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# Consideration of an Ecological Emergency

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- Report pertaining to the local situation has been produced and circulated prior to this meeting.
- Acceptance of global and national biodiversity loss.
- Local information provided on:

Condition of designated sites

Water Framework Directive (WFD) Targets

Atlas and Environment Agency information species



# Consideration of an Ecological Emergency

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Updates since the special meeting of the committee held on the 13th December 2021.

- Contact made with Durham University
- Further contact with Butterfly Conservation and members of Durham Bird Club
- Bird data for SPA qualifying species
- More recent survey data for Dingy Skipper (2016)
- Recent opinion from Herptile recorder with regards to reptiles and Great Crested Newts
- Breakdown of LWS data into broad habitat types
- Time series data for WFD monitoring



# Designated Sites & WFD

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**SSSI** - 85% in unfavourable condition in one of three categories

**Local Wildlife Sites** – 70% fail condition assessments

**Ancient Woodlands** – 77% of ancient woodlands fail to meet condition assessments

**WFD** – 94% of the Wear Catchment fails to meet target habitat condition

**WFD** – 85% of the Tees Catchments fails to meet target habitat condition



# Species

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## **Birds.**

- Evidence that declines match national trend (especially Farmland and Woodland & Scrub species)
- SPA qualifying species (turnstone / purple sandpiper) declining

## **Reptiles.**

- All reptiles have declined and probably still declining.
- Grass Snake extinct.

## **Great Crested Newt.**

- Stable population after a decline between 1984 and 2012, no evidence of a recovery



# Species

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## Mammals.

- Red squirrel and Water Vole undergone significant declines.
- Otter have returned after a significant decline

## Butterflies.

- 5 of 7 Priority species have declined
- Specific conservation work is directed towards the fritillary species and some recovery has been achieved



# Species

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## Bumblebees

- Four species locally extinct since 1926
- One species lost from the lowlands of County Durham (1970s)
- New colonist, Tree bumblebee, in 2010

## Salmon and Sea Trout

- Fish counts indicate presence in the Wear and Tees is declining
- EA assessment of Wear and Tees meeting management objectives shows both rivers at greater risk of failing to meet objectives



# Working for Nature now

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A snapshot of what's happening in  
County Durham to promote nature  
recovery



*Curlew - Brian Rafferty*





## Durham Heritage Coast 1992 and 2021

- 12 miles of unique coast restored, 160ha of grassland habitat managed for nature conservation, extending habitat restoration into the marine environment.



## Restoring species rich upland hay meadows in the North Pennines

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Doubling the area of species-rich upland hay meadows



# DCC BIODIVERSITY ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Enhancing council-owned greenspaces  
41ha converted to species rich  
grassland / positive management for  
biodiversity.

# Tees and Wear Rivers Trusts



Promoting good soil management



Metal mine pollution remediation



Coolwaters Tree Planting



Invasive and non-native species



Agricultural diffuse pollution



## Restoring peatlands for nature and climate

North Pennines AONB team has led the restoration of c.16,000ha within County Durham

- Size of Newcastle;
- Avoided carbon loss = 190,000;
- = 2800 cars/year off the roads;
- = emissions of 400,000uk homes/year
- Major benefits for biodiversity





## Expanding tree and woodland cover

- Multiple partners focused on expansion of tree and scrub cover.
- DCC led planting <million trees & 200mls of hedgerow in the last 20 years
- Durham Woodland Revival
- Durham Woodland Creation Programme
- 500ha in UKWAS
- Urban Tree Challenge Fund
- North East Community Forest
- A68 Corridor woodland expansion
- Hybrid elm planting
- Trees Call for Action

# DWT-led projects

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- **Heart of Durham** – restoring arable and forestry to semi-natural habitats, saving the small pearl-bordered fritillary
- **Discover Brightwater** – wetland restoration programme leaving the legacy of the 500 acre Great North Fen
- **Naturally Native** – working with partners to restore water vole populations
- Plus managing 27 nature reserves





## Tees Swale – naturally connected

*Putting farmers at the heart of nature recovery and nature recovery at the heart of farming in Teesdale and Swaledale.*

1250ha peatland restored

Restore at least 225 ha hay meadows

Manage 2,500ha rush

Create at least 40 small wetlands;

Establish 200,000 trees;

Improve water quality in 200km of watercourses by mitigating pollution from diffuse metals;

Improve Fish-passage and habitat on the Greta.

A scenic view of the North Pennines Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The foreground shows a lush green field with several cows grazing. In the middle ground, there's a traditional stone barn and some trees. The background features rolling green hills under a blue sky with white clouds.

# Farming in Protected Landscapes

- Likely to invest c.£1m in the Durham part of the North Pennines AONB in the next 2 years
- Work for nature, climate, people and place
- River restoration, walls and hedges, grassland restoration, public access and more

# Training and Skills to support nature and people

Farmer/conservationist knowledge-exchange



Farmer-led habitat assessment



Contractor training

Volunteer training – DWT, DCC, AONB, RTs

Traineeships

Engagement through citizen science



*Interest, care and action begin with discovery and enjoyment, and with stories not stats*

# Beware Shifting Baseline Syndrome

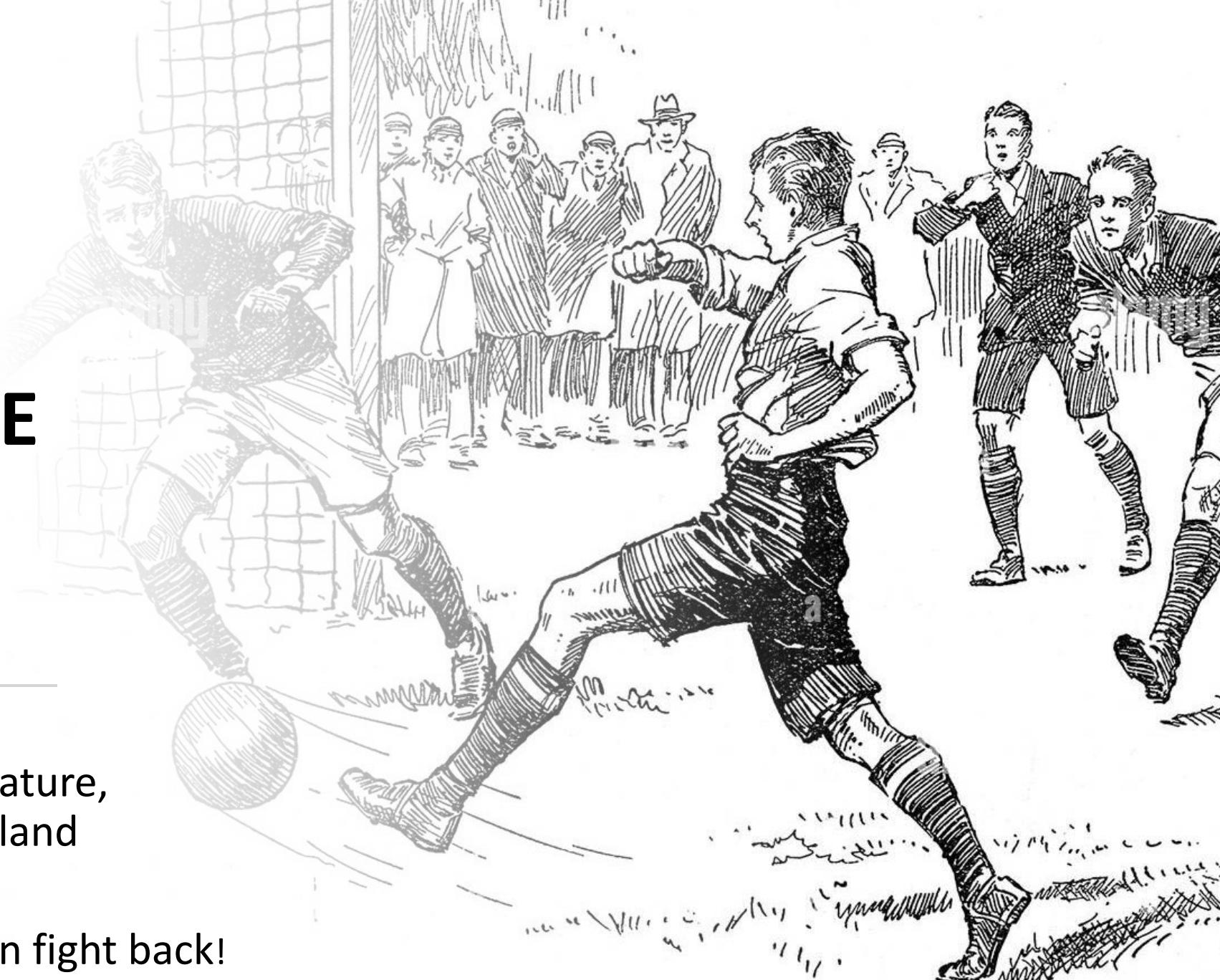


# WERE THIS A FOOTBALL MATCH, NATURE WOULD BE 5-0 DOWN

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Without those working for nature,  
including many farmers and land  
managers, it'd be 10-0.

It's past half-time, but we can fight back!



The CDP Ecological Emergency Board believes there is a global, national, and local ecological emergency that is at least as profound as, and partly linked to, the climate emergency.

