

Broads Wildlife and Habitat Importance and Designations

1 Summary

The Broads is one of Europe's finest and important wetlands for nature conservation. It includes designated sites for nature conservation, including 28 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), which cover 24% of the Broads executive area. One-third of SSSIs are designated National Nature Reserves (NNRs) (Map 3). Virtually all SSSIs also have international designation under European Habitats and Birds Directives and Ramsar Convention (Map 4). For more on the legislation see section 3 in this Appendix.

The Broads, apart from having many designated sites for nature conservation, is also important for wildlife throughout its area, with land and water managed for both biodiversity and landscape. Often, hydrological connections between the waterways, fens and grazing marsh dykes will result in pollution in one part of the wetland affecting a wide area.

Biodiversity Action Plans, derived from the UK's ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity, give guidance and targets for species and habitat management and protection.

The Water Framework Directive establishes a framework for protection surface water, groundwater, and coastal and transitional waters. Targets are set to protect and improve the ecological status of the waterbodies.

2 Habitats

Maps 1 and 2 show the distribution of important habitats for nature conservation in the Broads.

2.1 *Water and Reedswamp*

There are 63 broads, of which 68% are directly connected to the rivers. Pollution from the river has been shown to affect these connected broads. Several of the broads and rivers are home to rare aquatic plants; some found nowhere else in the UK, such as holly-leaved naiad and intermediate stonewort.

2.2 *Fens and Reedbeds*

The Broads has the largest expanse of lowland species-rich fen in lowland Britain. Fens and reedbeds as part of the Broads wetland are in hydrological connection to the river water thus water quality is important for this habitat as it is for the open water itself.

2.3 *Estuary*

Breydon is an important salt marsh area with mud-flats which provide an internationally important staging post for migratory birds.

2.4 **Grazing Marshes**

These drained or grazing marshes, if managed correctly provide habitat to farmland birds, particularly waders and wildfowl. The grazing marsh dykes are important for aquatic plants and rare invertebrates such as snails. Water to supply these dykes can come from the river. This is the case for Halvergate Marshes Special Area of Conservation, (SAC) where river water is pumped into the grazing marsh dykes via the Stracey intake.

3 **Legislation**

3.1 **International Legislation**

Ramsar Convention: Or to give it its full title, the 'Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, especially as Waterfowl Habitat'. This is a global convention, signed at Ramsar in Iran in 1971, and ratified by the UK in 1976. It has 3 main aims: designation of wetlands as Ramsar sites, 'wise use' of wetlands, and international co-operation.

3.2 **EU legislation**

Habitats Directive: To promote maintenance of biodiversity by requiring member states to take measures to maintain or restore habitats and species at 'favourable conservation status', with national governments reporting to the EU every 6 years. It includes designating a series of protected sites (Special Areas of Conservation SAC), which together with SPAs classified under the **Birds Directive** (see below), makes up an EU-wide network of sites (the **Natura 2000** series).

Birds Directive: Requires member states to take steps to protect listed bird species and the habitats on which they depend by classifying Special Protection Areas (SPA).

Both the Habitats and Birds Directives are enshrined in UK legislation under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994, otherwise known as the 'Habitats Regulations'.

Water Framework Directive: To establish a framework for protection of inland surface waters (and) groundwater. It aims to ensure all aquatic ecosystems, and, with regard to their water needs, all terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands meet 'good status' by 2015. The Directive requires member states to establish river basin districts and management plans, to be reviewed every 6 years.

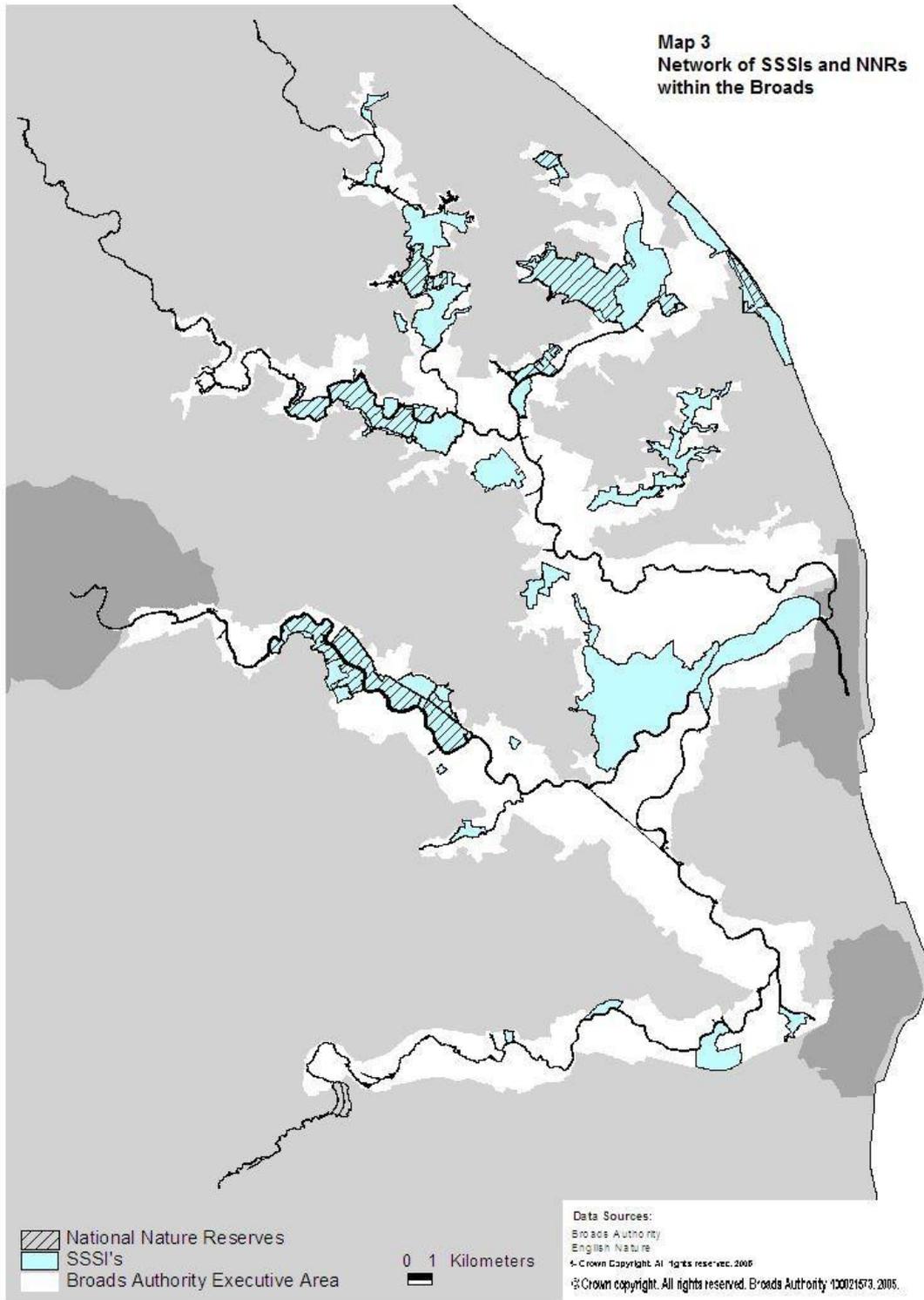
3.3 **UK legislation**

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): this underpins statutory nature conservation in the UK, and most significantly, makes provision for the notification by English Nature of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and where appropriate, National Nature Reserves managed by 'approved bodies' other than EN.

The Act is supplemented and amended by the **Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000**, which strengthens protection of SSSIs by giving English Nature greater enforcement powers, and makes provision for open public access to certain types of land (defined as mountain, moor, heath, and down). Section 28 places a duty on all public bodies, including the Broads Authority, to enhance the special interests of SSSIs.

The provisions of the 1995 Environment Act (Section 62) and 2000 CRoW Act (Sections 85 and 97) confer statutory duties on 'relevant authorities', which include statutory agencies and local authorities, to have regard to the purposes of national parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Broads.

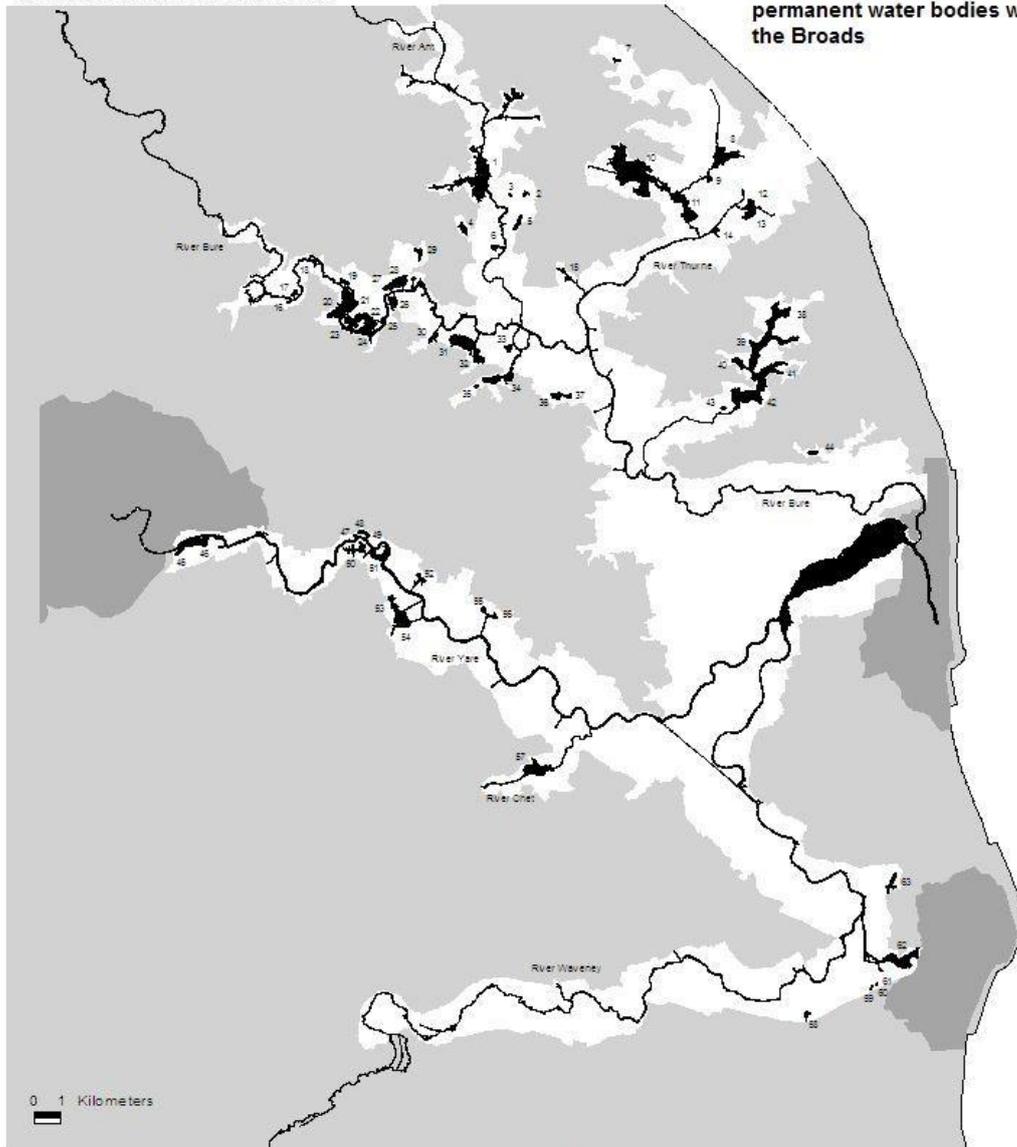
Biodiversity Action Plans: these are a framework for achieving wildlife conservation based on targets for habitats and species. These are identified and planned for at local, regional and national level, and usually implemented by local partnerships. They can embrace broad habitats (ie fens) or the needs of the smallest insects or plants (such as Norfolk hawker dragonfly). The production of BAPS derived from the UK's ratification of the Convention on Biological Diversity, itself one of the outcomes of the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992.



Data Sources:
Broads Authority

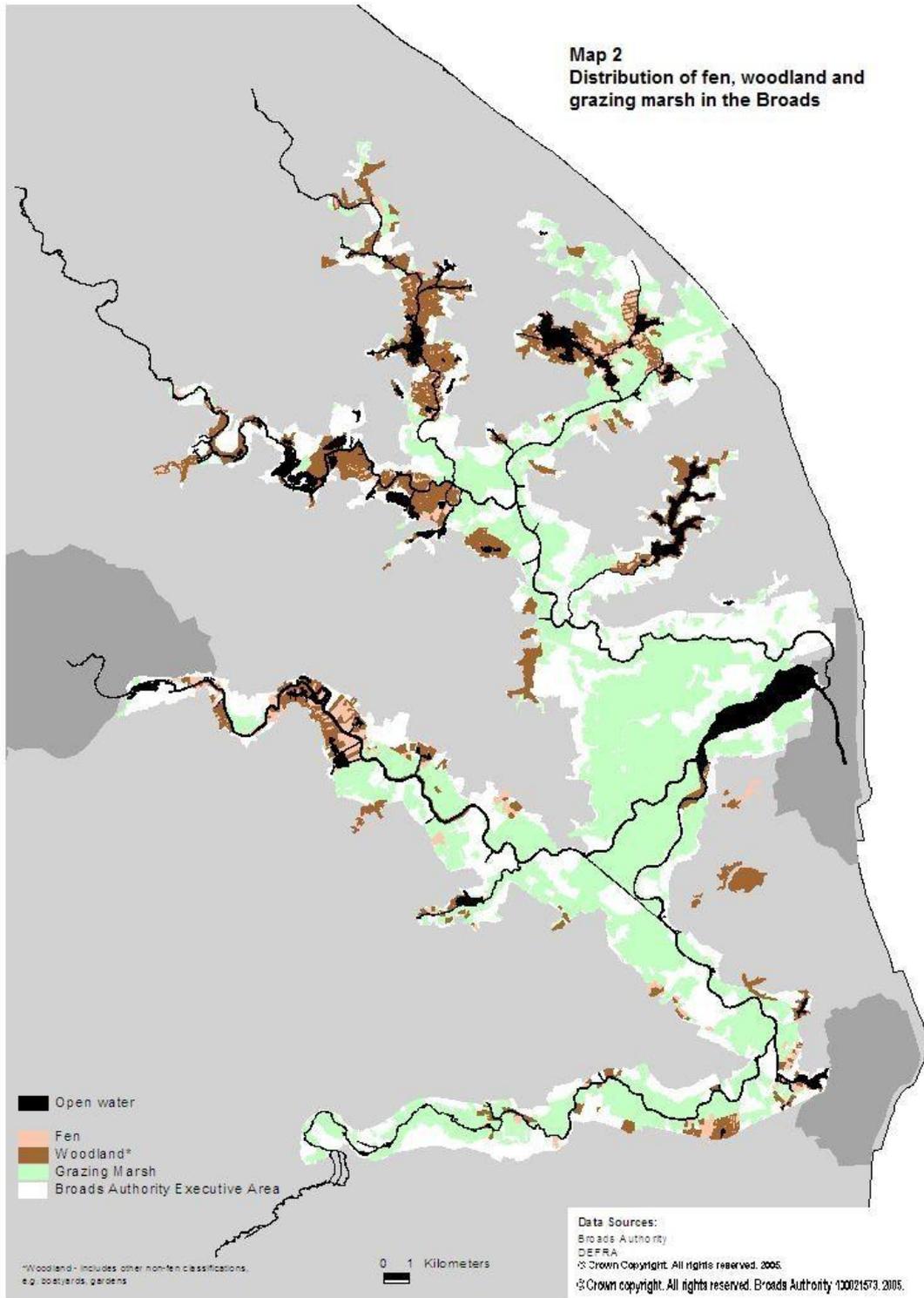
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Map 1
Location and condition of permanent water bodies within the Broads



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|-------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1 Barton Broad | 17 Belaugh Broad | 33 Ranworth Flood | 49 Brundall Inner Broad |
| 2 Catfield Broad | 18 Bridge Broad | 34 South Walsham Broad | 50 Burlingham Broad |
| 3 Irstead Holmes | 19 Snape's Water | 35 Sotshole Broad | 51 Bargate Broad |
| 4 Alderfen Broad | 20 Wroxham Broad | 36 Upton Great Broad | 52 Strumpshaw Broad |
| 5 Cromes Broad | 21 Hudson's Bay | 37 Upton Little Broad | 53 Wheatfen broad & channels |
| 6 Reedham Water | 22 Hoveton Great Broad | 38 Ormesby Broad | 54 Rookland Broad |
| 7 Calthorpe Broad | 23 Salhouse Little Broad | 39 Rollesby Broad | 55 Buckingham Broad |
| 8 Horsley Mere | 24 Salhouse Broad | 40 Lily Broad | 56 Hassingham Broad |
| 9 Blackfoot Broad | 25 Devil's Hole | 41 Ormesby Little Broad | 57 Hardley Flood |
| 10 Hickling Broad | 26 Decoy Broad | 42 Filby Broad | 58 Barnby Broad |
| 11 Heigham Sound | 27 Pound End | 43 Little Broad | 59 Woolner's Carr |
| 12 Martham North | 28 Hoveton Little Broad | 44 Mautby Decoy | 60 Round Water |
| 13 Martham South | 29 Burntfen Broad | 45 Whittingham Little Broad | 61 Sprat's Water |
| 14 Martham Pits | 30 Cookshoat Broad | 46 Whittingham Great Broad | 62 Oulton Broad |
| 15 Womack Water | 31 Ranworth Broad | 47 Brundall Outer Broad | 63 Flixton Decoy |
| 16 Norton's Broad | 32 Malthouse Broad | 48 Brundall Gardens Lake | |

Map 2
Distribution of fen, woodland and grazing marsh in the Broads



Map 4
Network of SSSIs within the Broads
that is also of European importance

