	Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	no. of sites or hectares	2	2
	Special Protection Area (SPA)	no. of sites or hectares	4	4
	Local Nature Reserves (LNR)	no. of sites or hectares	25	25
	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)	no. of sites or hectares	67	67
	Local Geological Sites (Regionally Important Geological Sites)	no. of sites or hectares	1	1
	Land managed by BCP Council in a countryside stewardship agreement to improve condition of site	hectares	865Ha	865Ha
	Value of countryside stewardship agreements held by BCP Council	£	c £300k pa	c £300k pa
	Land purchased to create new habitat	hectares		
Measure 2: Countryside Team	Verges managed to enhance their value for nature	sq m		
	Rights of way improvements to make nature more accessible	km		
	Percentage of Herbicide (glyphosate) decreased when managing weed growth within BCP highway network	%		
	Trees planted	no. of	5593	620
	Hedgerow planted	no. of	50m	620m
	Shrubs planted	no. of		
	Wildflower seeds	sq m		
	Removal of invasive and non-native species	sq m		
	Wetland creation	sq m		

Measure 3: Landscape design and projects	Trees planted	no. of trees	151	212
	Hedgerow planted	no. of		
	Shrubs planted			
	Wildflower seeds	sq m		
	Removal of invasive and non-native species	sq m		
	Total schemes that enhance or create nature	no.of schemes		
	Value of the schemes that enhance or create nature	£		
Measure 4: Other Capital Projects eg BCP Homes	Schools and community buildings with new or enhanced space for nature	no. of buildings / schemes	No current Data. Information to be collated and supplied for further reports.	
	Schemes with a long-term landscape and ecological management plan (XX years)	no. of schemes		
	Trees planted	no. of		
	Hedgrow planted	no. of		
	Shrubs planted	sq m		
	Wildflower seeds	sq m		
	Wetland creation	sq m		
	Wildlife enhancements (e.g. bee bricks, bird boxes, bat boxes, reptile chambers, log piles, dormouse nest boxes)	no. of		
	no. of schemes with Sustainable Drainage features	no. of		
Measure 5: Highways projects	Trees planted	no. of trees		
	Hedgrow planted	no. of		
	Shrubs planted	sq m		
	Wildflower planting	sq m or km		

Measure 6: Arboriculture	New trees planted	no. of trees	
Measure 7: Biodiversity gain through development	Biodiversity units on offer through habitat banks secured by BCP Council	no. of units	
	Biodiversity net gain agreed through planning applications	units and % from master gov ? no. of agreed planning applications where BNG applies? No. of developments delivering on-site BNG	
	wildlife enhancements secured through biodiversity plans (e.g. bee bricks, bird boxes, bat boxes, reptile chambers, log piles, dormouse nest boxes)	no. of	
	Land use/management change to deliver nutrient mitigation which by default will deliver nature recovery (increase in biodiversity) - ha	hectares	
	Nitrogen removed as part of nutrient mitigation as part of planning	kilograms of nitrogen per hectare per year	
	SANGs with nature-friendly management plan	hectares	13Ha
Measure 8: Sustainable Farming	County farms managed using sustainable farming practices	%	
Measure 9: Nature-based solutions	Natural flood management projects	hectares	No current Data. Information to be collated and supplied for further reports.
	Nature Based Solution opportunity project		

Measure 10: Nature Recovery Dorset network	Nature Recovery Dorset network members	no.of	No current Data. Information to be collated and supplied for further reports.
	Approx. hectares space for nature created by all the NRD members	ha	
	Member of public	ha	
	Community Group	ha	
	Charity or social enterprise	ha	
	Farmer	ha	
	Land manager	ha	
	Landowner	ha	
	Organisation	ha	
	Public body	ha	
	School	ha	
	Other	ha	

Appendix 3

Group Name	Location
Friends of Fisherman's Walk	Southbourne
Friends of Knyveton and Spencer Gardens	Knyveton and Spencer Gardens
Friends of Boscombe Chine Gardens	Boscombe
Southbourne, Wick and Tuckton Action Group (SWAT)	Southbourne, Wick and Tuckton
Friends of Seafield Gardens	Seafield gardens
Winton Library Garden	Winton Library
Friends of Skerryvore Garden	Skerryvore Garden
Stour Valley Supporters	Stour Valley
Southbourne in Bloom	Southbourne Green
Mallard Road Park	Mallard Road Park
Friends of Coy Pond	Coy Pond Gardens and Upper Gardens Rockery
Adastral Square Gardening Group	Adastral Square, Canford Heath estate
BH12 Planters	Planters in Albert Road, and surrounding roads, Poole
Broadstone in Bloom	Broadstone High Street
Friends of Broadstone Nature Reserve	Broadstone Nature Reserve (Broadstone Heath)
Friends of Hamworthy Park	Hamworthy Park
Friends of Turners Nursery	Newtown
Friends of Upton Country Park	Upton Country Park
Heathland Lookerers	Canford Heath
Merley Nature Group	Sopwith Crescent Open Space, Fenners Field Rec, Chichester Walk, Oakley Lane, Selkirk Close Park, Magna Road, Down in the Woods Pre school, Harrier Drive
Oakdale Library Gardens Association	Oakdale Library
Pinecliff Gardens volunteers	Pinecliff Sunken Gardens, Pinecliff Road
Sterte Community Garden Association	Sterte Court apartment blocks,Sterte Close
Friends of Sterte Green	Sterte Green
Tatnam Organic Patch	Oakdale
Parkstone Rotary Club	Parkstone
Bluebell Woods	Behind St Michael's Church, Hamworthy
Hamworthy Gardening Volunteers	Hamworthy
Rossmore Library Community Garden	Rossemore
Haskells Rec Community Group	Haskells Rec
Alum Chine Tropical Gardens Volunteer Group	Alum Chine
OLGA - Oakdale Library Garden Association	Oakdale
Alexandra Park GreenFingers	Alexandra Park

Parks in Mind Project	Shelley Park, Knyveton Gardens, Boscombe Overcliff, Fisherman's Walk, Woodland Walk, Kings Park
Winton Recreation Ground GreenFingers Volunteers	Winton Rec
Winton Rec Community Cafe Volunteers	Winton Rec
Muscliffe Park GreenFingers Volunteers	Muscliffe Park
Slades Farm Community Garden	Slades Farm (rear of Cycle track)
Seafield Gardens GreenFingers and Nature Tots	Seafield Gardens
Kinson and West Howe GreenFingers	Moore Avenue, Pelhams Park, Kinson Manor Playing Fields
Redhill Park GreenFingers	Redhill Park
Boscombe Chine Gardens	Boscombe Chine Gardens
Pelhams Park GreenFingers	Pelhams Park
Kings Park Nursery	Kings Park Drive
Friends of Druitt Gardens	Druitt Gardens
Friends of Stanpit Marsh	Stanpit Marsh and surrounding areas
Friends of St Catherine's Hill	St Catherine's Hill
Highcliffe and Walkford in Bloom	Various
Watermans Park GreenFingers and Wildlings	Watermans Park
Mudeford Woods	Mudeford Woods
South West Lakes Trust	Christchurch Harbour

Appendix 4

Statement on Highway weed management treatment.

Highways based weed management treatment involving the use of Glyphosate has significantly reduced due to the reinstatement of effective twice annual spot treatment reducing growth following a backlog in treatment during the pandemic and subsequent management programme.

The Council is committed to securing sustainable opportunities to further reduce its use of glyphosate and is working with its Contractors and Suppliers to trial the effectiveness of reducing the level of active product quantities.

Usage Data:

Year	Product quantities used in litres	Quantities of active ingredient used
2023	2226	801.36kg
2024	1371	493.56kg
2025	1340	482.40kg

Appendix 5

Case studies – see separate document.

i. Stour Valley water meadows SANG
ii. The Parks Foundation: Urban Greening project evaluation and nature interventions.
iii. Green Heart Parks
iv. The Nature Pledge
v. The Peat project

Appendix 6

BCP's Top 14 species - Summary of species, their habitats and recording platforms/groups.

	Heath	Ponds	Rivers /streams	Gardens	Woodland	*Monitoring in place*	*Partner orgs involved*	*Data sources*	*Current monitoring*	*Future monitoring*
Sand Lizard ***Lacerta agilis***	**Y**					**Y**	ARC	ARC	National Reptile Survey	National Reptile Survey[1]
European Nightjar ***Caprimulgus europaeus***	**Y**					**Y**	RSPB	BTO	Heathland Bird Survey	Heathland Birds Survey[2]
Stag Beetle ***Lucanus cervus***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		European Stag Beetle Monitoring Network[3]
Hedgehog ***Erinaceus europaeus***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		
Green Woodpecker ***Picus viridis***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**	**Y**		Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist	Breeding Bird Survey	Breeding Bird Survey[5]
Heath Spotted Orchid ***Dactylorhiza maculata***	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**			**Y**		Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist	Count	Count[6]
Natterjack Toad ***Epidalea calamita***	**Y**	**Y**				**Y**	ARC	Living Record, ARC	String, tadpole & toadlet count	String, tadpole and toadlet count[7]

Silver-studded Blue ***Plebejus argus***	**Y**					**Y**	BC	iRecord	UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme	UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme[8]
Golden Ringed Dragonfly ***Cordulegaster boltonii***	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**			**Y**	BDS	iRecord	British Dragonfly Survey	British Dragonfly Survey[9]
Brown Long-eared Bat ***Plecotus auritus***	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	**Y**		DBG	Living Record	Bat box survey Bat activity transects Static bat survey	Bat box survey[10] Bat activity transects[11] Static bat survey[12]
Otter ***Lutra lutra***		**Y**	**Y**			**Y**			Ad-hoc field sign surveys	Field sign surveys[13]
Waxcaps ***Hygrocybe spp.***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		Waxcap Watch[14]
Swift ***Apus apus***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**	**Y**	CHOG, BoPH, Dorset Swift Network	CHOG, RPSB Swift Mapper	Swift box occupation	Swift box occupation[15]
Glow-worm ***Lampyris noctiluca***	**Y**			**Y**	**Y**			Living Record, iRecord, iNaturalist		UK Glow Worm Survey[16]

1 – protocol | National Reptile Survey

2 – nightjar_survey_methods_2025.pdf

3 – Protocol-for-the-European-Stag-Beetle-Survey-1.pdf

4 –

5 – Methodology and survey design | BTO

6 –

7 –

8 – UKBMS Factsheet TR1

9 – Survey-guidance.pdf

10 –

11 – Bat Survey Guidelines 2015

12

13 – Microsoft Word - HRSSM_16003 HR_Otter.docx

14 – Take part in Waxcap Watch 2025 - Plantlife

15 –

16 – UK Glow worm survey home page

Appendix 7

Species recorded within BCP

BCP Council predominantly use the Living Record online recording system for inputting data from species monitoring. This data is presented in the table below and all data is passed to the Dorset Environmental Records Centre for county-wide monitoring purposes.

Reptile survey data is managed through the National reptile Survey, coordinated by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation (ARC). Data is also collected via apps and field survey field maps.

Care should be taken when drawing inferences from this data due to various complexities.

- This is a record of species richness (and to some extent recorder effort) rather than biodiversity – it doesn't give information on changes in population size and is purely the number of species present in certain time periods.
- UK species totals are based on best available information and change on a regular basis as new species arrive or are amalgamated
- Despite large overlaps, species will not wholly be the same in each time-period – some species will have been lost and some will have been gained.
- There is no indication of recorder effort year by year or available expertise.
- Abundance (and relative abundance) is not shown but is measured for some species groups.
- Although Living Record is extensively used in Dorset, it is not the only record database and therefore it does not give a complete picture of actual species recorded. However, data is all verified by County Recorders before going live and should be seen as robust.
- Recording is often time-intensive, and specialist knowledge often has a monetary cost. Funding is often limited and infrequent, making fair comparison difficult. (e.g. apparent spider decline is very likely due to lack of recording effort)
- Data for 2025 is still incoming/not fully verified and only included in the 'all-time' record column. This is therefore subject to change.

Species recorded within BCP on Living Record Database

Species Group	UK species	S41 Species	LNRS S12 Species	2010-2025	% of UK	2010-2014	2015-2019	2020-2024	% UK	% BCP	Richness Trend	
Amphibians (native)	7	3/4*	1/1	6	86	5	5	**6**	86	100	Up	20%
Bats	18	7/26	9/10	14	78	10	13	**12**	67	86	Down	-8%
Bees, Wasps, Ants	590	3/31	0/6	183	31	23	44	**169**	29	92	Up	284%
Beetles	4072	5/75	1/1	298	7	68	202	**159**	4	53	Down	-21%
Birds	640	31/49	8/15	198	31	145	170	**157**	25	79	Down	-8%
Birds (CHOG records)	640	36/49	9/15	287	45	260	246	**252**	39	88	Up	2%
Bugs (Hemiptera)	1830	0/10	0	176	10	33	104	**129**	7	73	Up	24%
Butterflies	59	10/22	1/4	39	66	33	33	**36**	61	92	Up	9%
Caddisflies	199	0/3	0	54	27	49	4	**24**	12	44	Up	500%
Dragonflies & Damselflies	57	1/2	0/1	35	61	28	30	**33**	58	94	Up	10%
Flies	7000	4/29	0	292	4	70	136	**192**	3	66	Up	41%
Freshwater Fish	64	17/35	1/2	18	28	3	11	**9**	14	50	Down	-18%
Fungi	14889	2/61	0	345	2	51	221	**205**	1	59	Down	-7%
Grasshoppers & Crickets (native)	38	0/3	0/1	28	74	17	20	**25**	66	89	Up	25%
Larger Crustaceans	36	0/6	0/1	5	14	0	4	**2**	6	40	Down	-50%
Lichens	1800	2/97	0	271	15	129	134	**132**	7	49	Down	-1%
Mammals (exc. bats)	68	6/6	2/4	31	46	19	24	**29**	43	94	Up	21%
Marine Fish	330	21	1/1	15	5	0	8	**9**	3	60	Up	11%
Molluscs (non marine)	239	1/20	0	33	14	6	24	**18**	8	55	Down	-25%
Mosses & Liverworts etc	1110	0/77	0/3	188	17	1	60	**177**	16	94	Up	195%
Moths	2610	70/142	2/12	1288	49	907	1036	**1068**	41	83	Up	3%
Reptiles (native)	6	6/6	0	6	100	6	6	**6**	100	100	No change	0%
Sawflies	500	0	0	19	4	2	6	**11**	2	58	Up	83%
Seaweeds	644	0/6	0	26	4	0	19	**8**	1	31	Down	-58%
Spiders & Harvestmen	707	1/30	0/1	144	20	34	129	**44**	6	31	Down	-66%
Vascular Plants	2951	7/151	4/9	1461	50	522	956	**1236**	42	85	Up	29%
Total**	**40464**	**197/943**	**30**	**5173**	**13**	**2161**	**3393**	**3896**	**10**	**75**	Up	15%

*Great Crested Newt records are probable deliberate/accidental introductions

** excludes CHOG records Christchurch Harbour Ornithological Group (CHOG)

Appendix 8

BCP Countryside Team and partner species monitoring 2023-2025

Year	Site	Funder/For	Type		Species/Group	Surveyor
Central team						
2025	Turbary Common	BTO	BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Turbary Common	BTO	WBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Turbary Common	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Turbary Common	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Stour Valley	BTO	WEBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Stour Valley	BTO	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house/volunteers
2025	Stour Valley		Trap		Moth	In-house
2025	Stour Valley	BDS	BDS transect		Odonata	In-house
2025	Millhams	BTO	BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Millhams	BTO	WBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Millhams	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	ARC
2025	Millhams	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	BTO	BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	BTO	WBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Kinson Common	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house/volunteers
Year	**Site**	**Funder/For**	**Type**		**Species/Group**	**Surveyor**
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	In-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Bee transect		Bees	Silvia Freire
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Walking transect		Bats	in-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	BTO	Breeding bird survey		Birds	in-house

2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	BTO	Winter bird survey		Birds	in-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Presence/absence survey		Dragonflies	in-house
2025	Stour valley water meadows SANG	n/a	Field survey		Otter	Guy Finucane
West team						
Year	**Site**	**Funder/For**	**Type**		**Species/Group**	**Surveyor**
2025	Bourne Valley		BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Bourne Valley	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Bourne Valley	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Bourne Valley		Count		Southern marsh orchid	In-house
2026	Bourne Valley	DBS	BDS point/transect		Odonata	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		BBS transect		Bird	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		HBS transect		Dartford/nightjar/woodlark	RSPB
2025	Canford Heath	BC	UKBMS transect		Butterfly	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		Trap		Moth	In-house
2025	Canford Heath	BDS	BDS point		Odonata	In-house
2025	Canford Heath	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Canford Heath	SRT	PondNet count		Marsh clubmoss	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		Count		Pale butterwort	In-house
2025	Canford Heath		Count		Dorset Heath	DFG
2026	Canford Heath		Trap		Moth	In-house
2026	Canford Heath	ARC	Emergence		Reptile	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		HBS transect		Dartford/nightjar/woodlark	RSPB
2025	Corfe Hills North	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		PondNet count		Marsh clubmoss	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		Count		Pale butterwort	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills North		Count		Marsh gentian	In-house

2025	Corfe Hills North	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	ARC volunteer
2025	Corfe Hills Middle	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills South		HBS transect		Dartford/nightjar	In-house
2025	Corfe Hills South	ARC	NRS transect		Reptile	ARC volunteer
2025	Hatch Pond	BTO	Ringing		Bird	BTO
2025	Hatch Pond		Field Surveys		Bird	Volunteers and BCP staff
2025	Hatch Pond		Trap		Moth	In-house
2025	Poole Harbour		WeBs		Bird	
East team						
Year	**Site**	**Funder/For**	**Type**		**Species/Group**	**Surveyor**
2025	Stanpit Marsh	FOSM/CHOG	Field survey		Insects	Bryan Pinchen
2025	Stanpit Marsh	FOSM	Light trapping		Moths	Phil Budd
2025	Christchurch Harbour	Southern IFCA	Seine net trapping		Fish	Southern IFCA
2025	Hengistbury Head	Buglife	Pitfall trapping		Scaly Cricket	Caroline Kelly
2025	Hengistbury Head	n/a	Light trapping		Moths	in-house/Mike Jeffes
2025	Hengistbury Head	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	in-house
2025	Hengistbury Head	n/a	Pond transect		Dragonflies	in-house/volunteers
2025	Stanpit Marsh	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	volunteers
2025	Mude Valley	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	in-house
2025	St Catherine's Hill	Butterfly Conservation	UKBMS transect		Butterflies	in-house
2025	Christchurch Harbour	BTO	WeBs count		Birds	CHOG
2025	Christchurch Harbour	CHOG	Breeding bird survey		Birds	CHOG
2025	Christchurch Harbour	n/a	Field survey		Insects	Paul Morrison
2025	St Catherine's Hill	ARC	Refugia transect		Reptiles	in-house

2025	Hengistbury Head	ARC	Refugia transect		Reptiles	in-house
2025	Hengistbury Head	n/a	Pond survey		Natterjack Toad	in-house
2025	St Catherine's Hill	DHP	Heathland Bird Survey		Birds	

Selected additional wildlife monitoring data sources:

Holes bay nature park

- **Website**
- **2024 latest survey report**

Appendix 9

Highlighted species trends - species lost

There are many species where their distribution and density are changing across Dorset, many are not clearly known but some are very apparent. Invertebrates are generally seeing an overall decline and species that were once common in Dorset are now rare.

Long-term data shows that more species have decreased significantly in number than have increased. The factors are not always known but many that have become apparent have strong correlations with climate and/or habitat.

Where habitat restoration has occurred, there is encouraging evidence that nature can respond quickly, if given the chance. Birds, Butterflies, Moths and Dragonflies tend to be the most easily and regularly observed and recorded taxa, with many professional and amateur recorders located across the county, providing annual insights into any clear or rapid changes.

Appendix XX highlights a small representation of species that have seen significant changes within BCP, highlighting the need to avoid complacency about what we have, and also to expect new arrivals.

The need for continual monitoring is vital to understand both local and national changes and the health of our environment and take action where it is possible. It is hoped in the future to be able to produce graphs and visuals related to the trends shown below.

Class	Species	Trend	Likely reasons	Comment
Birds	Willow Warbler	Decreasing	Climate Productivity	63% decline in SW England since 1995. This once common breeder is almost now restricted to a passage migrant within BCP. Northen population is increasing, suggesting a shift northward.
	Wood warbler	Extinct	Climate Predation	32 pairs were reported across Dorset in 1998, bred in Delph Woods. Part of a national decline, has been on UK red list since 2009
	Spotted Flycatcher	Decreasing	Low 1st year survival rates Lack of flying insects Predation Traditional habitat management has changed.	Another summer migrant suffering severed declines. 66% decline in SW England since 1995. Improved habitat, reduced use of pesticides may assist recovery.

	Goldeneye	Rapidly decreasing	Climate Birds no longer need to migrate as far south.	Dramatic decline, Poole harbour was a nationally important wintering site, with up to 500 birds in the 60's, 208 were counted in Feb 1991, with just 5 birds in Feb 2025
	Woodlark	Increasing	Habitat Management	One of the many species that has benefited from improved heathland management. It also now breeds away from traditional heathland habitat and the recovery of habitat at Wild Woodbury (DWT) has enabled the species to breed there in the past two years.
	Firecrest	Increasing	Climate	Rapid population growth, from just a few breeders in the west of the county, can now be encountered breeding across Dorset and BCP.
	Egrets and Herons	New arrival	Climate Habitat restoration	Numerous species colonising and expanding rapidly. Little, Great and Cattle Egrets in particular.
	Osprey	Increasing	Reintroduction and protections	First successful pair to breed in southern England for 200 years occurred in Poole Harbour in 2022. 2025 saw a second pair successfully breed.
Invertebrates	Jersey Tiger moth	New arrival	Climate	New species of moth continue to colonise Dorset having arrived since the year 2000 but many are in decline
	Willow Emerald damselfy	New arrival	Climate	Recent colonist; first recorded in significant numbers in East Anglia in 2009. Since then, it has rapidly expanded its range and was first recorded in Dorset at Hengistbury head in 2021 and is now spreading west, having been found at Upton County Park in 2024
	Praying Mantis (A Mantis)	New arrival	Climate / illegal releases	