

**RMA**

# **BIODIVERSITY DUTY**

(2020-2023)



**REDUCING  
SERIOUS HARM**

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Reports published by the RMA which contain the Biodiversity activities carried out to date are as follows:

<b>Date of Report</b>	<b>Period Covered</b>
Jan 2015	2012 - 2014
Jan 2018	2015 - 2017
Jan 2021	2018 - 2020
Aug 2024	2020 - 2023

# What is the Biodiversity Duty?

**Biodiversity - nature to most people - underpins our lives, our prosperity and the very essence of our world. The wildlife, habitats and other forms of nature with which we share planet Earth are valuable in their own right quite apart from the pleasure we take from their existence and the ways in which they support us.**

This report provides details on what actions the Risk Management Authority (RMA) has taken to highlight our Biodiversity Duty contributions to national and international targets. The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 places a statutory duty on all public bodies in Scotland to further the conservation of biodiversity. Section 1 of the Act states:

*“It is the duty of every public body and office holder, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as it is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions”*

The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 introduced a requirement for all public bodies in Scotland to make a report publicly available on their compliance with the biodiversity duty. Biodiversity Duty reports are required every three years. The Biodiversity duty is not only about protecting biodiversity through managing specific sites, habitats and species. It also aims to:

- Increase the level of understanding & connection between people and the living environment
- Encourage staff, partners and customers to engage with and understand and consider biodiversity
- Promote consideration of all our impacts on the natural world through our actions and decisions, including through procurement and use of resources



# Why is Biodiversity Important to Public Bodies in Scotland?

**Biodiversity is fundamental to the living networks (the ecosystems) that provide us all with a healthy environment and a regulated climate. It provides many vital services that enrich our lives and that we depend on.**

Biodiversity underpins much of our food and drink production through maintaining healthy soils and pollination, it captures carbon and helps to clean and cool the air, it protects us against flooding and it regulates our supply of fresh water.

Human activity is causing biodiversity to be lost at a greatly accelerated rate and these losses can be irreversible, impoverish us all and damage the life systems we all rely on.

Biodiversity loss and the climate emergency are intimately linked. Climate change increases the pressure on biodiversity while the living world provides us with nature-based solutions to climate change and to a wide range of associated socio-economic outcomes in rural and urban areas alike.

Many organisations, even those that don't manage or regulate the use of land, rely on healthy biodiversity to provide them with goods and services that are essential to their operations and to the wellbeing of their staff, customers and users.

The public sector can play a key role in leading by example and it can make a real contribution to Scotland's efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and implement our international obligations such as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Scottish Natural Heritage provide guidance to help identify how organisation's link to biodiversity. This guidance is proportionate to the organisation's role and remit, incorporating the elements on which we should report.



# Section 1: Introductory Information

**The RMA is a non-departmental public body (NDPB) funded by the Scottish Government. It was established in 2005 under the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2003.**

The RMA work to make Scotland safer through developing evidence-based risk assessment and risk management, setting and raising standards of practice, improving knowledge and confidence and influencing policy and practice in Scotland.

The Board is responsible for setting the strategic direction of the RMA and, together with the RMA Chief Executive, ensures that Best Value is achieved through efficient and effective use of resources and personnel.

The RMA has a small structure of twenty four permanent employees and we place great emphasis on the continued development of colleagues to support the achievement of our corporate and business plan objectives.

## Section 2: Actions to Protect Biodiversity and Connect People with Nature

The Sustainability section of the RMA's Best Value report details our achievements against the following core principle: living within environmental limits. Evidence recorded against this objective for 2020-2023 are:

- use of video conferencing for online meetings and delivery of training and inputs to reduce corporate travel
- use of Diligent Board software for Board Meeting papers to reduce the level of printed materials
- implementation of formal Hybrid working policy to reduce colleague travel
- installation of timed electrical heating with smart meter control system
- replacement of office fluorescent lighting with LED lighting
- improvements in provision of recycling facilities for colleague use
- provision of cycle to work scheme and secure on-site cycle storage
- provision of multiple monitors to reduce the level of printed materials

## **Section 3: Mainstreaming Biodiversity**

The Sustainability section of the RMA's Best Value report outlines examples of how biodiversity is considered within our governance policies and procedures. Evidence recorded by the RMA against this objective for 2020-2023 are:

- Annual publication of Best Value reports
- Operation and review of suitable procurement policies and procedures
- RMA policy to support colleague volunteering and voluntary activities

## **Section 4: Nature-Based Solutions, Climate Change and Biodiversity**

Climate change is a direct driver of biodiversity loss. Some species are dying out while others are being displaced due to warmer air temperatures, extreme weather patterns and higher sea levels. As well as being a direct driver of biodiversity loss, climate change also worsens the other drivers. For example it enables quicker spread of non-native invasive species. Combined action for biodiversity loss and climate change can be achieved through nature-based solutions.

The RMA, due to its size and scale, is limited in steps it can take to reduce climate change however we continue to reduce our carbon footprint by reducing paper use, investing in greener lighting and heating systems and supporting colleagues to work from home to reduce travel and associated environmental costs. The RMA has a travel policy which prioritises the use of public transport.

## **Section 5: Workforce Development**

Given the small size and office structure of the RMA, there are limited activities we can undertake in relation to skills relevant to biodiversity, nature or outdoor learning and community engagement in the natural environment.

## Section 6: Research and Monitoring

The RMA is currently researching provision of online training resources rather than classroom-based learning and has introduced a formal Hybrid working arrangement to reduce the volume and impact of corporate travel. We do not currently have monitoring arrangements in place.

## Section 7: Biodiversity Highlights and Challenges

As a public body, the RMA has a duty of Best Value. Best Value ultimately is about creating an effective organisational context from which Public Bodies can deliver their key outcomes. It provides the building blocks on which to deliver good outcomes by ensuring that they are delivered in a manner which is economic, efficient, sustainable and overall is supportive of continuous improvement.

The RMA publishes an annual Best Value report on the actions we have taken to meet this duty. Those duties are:

- To have regard to economy, efficiency, effectiveness, the equal opportunities requirements and to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- To make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in performance whilst maintaining an appropriate balance between quality and cost; and, in making those arrangements and securing that balance

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