

## About this Audit

### Regional Boundaries

For the purposes of this audit the boundary is that used by the Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber. This is being used increasingly by organisations and agencies as regionalisation progresses. It includes North Yorkshire, the Unitary Authorities of what were once West Yorkshire and South Yorkshire and the old county of Humberside. North and North-east Lincolnshire are therefore included, as are areas of the Peak District National Park, Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors National Parks within the old county boundaries (see Map 1). Only marine habitats within 12 miles of the coast are considered in the report, though some marine species records from further out are presented. Local planning authority jurisdiction on the coast only extends to land above the low tide mark. Consequently no marine habitats can be ascribed to local planning authority boundaries.

### Towns and Districts

Throughout the audit, where district towns, eg. Doncaster, are noted, this refers to the whole district not the town itself.

### Natural Areas

English Nature has developed a map of England divided into 120 Natural Areas characterised by their particular wildlife and natural features. This correlates with the Countryside Agency's landscape character areas (which form sub-divisions of the Natural Areas). They do not follow administrative boundaries but delineate areas with a common history of land use and ecological character. They provide a logical and natural way of approaching land use and ecological issues and promote more effective action on a regional scale by encouraging co-operation between local authorities. Profiles have been written for each Natural Area and are available from English Nature. A map of the areas in this region is given (Map 2) and reference will be made to these areas in the audit.

### Habitat Data

The habitats covered in this report are those which have or will have national habitat action plans. These are listed in Table 1 and are compared to broad habitat types and to the specialist habitats identified in the EC Habitats Directive. Information on these habitats has been gathered from a wide range of sources including published and unpublished material.

For each habitat an attempt has been made to provide information on:

- the total UK resource, both quantity and distribution
- the regional resource, where possible quantified and presented as amounts within each local planning authority boundary and Natural Area

Where appropriate this information is presented in map form. Care should be taken in interpreting the maps. What the map portrays may vary. It may be, depending on the availability of data:

- simple presence or absence of habitats
- proportions of the Regional resource
- actual locations of key sites

Please read the text accompanying each map to determine which of the above categories it falls into. The extent of some local planning authorities or Natural Areas are split between more than one area on the maps, such as Scarborough District and the Lincolnshire Wolds Natural Area (see Maps 1 and 2).

Information is also provided in the text on each habitat, providing a description which mentions important associated species; then under the heading 'status,' the conservation value, quantity and quality of the habitat is given. Under 'threats', the main issues of concern are listed. References are given at the end of these habitat summaries and the data sources provided with the tabled information.

### **Species Data**

Species data are presented in two main tables showing the known presence of each species in individual districts and in Natural Areas. The audit has gathered historic as well as current information and these are presented under the following categories:

- recent (from 1990 onwards)
- ▶ old (from 1960 to 1989 inclusive)
- historic (1959 or earlier)

Interpretation of this information will vary from species to species. For example, some plants have seeds which can remain in the soil for many years before germinating. Consequently, a lack of recent records may not necessarily mean that the species has been lost from the region. Those species considered extinct are noted as such in the summaries. The tabulated information should be used together with the text in the species summaries, where additional unconfirmed records may be included.

### **How Accurate and Comprehensive is the Information in this Audit?**

As mentioned earlier, this audit represents a comprehensive gathering of known existing information on the most important species and habitats in the region. However, in common with all other audits of its type there are gaps in the information. Not all areas of the region have been comprehensively surveyed for all species and habitats. The information is also variable in age. Some habitat data presented may be ten years old or more. This gives a valuable insight into the resource, but care should be taken in its interpretation. A great deal of land-use change can happen over ten years. It is highly likely that a proportion of most of the habitats presented here will have been lost in that time. However the information presented is robust, as accurate as possible and will be a vital planning tool.

### **What Happens Now?**

The first phase of the biodiversity audit for the region is complete. However, this should be seen as the start of a process rather than the end. Biodiversity conservation should involve all. Continuing action is constantly evolving amongst the key organisations in the region. Some of the important tasks have already been outlined in the Regional Biodiversity Audit sections above. There are a number of generic tasks which must be addressed soon. These include the following:

- create the lists of regionally important species and habitats and publish an addendum to this report
- support the production of a network of local biodiversity action plans which cover the whole region
- enhance biodiversity through:
  - the protection and sensitive management of all important sites and species and the creation of habitats appropriate to the natural character of the local area
  - ensure all development is properly assessed to cause no environmental damage to biodiversity
- support partnerships to foster education and awareness of sustainable development and joint actions for biodiversity
- support initiatives for the improved acquisition, handling of and access to biodiversity information
- encourage the use of European, national and regional funding for biodiversity purposes
- fully integrate biodiversity planning with economic and social planning under the banner of sustainability within the region

- monitor progress of biodiversity action through the region's sustainable development indicators
- ensure that biodiversity action is embraced within Local Agenda 21
- all local authorities and statutory agencies should develop strategies which identify their role in biodiversity conservation and enact policies and programmes to take these forward in partnership with the conservation agencies
- ensure the increasing involvement of the private sector in making a greater contribution to biodiversity action
- promote the growth of the environmental sector to provide new jobs and new economic opportunities.