

Executive Summary

Greater Gwent State of Nature asks the question ‘what do we know about the wildlife within Greater Gwent?’ The report collates data for 100 species or groups of species and interprets what this data shows. By studying species populations and trends, changes and threats in the wider ecosystems that support them are revealed.

The 100 species and species groups were chosen by partners within the Resilient Greater Gwent partnership, Local Nature Partnerships and local experts, with a focus on species that were representative of different habitats found across Greater Gwent, or were of local interest, or conservation interest. Data was collected from Local Records Centres, particularly the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBReC), national recording schemes and local recorders and recording groups. This data was then used to present maps showing distribution, abundance and age of records, and where possible regional population trends.

Data availability and quality varies hugely between species, from just a handful of historic records to thousands of records and reliable regional trends. Around a third of species or species groups studied were considered to have ‘Good’ data – meaning that the data was thought to be an accurate representation of the regional status of the species. The use of biological records has many limitations, as recording can be heavily biased, and each record only represents the location of a species at a particular point in time.

The variety of species covered includes both increasing and decreasing species – the well-documented recovery of otters, for example, as well as the serious declines shown by adders and lapwings. For almost every species, however, the data shows that there is much more that can be done – protecting and managing places where a species is abundant, restoring habitat and connectivity for declining species, and recording and monitoring to fill the gaps in the data.

Several issues in monitoring and recording of species, and in data availability are highlighted by the report. These include recording bias towards certain species and locations, variability of national recording scheme coverage and consistency, data duplication and data disconnect. There is also a lack of information regarding previous conservation activity.

It is hoped that the information within the Greater Gwent State of Nature will be used to direct further recording and monitoring, as well as inform future conservation action.