

Atmospheric nitrogen pollution impacts on biodiversity: Phase 1 – Model developments and testing

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Project specification

Overall aim

To develop and test models to assess the impact of nitrogen enrichment with specific reference to the delivery of PSA targets for achieving favourable condition on SSSIs and to Biodiversity Action Plan targets for priority habitats and species.

Aims and Objectives

- Review the current knowledge base for atmospheric nitrogen pollution impacts on biodiversity.
- Further develop and test modelling techniques to help quantify the impacts of atmospheric nitrogen deposition on biodiversity nationally.
- Apply the modelling techniques to a sample of habitats and sites to examine current and projected levels of the nitrogen threat (from atmospheric and other sources) to habitats and sites of high nature conservation importance.

Aims and Objectives cont'd

- Provide a preliminary interpretation of the results with respect to achievement of:
 - Public Service Agreement (PSA) target for achieving favourable condition on SSSIs
 - Biodiversity Action Plan targets for priority habitats and species and related indicators of biodiversity.
- Develop proposals for Phase 2 of this work which should allow for a wider geographical application of the models.

Key outputs of Phase 1

A tool kit to assess the impact of N deposition:

- on the plant community and its condition at specific sites and explore management scenarios to abate impacts
- on a national scale by using a broader brush risk assessment
- Recommendations for Phase 2

Timing of the project

- In process of letting the contract
- If negotiations are successful hope to let contract by end of 2003
- Contract will run for approx. 18 months
- Setting up a steering group