

Background to the BIGs

In 1994, the [UK Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (UK), a detailed programme for conserving biodiversity in the UK, was published in response to the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD). Despite these commitments and the combined efforts of the conservation community, biodiversity loss in England has continued.

In November 2008, a new delivery framework for England, '[Securing Biodiversity](#)', was launched to improve biodiversity. The framework aims to enhance the recovery of priority habitats and species, adopting an integrated, ecosystem approach, to meet our 2015 national biodiversity targets. The framework has been developed and endorsed by the [England Biodiversity Group](#) and wider partnership.

Under the new framework, nine biodiversity groups have been established: wetland, woodland, rivers, lakes and ponds, lowland farmland, urban, upland, coastal and marine. The BIGs are chaired by government agencies or professional habitat experts and include representation from national and regional organisations and partnerships. They are charged with driving the delivery of priority habitat targets and those of associated species, through close working with taxonomic advisory groups: they will set the standards for habitat-based working, agree targets, identify and carry out priority projects for delivery, in particular landscape-scale projects and identify policy priorities. They will work closely with regional and, at times, local biodiversity partnerships to agree the most important areas for landscape-scale delivery