

Making Biodiversity* Visible

** Biodiversity - the different types of living things (plant, animal, fungi)*



A resource pamphlet for neighbourhoods

Created by The Portland Inn Project for Natural England



Why collect Biodiversity Data?

September 2023 saw the release of the fourth State of Nature Report. It is the result of a collaboration between environmental organisations and government agencies, including Natural England. The report helps us to gain an understanding of how species of plants and creatures are faring and is a result of data collected by thousands of Citizen Scientists.

The report makes for stark reading:

“The data show that since 1970 UK species have declined by about 19% on average, and nearly 1 in 6 species (16.1%) are now threatened with extinction”

The State of Nature Report, 2023



This info sheet has been prepared by The Portland Inn Project in Stoke-on-Trent. We are a community-based arts organisation, and we have become aware of the urgency to understand nature on our doorstep, and the role we might play as neighbours in protecting the variety of at risk species.

We all have a role to play in supporting and protecting Nature; the State of Nature Report relies on Citizen Scientists to record the nature where they live in order to understand the precarious position of species and contributing to the collection of biodiversity data, which can help to understand the impact of human actions on wildlife, and can show us where urgent actions need to be taken.

We discovered that in our Neighbourhood there was a lack of 'biodiversity survey culture' meaning that when we tried to find out what Ecology Data existed for our area, by contacting Staffordshire Ecological Record (our local official biodiversity data records) we learned that there were no records. We then learned that there is a link between less affluent neighbourhoods and a lack of access to nature which then leads to a lack of survey culture and Citizen Science activity.

Green Interventions to Increase Biodiversity

Recording species levels where you live provides baseline data from which you can then measure any positive impact you might have when making green interventions to try to increase biodiversity. It can be really simple to start to make a difference to biodiversity levels.

You don't have to have an enormous garden – even one plant on a windowsill can make a difference. Birds and insects can use the small interventions we make as stepping stones to move around the neighbourhood.

We have a moth trap which tells us about the night-time pollinators in our area – we planted a mint plant, and when we looked at the moths in the area, we learned that we have a mint moth!

But you don't have to have a lot of specialist equipment to start to record ecological data.



You can just start by observing, and identifying what you find and making a note.

If you have access to a smart phone, we have started to use a few Apps in our area that have helped us to identify birds, plants and creatures, and to ensure what we see is recorded and can add to the State of Nature Report.

Simple ideas for increasing biodiversity in your area

Create wildlife corridors, as connections between green spaces to act as a stepping stone for nature.



Think about planting native plants that can provide forage for wildlife all year round, for example:

Spring - Crocus

Summer - Borage

Autumn - honeysuckle

Winter - Ivy



Don't cut back stems and seed heads of overwintering plants as they can provide important habitat and food for wildlife.

Create habitats for nature, by making bug hotels and installing bird boxes.



Refrain from the use of weedkillers and pesticides and ask your council not to use them in your area.



Ideas for creative ways to Make Biodiversity Visible:



You can also use creative ways to support your community to make biodiversity visible. We have used lots of methods to notice and amplify the nature in our neighbourhood. This is a great way to create conversations with your neighbours and community about the local environment.

Set up a hands on session where everyone selects and identifies plants and flowers growing in the neighbourhood. You can aim to notice insects like butterflies, moths, worms and other creepy crawlies, using reference books to identify what is around, and perhaps upload what you found out to National databases, or Apps which monitor biodiversity.

Then you can use a variety of visual methods to record what you have found creatively. We use clay to make the plants and invertebrates visible in our area: for this each person identifies plants and other species and then we create a ceramic plaque which shows what we have found.

You could also observe and then draw or print the plants and creatures you have found and create a poster with your community?



Weblinks:

theonehundredyearplan.com

theportlandinnproject.com

[Natural England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

