

Condition of SSSIs

Indicator

The proportion of Worcestershire Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' condition.

Status



Since this indicator was initially measured there has been steady increase in the number of SSSI within the county which are either in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' (ie: returning to favourable) condition. However during 2010 this increase has not continued and a 0.3% reduction in the number of sites meeting the criteria has been experienced. 93% of SSSI's within the county are in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition.

Overview

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are wildlife or geological sites of national importance. They are key to the conservation of some of our most valued biodiversity and it is therefore essential that they meet their conservation objectives and that we have information on their condition, as a measure of the wider biodiversity of the county. SSSIs cover 2.72% of Worcestershire's area (3,763 ha). This indicator should therefore be considered along with the other biodiversity indicators to provide a more general picture of the state of the county's biodiversity.

This indicator addresses DEFRA's Public Service Agreement (PSA) target to have 95% of SSSI (by area) in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' condition, by December 2010.

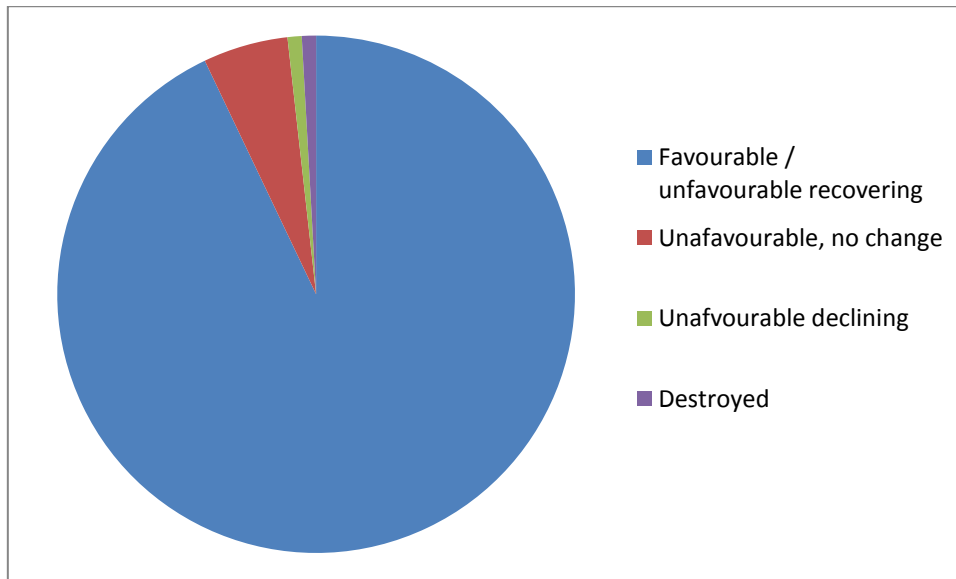
SSSIs are often broken down into smaller 'monitoring units', the condition of which is assessed against an agreed set of UK standards, resulting in a unit being assigned to one of 6 condition categories (see below). This standard framework, known as 'Common Standards Monitoring' also requires SSSI units to be assessed at least once every six years.

The indicator assesses the number of SSSI within each category, and not the total area of SSSI within each category.

Performance

The percentage of SSSI area classed as 'favourable' or 'recovering' was 93% at 1 April 2011. The graph below shows the proportions across each condition category. There has been a shift since the 2008 report from 'favourable' to 'recovering' as Natural England reviews the condition of SSSIs.

Percentage of Worcestershire SSSIs in each Natural England condition category



In the past year, there has been a 0.3% reduction in the percentage of SSSI which are in favourable or unfavourable recovering condition. The indicator will, therefore, remain at amber for the current year.

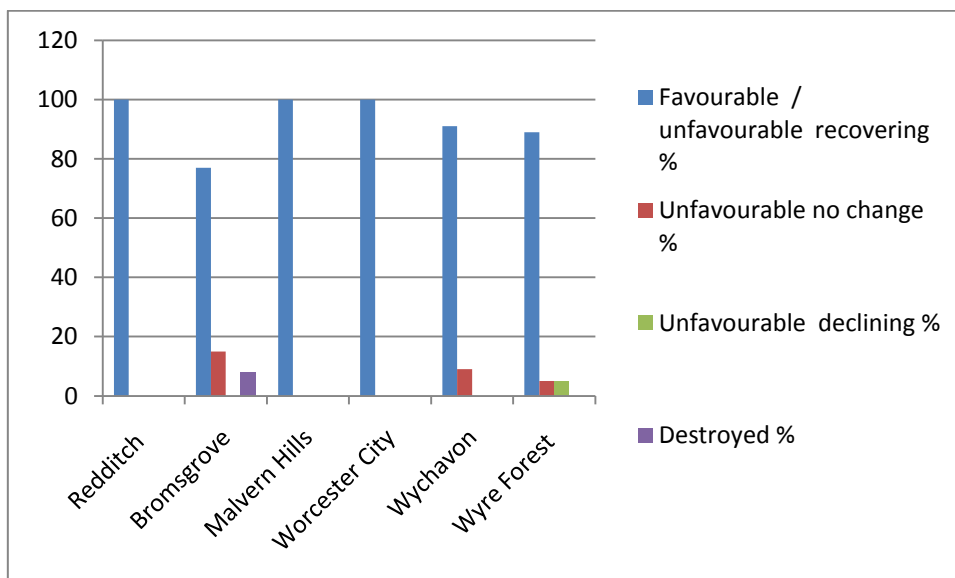
Geographical Context

In Worcester City, Redditch and Malvern Hills 100% of sites are in 'favourable' or 'unfavourable recovering' condition.

Significant issues remain with sites in both Bromsgrove and Wyre Forest districts. In Bromsgrove, 23% of sites are classified as 'unfavourable no change' or 'destroyed' and 11% of sites in Wyre Forest are 'unfavourable no change' or 'unfavourable declining'.

District breakdown

	Total number of SSSI's	Favourable/unfavourable recovering %	Unfavourable no change %	Unfavourable declining %	Destroyed %
Redditch	6	100	-	-	-
Bromsgrove	13	77	15	-	8
Malvern Hills	42	100	-	-	-
Worcester City	2	100	-	-	-
Wychavon	32	91	9	-	-
Wyre Forest	18	89	5	5	-



Actions

The shift from 'favourable' to 'recovering' means that these SSSIs do not meet the standards necessary to be classed as 'favourable', but are under management regimes that should allow this status to be reached. The condition statistics are derived from ongoing condition monitoring of all Worcestershire's SSSI units, undertaken by Natural England under a rolling 6-year programme.

Further Information

More information about SSSIs, including why and how they are protected, is available on the [Natural England](https://www.naturalengland.org.uk/) website.