



## Durham Biodiversity Partnership

Durham Biodiversity Partnership has involved a wide range of organisations in promoting local biodiversity and has now launched a pilot project aimed at integrating biodiversity concerns into the community strategy.

*Action for Wildlife — the Durham Biodiversity Plan (or DBAP)* is the local biodiversity action plan covering County Durham and the unitary authorities of Darlington, the City of Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead. In totality it comprises 106 habitat and species action plans (or statements).

The objectives of the Durham BAP are:

- to conserve, enhance or re-create the biodiversity of the Durham BAP area
- to prioritise and direct action for locally threatened species and habitats
- to promote the locally relevant actions as laid out in *Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan*

The Durham Biodiversity Partnership steers the work of the DBAP. The steering group comprises representatives from: Durham County Council, Durham Local Agenda 21, Darlington Borough, Gateshead Council, City of Sunderland, South Tyneside Council, Northumbrian Water, Durham Wildlife Trust, DEFRA, English Nature, RSPB, Tyne Tees TV, Farming and Wildlife Action Group (FWAG) and the Environment Agency.

The Durham Biodiversity Partnership, through the action plan, has created a well-developed framework for managing the biodiversity process locally. This process is strengthened by the strong commitment of the wide range of partners who are involved, many of whom provide funding for the partnership's work.

Supported by an Implementation Officer, who helps coordinate and drive forward action, the DBAP has produced:

- Authoritative and acclaimed biodiversity guidance documents for the business, local authority and planning sectors
- The first UK local BAP to have a fully coordinated set of coastal and marine habitat and species action plans
- Up to February 2001, over £1.1 million of 'partnership funding' on major new conservation programmes to meet DBAP targets
- Increased public perception of the wildlife value of the area.

More recently, the DBP has been developing a two-year pilot project on the integration of biodiversity concerns into the community strategy. As a first stage a guidance note on the integration of biodiversity into the CS has been prepared. The aim is to support members of the LSP and those responsible for drafting the community strategy, through highlighting the obligations under the Local Government Act 2000 and the wider connections between biodiversity and local quality of life. This project will be based in Chester-le-Street and is funded by EN and Chester-le-Street Council.

Other new initiatives include:

- With Durham Constabulary, coordination of a special ‘Biodiversity on the Beat’ training seminar for local Wildlife Liaison Officers
- Assisting in the more effective targeting of the new arable stewardship options schemes on the most important areas for farmland bird populations
- Preparing an Industrial Estates Management Plan Guidance Document – this is now at an advanced draft stage

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