



Irish hare

Lepus timidus hibernicus

The current review of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan is considering new ways of working that would see conservation efforts concentrated more on over-arching habitat improvement than on actions aimed at individual species. It is a way of working that is already in place in Northern Ireland, where conservation action is focussed at changing habitats in a way that benefits a number of target species. For example, improvements to farmland habitat benefits the Irish hare *Lepus timidus hibernicus*, a flagship species, but also supports a range of other farmland species.



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> Policy-relevant information and reporting

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JNCC aims to encourage research and produce information products that support the development and implementation of nature conservation policy

An expanding area of JNCC's work is to identify gaps in information about nature conservation and encourage new research to address them.

JNCC supported the Royal Society's international workshop in June that considered the interconnectedness of climate, biodiversity and human well being. An outcome of that meeting has been the Royal Society's policy document, *Biodiversity-climate interactions: adaptation, mitigation and human livelihoods*.

The workshop identified a series of science and policy gaps and research needs. They include improving the evidence base for the role of biodiversity in supporting human wellbeing, and creating a better understanding of how extreme climatic events impact on biodiversity.

During the year JNCC was involved in Biodiversa, a European Research Area consortium that brings together 19 research funding agencies. We also continued to contribute to the Newcastle-based Rural Economy and Land Use programme, which supports inter-disciplinary research into countryside and rural economy issues.

In addition we joined the influential Environment Research Funders' Forum, which brings together the UK's major public sector sponsors of environmental science to make best possible use of funding. It is currently developing an Environmental Observations Framework into which JNCC's surveillance strategy will fit (see section 10, page 47).

> Biodiversity indicators in your pocket Published by Defra

JNCC contributed to work led by Defra to produce indicators that will help measure the impact of efforts to halt biodiversity loss in Europe by 2010. The outcome of this work, *Biodiversity Indicators in Your Pocket*, was published in June 2007 and is a free, pocket-sized booklet that outlines 18 indicators covering various aspects of biodiversity.





JNCC provides secretariat function to major climate change event

Ahmed Djoghlaif, Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity, is seen here addressing the Royal Society's international workshop in London, June 2007. His keynote speech was part of an event that brought together individuals from three very different disciplines – biodiversity scientists, climate change scientists, and experts in poverty alleviation.

JNCC provided the secretariat function for the meeting, including event logistics and issuing delegate invitations, including arranging the sponsorship of several from the least developed countries. We were also involved in organising the drafting of the report that came out from the event, *Biodiversity-climate interaction: adaptation, mitigation and human livelihoods*.

As a consequence of the workshop, JNCC was invited to assist in helping present the findings to specialist audiences across the world, including at the Conference of the Parties for the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



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As described in section 9, JNCC devoted a great deal of effort during the year to the review of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP).

JNCC chairs and provides the secretariat for the Biodiversity Reporting and Information Group (BRIG), a sub-group of the UK Biodiversity Partnership Standing Committee, which plays a key role in the provision of information to support the UK BAP. The group led the development of the new list of UK BAP priority species and habitats, which was published during the year. It was also tasked with the job of identifying conservation actions necessary to prevent and reverse biodiversity loss, and is considering new ways of delivering UK BAP outcomes.

JNCC also provides the secretariat for a second sub-group, the Biodiversity Research Advisory Group (BRAG), which brings together researchers, practitioners and policy-makers to promote scientific research that answers the UK BAP's needs.

In June 2007, JNCC produced a second update of the State of Nature report, first published in 2005, which was presented to the Joint Committee. It pulls together information from a wide range of sources, including new reports from surveillance and monitoring schemes and the large body of work undertaken to report on the conservation status of species and habitats under the Habitats Directive (see section 4, page 23).

The 2005 report described how over 30–40 years about 30 per cent of habitats and species in the UK have declined, with most of the loss between 1960 and the 1980s. That loss has levelled off or was reversed in the 1990s. The 2007 update restates that conclusion, but raises concerns about other pressures on biodiversity, including climate change and the fragmentation of habitats. It says: "The evidence is becoming overwhelming that climate change is a major consideration for nature conservation now and in the future."

**Dusky thorn moth***Ennomos fuscantaria*

One of the many inputs into JNCC's State of Nature update was data on moth populations from a recent report by Butterfly Conservation and Rothamsted Research. It concludes that, of 337 species, 226 suffered population declines between 1968 and 2002.

Eight species declined by 95 per cent or more, including the dusky thorn *Ennomos fuscantaria*, figure of eight *Diloba caeruleocephala* and hedge rustic *Tholera cespitis* moths. The report says that declines across so many species must raise concerns about impacts on the ecosystems of which the moths are part.



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