

Assessing your Biodiversity Resource and Your Impacts on it

Consider your policies

Start with a **desk based review** of your operations, activities and functions. Here you will rely mainly on documentation and talking to people and if appropriate seeking assistance from a specialist agency (such as [SNH](#) or [SEPA](#)) or the [Local Biodiversity Partnership](#) in your area.

Review any relevant documentation. This will include any relevant internal plans, policies and procedures of your organisation that have any connection with biodiversity.

Survey your Site

If you have grounds around your building(s) or manage any other land you should carry out a site survey. The site survey can be done in-house using your own resources. However you may wish to seek external help.

Inspect and survey any landholdings you own or are responsible for, and find out what habitats and species are there. Any detailed survey work is best carried out by someone with an ecological knowledge, and perhaps your LBAP Officer or local ranger service can help with this.

- The simplest habitat survey method to use is the [Phase 1 Habitat Survey](#) but also look at the [habitats](#) section for a simpler introduction to the different types you may find. A basic survey should be supplemented with a more detailed look at plant and animal species present. Also remember that surveys need to be carried out at the right time of year for different species e.g. to identify breeding birds, or when butterflies are about. [Nature's Calendar](#) identifies the best times to carry out surveys for commonly encountered species.
- You should map where the different habitats and species are found on your land and identify what activities might affect them.
- You could run a Bioblitz over a weekend or maybe over several lunchtimes, to get an idea of the biodiversity in your grounds, it is also an opportunity to get staff involved and to learn about biodiversity – for more information have a look at guides to running Bioblitzes at <http://www.bnhc.org.uk/bioblitz/free-downloadable-resources/> and <http://www.nhm.ac.uk/content/dam/nhmwww/take-part/Citizenscience/bioblitz-guide.pdf> .
- Also check out the following websites for further information on species, habitats and finding out more about the biodiversity at your site:
- OPAL Explore Nature <http://www.opalexplornature.org/>
- Buglife Scotland <https://www.buglife.org.uk/scottish-habitat-management-advice>
- Scotland's Environment Web <http://www.environment.scotland.gov.uk/get-informed/land/>
- Atlas of Living Scotland <https://scotland.nbnatlas.org/>
- Field Studies Council <http://www.field-studies-council.org/>
- Countryside Jobs Training courses <http://www.countryside-jobs.com/Training/short-courses/plants>

Use Local Knowledge

Talk to people within your organisation who are, or could be, taking biodiversity action on the ground for example staff involved with grounds maintenance, LBAPs, education programmes, buildings maintenance, procurement etc; and those who have an interest in nature e.g. bird watching, butterflies, plants.

If this is the first site survey of the grounds [National Biodiversity Network](#) is a useful source of information on species and where they are found. You could also contact your local biological records centre (if you have one) or go to the [Biological Recording in Scotland](#) web site to review possible sources of information. These centres can act as useful sources of ecological information on plants and animals in your area. The website of [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) can also be a useful starting point for gathering relevant information on biodiversity conservation.

Assess the impacts of your activities

If you have run through the checklist [How is biodiversity relevant to your organisation](#) in detail you will already have begun to build up a picture of how your organisation impacts on biodiversity. During this assessment you should now take a more detailed look and identify/characterise your activities and functions together with the corresponding biodiversity effects. These can be most conveniently listed as either direct or indirect effects.

Your review should help you to build a picture of your organisation's relationship with biodiversity (the impacts, both positive and negative) and gather initial ideas on how you can contribute to biodiversity conservation. It should help you to identify information, contacts and resources for future action.

Once you have compiled a list of all the activities you do that could impact on biodiversity you need to then identify the significant ones which you will identify action for and take forward in doing your biodiversity duty.

You might want to use some criteria, to help identify the most significant activities to work on, such as:

- Will there be any loss of biodiversity or irreplaceable habitat from this activity?
- How big or severe is the impact on biodiversity from this activity?
- How likely is an impact and how long will it last?

Examples of activities which may have direct impacts on biodiversity:

Activity/ Public Body function	Likely effects/impacts on biodiversity
Emissions of gases, particles e.g. from industrial flues; crop spraying etc	Air pollution; can affect not only humans but plant and animal species, habitats and ecosystems. Air Scotland's environment web
Discharges, leaks and spills to water courses e.g. from industry, sewerage; crop spraying...	Water pollution; can affect plant and animals species and habitats either in or near water; Water Scotland's environment web
Land use/management including waste disposal, contamination, agriculture, development, industry, landfill, recreation	loss of habitat, direct damage or destruction of habitat; impacts the species of plants and animals associated with those habitats. Land Scotland's environment web
Use of natural resources	Unsustainable use of water, fuel, soils
Development control	Permitting developments that either remove (negative) or alternatively enhance (positive)

	habitats, species and ecosystems. https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/planning-and-development
Grounds maintenance	Planting, mowing and maintenance regimes have the capacity to severely restrict biodiversity (negative) or to enhance it (positive). https://www.nature.scot/scotlands-biodiversity/biodiversity-duty/biodiversity-duty-guidance-and-advice/grounds-and-habitat-management
Education	Incorporating more awareness raising and education on biodiversity into core curriculum could be very positive
Health	Promoting and supporting an environment rich in biodiversity and making the link to quality of life.
Sport	Promoting biodiversity awareness and the link with quality of life and health
Business	Promoting awareness in businesses regeneration and encouraging the incorporation of biodiversity considerations into business decision making.

People and the Environment [People and the environment | Scotland's environment web](#)