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Measuring Biodiversity in the West Midlands

25 November 2009

Agenda



- Why do we need to measure at a regional level?
- How can it be done?
- Future drivers
- What are the problems?
- How should we use it?

Why do we monitor at regional level?



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- To know what we've got specific to our region
- To understand and track change
- To see where we need to intervene
- To demonstrate the need for action to regional bodies
- To identify the challenges that are specific to the West Midlands

How do we do it?



- What are the existing tools?
 - RSS indicators
 - National Indicator
 - NI188 - *Planning to adapt to climate change*
 - NI197 - *Improved local biodiversity*
- PSA 27 - *Lead the global effort to avoid dangerous climate change*
 - PSA 28.2 - *Biodiversity as measured by changes in wild breeding bird population in England as a proxy for the health of wider biodiversity*
 - WMBP Regional Biodiversity work - links to LRCs and LBAPs

Future drivers



- Strategy for the West Midlands
- Opportunity
- Evidence base needs to be smarter
- Demonstrate the value of biodiversity across themes
- Economy
- Community

Evidence base workshop held in July 2009



- Challenges raised
 - “Silo-based approach: not enough cross-policy area understanding”
 - “Feedback of monitoring & evaluation findings into policy design/delivery is not systematic”
 - “Too much data -not enough intelligence”
 - “Lots of backward looking / trend-based evidence -not enough forward-looking”
 - “Link evidence, policy, delivery and monitoring”
 - “Managing conflicting policies and cross-cutting issues”
 - “Balancing short and long-term objectives”

Problems & Challenges



- What constitutes biodiversity?
- Why is biodiversity important?
- Consistent regional level data
- Sufficiently detailed to identify local needs
- Timely
- Regular

How should we use it?



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- Identify success
- Highlight problems & challenges
- Evidence based policy
- Influencing partners

Example - using the evidence to drive policy

Biodiversity and adaptation to Climate Change



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- Changes in distribution of species (loss of species at southerly edge of distribution, spread of species at northern edge of distribution including pests/diseases)
- Changes in species composition of habitats (favouring more adaptable species)
- Effects of drier/hotter summers (lack of water to support wetlands, water quality and temperature problems due to low dilution, low flows reducing aquatic habitat, fire risk, urban heat island effects)
- Effects of wetter/warmer winters (increased flooding of wet grassland, migratory birds moving north and east)
- Effects of seasonal/phenological changes (longer growing season, flowers/pollinators and predator young/prey out of phase)
- Land use changes (novel crops, management changes)



WMBP ADAPTATION PRINCIPLES

- 1. Develop Ecologically Resilient Landscapes**
 - 1a Conserve and Enhance Variation within the Landscape
 - 1b Make Space for the Natural Development of Rivers
 - 1c Establish Ecological Networks
- 2. Conserve the Habitat and Species Baseline**
 - 2a Conserve Protected Areas
 - 2b Conserve Range and Ecological Variability of Habitats and Species
- 3. Reduce Sources of Harm Not Linked to Climate**
- 4. Make Sound Decisions based on Analysis**
 - 4a Thoroughly Analyse Causes of Change
 - 4b Set Up and Implement Monitoring Systems
 - 4c Use Adaptive Conservation Targets and Priorities
- 5. Communicate Issues**

Conclusions



- We need to understand what's particular to our region
- There are existing measures but these have flaws
- Data needs to be consistent, timely and regular
- Good evidence makes it much easier to influence policy

Contacts



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