

Management status of Local Sites

Indicator

Management status of Special Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites, based on the percentage (by number) of Special Wildlife Sites and Regional Important Geological Sites under management regimes appropriate for the retention of site designation.

Status



Management status of local sites in Worcestershire remains poor, but is improving (this indicator has not yet been updated from 2010. It is expected that a new indicator will be published by September 2011).

Overview

Special Wildlife Sites are areas of nature conservation interest which are of county importance. There are approximately 460 in Worcestershire and they are a key element in the biodiversity resource of the county.

Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGS) are areas designated for their earth science and landscape interest. There are currently approximately 90 RIGS in the county. Designation is based on scientific, education, historical or aesthetic importance within the county and/or Region. RIGS contribute greatly to the conservation and understanding of the natural environment.

The indicator definition is based on the assumption that the quality of sites under appropriate management regimes (defined as working towards objectives set by a conservation or geodiversity organisation) should be maintained or enhanced. It is intended to report on this measure annually, and it is hoped that this can be done using currently available resources.

It is important however that in addition to the proxy measure above the actual condition of sites is monitored on a regular basis. This will require substantial and as yet un-identified resources, but work is progressing towards being able to report directly on condition as well as management.

Performance

Percentage of Biological and Geological Sites which are under appropriate management (based on the NI 197 spreadsheet on 25th May 2010):

Biodiversity + RIGS combined			
	Total no. Sites	No. sites scoring	Indicator % fig RIGS and bio combined
Bromsgrove	84	21	25.0
Malvern Hills	246	70	28.5
Redditch	22	8	36.4
Worcester City	9	7	77.8
Wychavon	139	49	35.3
Wyre Forest	53	17	32.1
County totals	553	172	31.1

	Biodiversity only			RIGS only		
	Total no. bio sites in district	No. sites scoring from revised scores	Indicator % fig bio only	Total no. RIGS in district	No. RIGS scoring	Indicator fig RIGS only %
Bromsgrove	79	17	21.5	5	4	80.0
Malvern Hills	183	45	24.6	63	25	39.7
Redditch	22	8	36.4	0	0	0.0
Worcester City	9	7	77.8	0	0	0.0
Wychavon	123	44	35.8	16	5	31.3
Wyre Forest	45	14	31.1	8	3	37.5
County totals	461	135	29.3	92	37	40.2

This year there was a 4.9% increase compared to the number of sites meeting NI 197 criteria last year. The primary reason for this increase is due to monitoring effort on the part of the Earth Heritage Trust identifying

more geodiversity sites meeting the criteria through survey work. A small number of biodiversity sites scored this year through new forestry and agri-environment grant schemes – there were 4 gains via HLS, 1 gain via EWGS, but 1 loss due to a woodland grant scheme ending.

The indicator colour remains red but the direction is improving.

Status categories are:

Red = <35% of sites under appropriate management

Amber = 36-65% of sites under appropriate management

Green = >66% of sites under appropriate management

Geographical Context

See district breakdown above.

Actions

- 1) Further work on the indicator is needed to refine our understanding of the management mechanisms applying to SWS and how these fit with site type by habitat etc. An audit of the strengths and weaknesses of these mechanisms in relation to site type is needed to aid our understanding of where the vulnerabilities lie.
- 2) Building on this understanding a focused action plan is required to attain NI 197 standards or better for all SWS.
- 3) Delivering improvements to both this indicator and lowland meadows present challenges which the Biodiversity Partnership cannot meet alone, and hence they represent an opportunity to test the strengths and benefits of wider partnership working through WPEG and others.

Further Information

This indicator is also one of Defra's national indicators for Local Authorities – **NI 197 Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites**. For more information on this indicator visit

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localgovindicators/ni197.htm>