

Biodiversity Benchmark Introduction Pack



August 2023

Contents

Introduction to Biodiversity Benchmark	3
Overview of the standard	3
Why you should apply for Biodiversity Benchmark	4
Biodiversity Benchmark process	5
Case studies	6

Introduction to Biodiversity Benchmark

We believe that we can achieve more for wildlife by working together: everyone has a part to play in turning round the nature and climate crises.

Since 2007, Biodiversity Benchmark has been helping landowning businesses be a positive force for nature's recovery in the UK. This unique certification scheme by one of the UK's best-loved nature charities, tests the design and implementation of a business's management systems to achieve continual biodiversity enhancement and protection on their landholdings.

Over 8,500 ha of land on 52 sites have met the standard.

We want to recognise and celebrate those businesses that have achieved excellence in the way they manage land for nature. The Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark is the only standard that certifies the management of your business landholdings for wildlife.



© TOYOTA

Overview of the standard

Each Biodiversity Benchmark application will have a bespoke plan, according to the habitat you are managing and the landscape within which it sits. To find out about the requirements of Biodiversity Benchmark please find a summary below:

- 1. Habitat management:** Demonstrating effective management of different habitats, such as grasslands, woodlands, wetlands, and coastal areas, to enhance biodiversity.
- 2. Species conservation:** Implementing measures to protect and conserve species of conservation concern, including monitoring populations and implementing appropriate management actions.
- 3. Ecological surveys:** Conducting regular ecological surveys to assess the biodiversity value of the site and track changes over time.
- 4. Community engagement:** Involving local communities and stakeholders in biodiversity conservation initiatives and raising awareness about the importance of biodiversity.
- 5. Sustainable land use:** Promoting sustainable land management practices, including responsible use of pesticides, water conservation, and minimizing habitat fragmentation.
- 6. Environmental education:** Providing educational opportunities and resources to enhance understanding and appreciation of biodiversity.
- 7. Monitoring and reporting:** Keeping records of biodiversity-related activities and outcomes, and reporting on progress towards biodiversity conservation targets.

These requirements aim to ensure that organisations actively manage their land or sites to enhance biodiversity, contribute to local ecological networks, and promote sustainable practices.

Why you should apply to become Biodiversity Benchmark certified

The Wildlife Trusts' vision is of a thriving natural world, with our wildlife and natural habitats playing a valued role in addressing the climate and ecological emergencies, where everyone is inspired to get involved in nature's recovery.

The UN Biodiversity Conference (COP15) in December 2022 saw leaders of many nations, including the UK, signing up to a global target of restoring 30% of land for nature by 2030, with expectations on the private sector to support this and disclose their impacts on biodiversity.

International initiatives – such as the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures and the Science-based Targets Network – are driving increased focus for businesses on the risk of biodiversity loss. Nature's recovery is becoming imperative for business alongside net zero plans in respect of climate targets.

The Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark plays a unique role in helping you to make a valuable contribution towards achieving this goal, as well as providing evidence of that commitment.

Biodiversity Benchmark is a respected and long-established standard for the management of commercial landholdings for wildlife. It is the only standard that certifies and celebrates the

management of your business landholdings for nature and wildlife. It is a quality mark that demonstrates to staff, customers and the wider public differentiation in your approach to contributing to nature's recovery. The wellbeing benefits of access to nature are well-documented, and Biodiversity Benchmark also acknowledges these positive impacts for employees and others who may access well-managed nature sites.

Biodiversity Benchmark provides both assurance of your compliance, and the endorsement of one of the UK's largest and most-respected environmental charities. It enables integrated systems as it links with internationally established Management System based standards such as ISO14001 and Health and Safety standards ISO9001 and ISO45001.

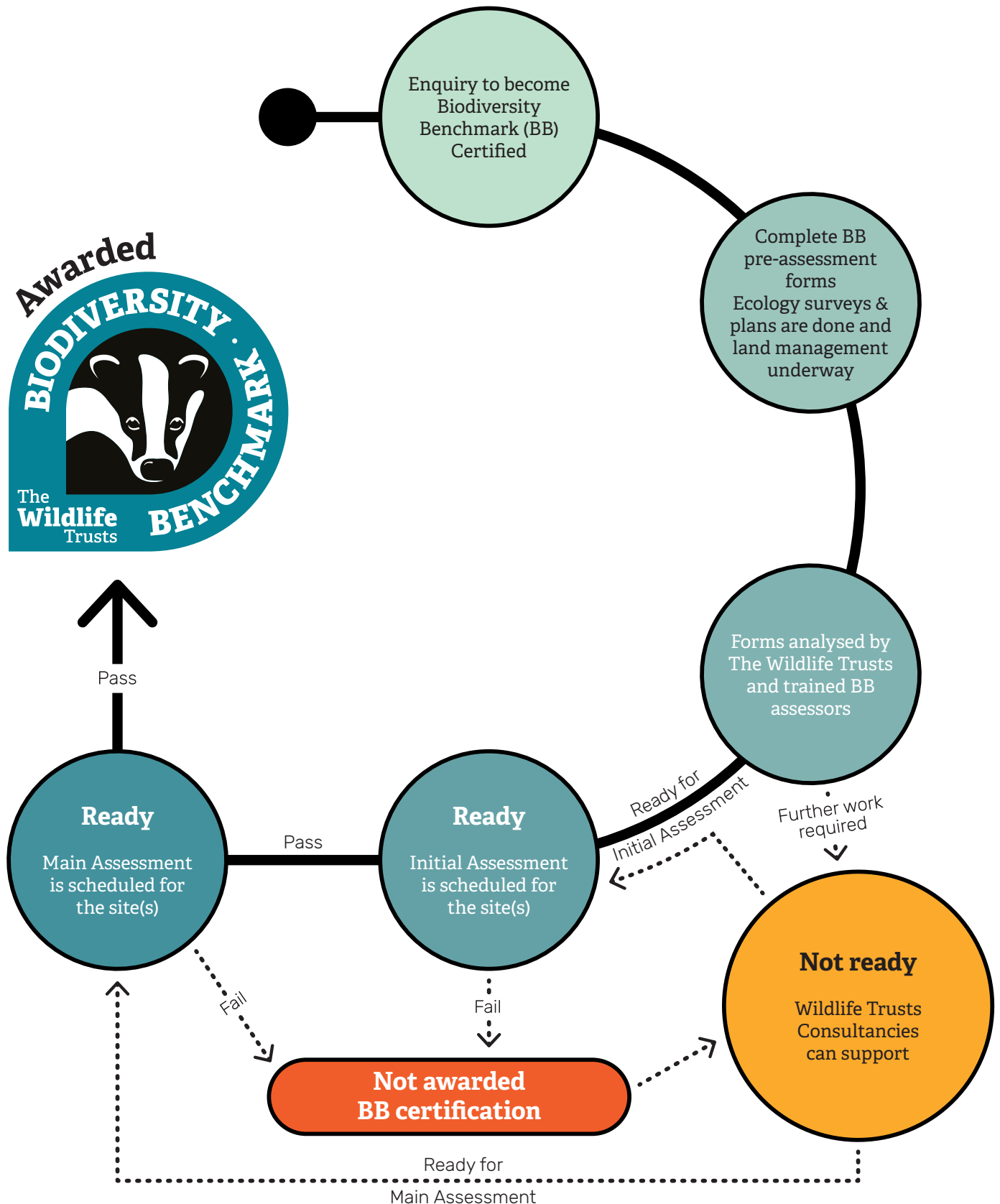
Landowning businesses can be a positive force for nature's recovery and Biodiversity Benchmark recognises and celebrates organisations that have met the standard by publicising it on our website and issuing a certificate signed by The Wildlife Trusts' Chief Executive.

Biodiversity Benchmark provides a framework within which an organisation can ensure that its impact is positive on nature by providing robust, independent verification of land management practices. Some of the benefits are as follows:

- Improving and managing nature to benefit the environment and society.
- Mitigate climate change impacts.
- Demonstrate you take your responsibilities for environmental sustainability on your landholdings seriously.
- Build relationships with local communities.
- Development of relationships with other stakeholders such as Natural England and the Environment Agency.
- Have your land management practices certified by one of the most trusted environmental charities in the UK.



How to become Biodiversity Benchmark certified



Biodiversity Benchmark

client case studies

Rare orchids make a return at the Met Office

In 2021, the Met Office celebrated 10 consecutive years of holding the Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark certification for their work at their 9.1 hectare headquarters site in Exeter.

The Met Office was keen to demonstrate its support to deliver national and local biodiversity priorities identified in the area e.g. Exeter Wild City Living Landscape, as well as to have its commitment to biodiversity work formally recognised. The Met Office chose The Wildlife Trusts' Biodiversity Benchmark standard to help achieve this.

They have developed a biodiversity management system, which contains several examples of good practices in fulfilment of the Biodiversity Benchmark requirements, including their Biodiversity Action Plan and a Continual Improvement Report for 2021-22. One example of continual improvement at the site is the number of bee orchids, which have increased from one flowering plant in 2008 to 390 in 2021! The site's biodiversity database includes an impressive 486 species, of which 121 (25%) are noteworthy species.



Biodiversity Benchmark

client case studies

Meadows and lakes teeming with wildlife at Stockley Park

Stockley Park, an 88-acre business estate south of Uxbridge, became the first business estate within the M25 to be awarded the Biodiversity Benchmark. Achieving Biodiversity Benchmark has demonstrated how Stockley Park manages the estate with biodiversity improvement as a priority, with its Biodiversity Action Plan purposefully providing the protection and enhancement of wildlife.

The site is now home to stag beetles, five different species of bats, 23 breeding bird species (including reed warblers), honeybees, water voles, newts and hedgehogs. The 10 lakes are abundant with fish such as carp and pike.

They have selected different species of plants to benefit pollinators, and wildflower meadows have been added to provide environments welcoming to both insects and birds. The protected bee orchid is researched and nurtured across the park.

"Stockley Park Estates Company Ltd is very proud of receiving The Wildlife Trust's Biodiversity Benchmark Award. The park and the team has benefitted enormously from the biodiversity action plan which has guided us on how to make the area more inviting for the local wildlife. We are encouraged by receiving the award to improve the park even more and integrate biodiversity within our events so our occupiers can also learn and benefit from it."

Bogdan Balut,
Landscape Contract
Manager at
Stockley Park.



© JOHN BRIDGES

© THE WILDLIFE TRUSTS

The Wildlife Trusts are a federated movement of 46 charities, supported by a central charity, the Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts. Together we have more than 900,000 members, 35,000 volunteers and 3,000 staff across the UK. We share a vision of nature in recovery, with abundant, diverse wildlife and natural processes creating wilder landscapes where people and nature thrive.



Wildlife Trusts care for – and have restored – some of the most special places for wildlife in the UK. Collectively we manage more than 2,300 nature reserves, operate 123 visitor and education centres and own 29 working farms. We undertake research, we stand up for wildlife and wild places under threat, and we help people access nature.

We work with businesses who are committed to being nature positive take action to help restore 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030

The Wildlife Trusts

✉ bb@wildlifetrusts.org
🖱 wildlifetrusts.org/biodiversity-benchmark

🐦 @WildlifeTrusts
📘 @wildlifetrusts
📷 @thewildlifetrusts