

# Appendix 18: Biodiversity Action Plan Summary

## March Third District Drainage Commissioners



## **Biodiversity Action Plan Summary for March Third District Drainage Commissioners (313)**

The actions listed in this appendix summarise March Third District Drainage Commissioners' Biodiversity Action Plan as a part of the larger Middle Level Biodiversity Action Plan. The plan has been prepared in accordance with the commitment in the Implementation Plan of the DEFRA Internal Drainage Board Review for IDBs to produce their own Biodiversity Action Plans by April, 2010.

It also demonstrates the Commissioners' commitment to fulfilling their duty as a public body under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to conserve biodiversity.

Many of the Commissioners' activities have benefits for biodiversity, not least water level management and ditch maintenance work. This Biodiversity Action Plan will help the Commissioners to maximise the biodiversity benefits of their activities and demonstrate their contribution to the Government's UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets.

The Commissioners have adopted the Biodiversity Action Plan as a policy and are committed to its implementation. The plan will be reviewed periodically and updated as appropriate.

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Date .....

Roger Manchett  
Chairman of the Commissioners

This Biodiversity Action Plan is a public statement by the Commissioners of their biodiversity objectives and the methods by which we intend to achieve them.

We would welcome appropriate involvement in the delivery of the Plan from interested organisations, companies, and individuals.

You can contact us about this Biodiversity Action Plan by writing to the following address:

March Third District Drainage Commissioners  
Middle Level Offices  
Dartford Road  
March  
Cambs PE15 8AF

or by email: [admin@middlelevel.gov.uk](mailto:admin@middlelevel.gov.uk)

Further information is available on the Middle Level Commissioners' website:  
<http://www.middlelevel.gov.uk/>

or from the Environmental Officer employed by the Commissioners to advise on biodiversity matters:  
[cliff.carson@middlelevel.gov.uk](mailto:cliff.carson@middlelevel.gov.uk)

## ***Biodiversity Audit***

### **Map**

The location map shows the drainage district, adopted drains, Middle Level main drains and any relevant designated sites and ditches of biodiversity interest.

### **Designated Sites**

There are no internationally designated sites in the District, no national or local statutory sites and no County Wildlife Sites.

### **Habitats**

Key habitats for March Third DDC:

- Drainage ditch
- Reedbed
- Open water

### **Species**

Key species for March Third DDC:

- Water vole
- Otter
- Bats
- Kingfisher
- Barn owl

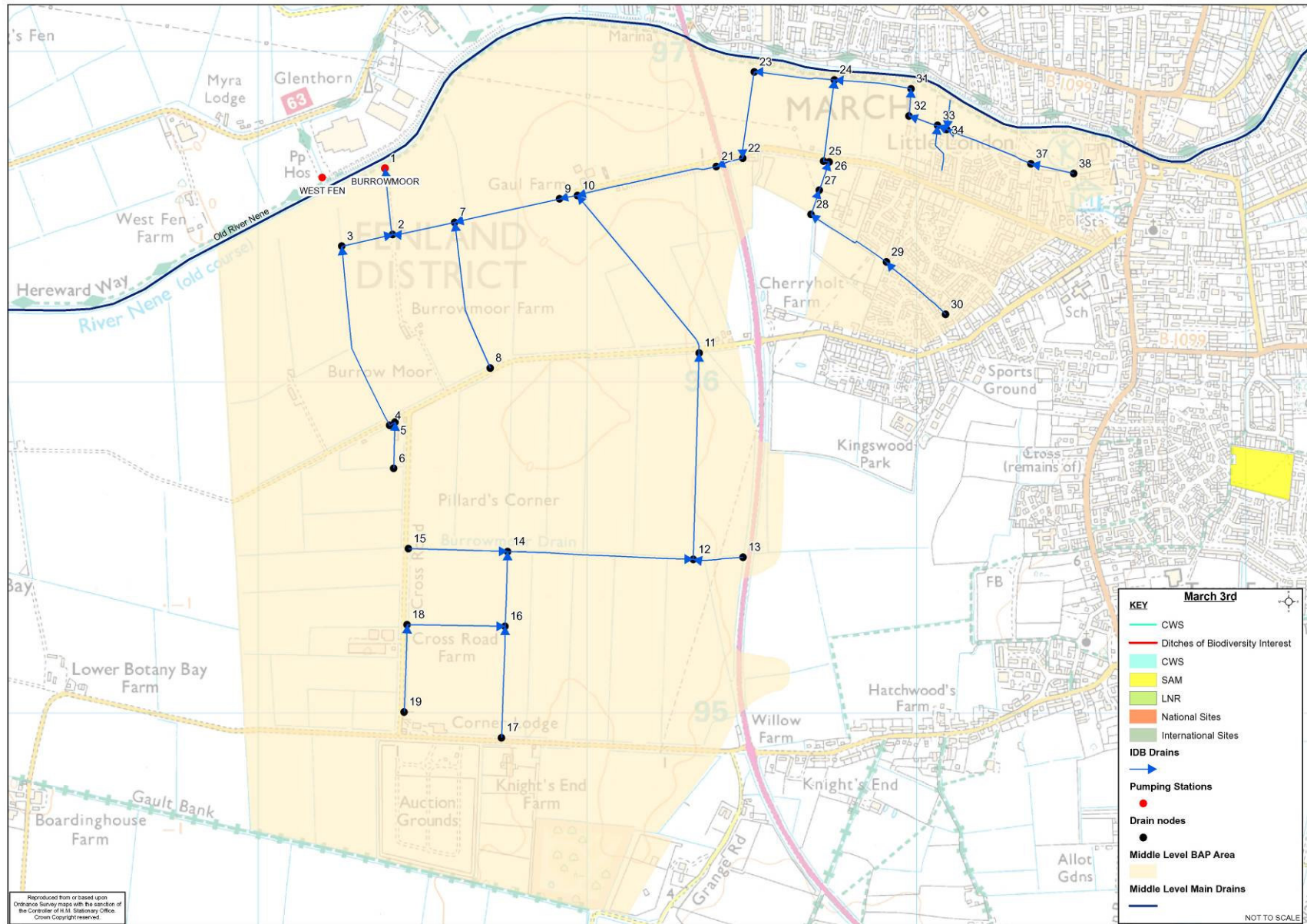
### **Procedural**

Training and capital works are covered by a Procedural Action Plan.

### **Notes**

Water voles have been recorded on some of the IDB drains, the Twenty Foot River and the Whittlesey Dike, and will be assumed to be present when carrying out work. Otters use the Twenty Foot River and probably also the old river Nene. A list of species recorded in the drainage district is provided at the end of this document. The list is restricted to BAP species and species listed under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

# Location Map



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## Drainage Ditch Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Manage ditches for biodiversity as well as for drainage	1.1	Establish and maintain a management plan for routine IDB operations incorporating key biodiversity features	Environmental Officer	2015	Plan finalised and followed each year	<i>Annual after plan created</i>
		1.2	Look for opportunities to provide natural erosion protection such as marginal plant ledges when re-profiling ditches	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	If re-profiling is carried out, opportunities identified	<i>Annual</i>
		1.3	Provide natural erosion protection as in 1.2 if opportunities available	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	Length of ditch with ledge / natural vegetation revetment	<i>Annual if opportunities available</i>
2	Identify ditches of conservation interest and manage appropriately	2.2	Ensure appropriate management of ditches for priority species	Environmental Officer, Plantlife, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Specified in management plan	<i>Annual</i>
3	Support the Environmental Officer in working with landowners to benefit wildlife in the district	3.1	Refer private landowners to the Environmental Officer for advice on creating field margin buffer zones and wildlife-friendly ditch management	Environmental Officer, Natural England, Wildlife Trust, FWAG	Ongoing	Number of contacts received and passed to Environmental Officer	<i>Annual</i>
4	Control invasive species	4.1	Report any sightings of non-native invasive species immediately to the Environmental Officer and control as appropriate (see Appendix F for species list)	Environmental Officer, Environment Agency, Plantlife, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Reports to Environmental Officer	<i>Annual</i>

## Reedbed Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Identify, assess and map any areas of reedbed over 0.5ha in size	1.1	Pass details of any known areas to MLC Environmental Officer	Wildlife Trust, Natural England, Environment Agency	2012	Review of reedbed areas carried out	2013
2	Support appropriate reedbed creation	2.2	Manage the District adopted drains, where possible, to assist private landowners who wish to create areas of reedbed on their own land	Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency	Ongoing	(a) Number of requests received (b) Number of landowners assisted	<i>In response to approaches</i>
3	Take conservation value of reedbed into account when planning and carrying out ditch and river maintenance	3.2	Where reeds are present, commence mowing or cleansing work outside the bird breeding season (7 <sup>th</sup> April – 15 <sup>th</sup> July). Where reeds are growing in water be aware of the potential for late-nesting reed warblers being present until late August and avoid mowing in that location. In exceptional circumstances where this is not possible, seek advice from the Environmental Officer.	Environmental Officer, Wildlife Trust, RSPB	Ongoing	Reeds not cut during bird nesting season	<i>Annual</i>

## Open Water Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Promote the creation of ponds, lakes and reservoirs in appropriate areas	1.1	Consider pond creation as mitigation when a ditch has to be filled in or culverted	Local authorities, Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	(a) Number of mitigation opportunities (b) Number of ponds created	<i>Annual</i>

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		1.2	Support creation of flood storage areas and reservoirs	Environment Agency, Natural England, Wildlife Trust, RSPB	Ongoing	Number of projects involved with	<i>Annual</i>
		1.3	Assist private landowners with advice, information or contacts as necessary	Amphibian & Reptile Conservation, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	(a) Number of information requests (b) Number responded to	<i>Annual</i>
2	Look for opportunities to create open water habitat when managing ditches	2.1	Create a pool at an appropriate ditch junction when re-profiling (see the Drainage Channel Biodiversity Manual, technique CL3))	Environmental Officer	2010	One pool successfully created	<i>When created or every 5 years</i>

**Water Vole Action Plan**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Manage ditches according to the law and to best practice for water vole	1.1	Assume water voles are present when carrying out works (discuss special circumstances with the Environmental Officer) and follow the ADA water vole mitigation guide	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	Measures incorporated in management plans	<i>Annual</i>
		1.2	Publicise good practice for rat control near drainage ditches	Environmental Officer, Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Good practice publicised	<i>Annual</i>
2	Enhance drainage ditch habitat to benefit water vole	2.1	Look for opportunities to add a marginal shelf when re-profiling banks	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	(a) Opportunities identified (b) Measures taken	<i>Annual</i>
		2.2	Consider using coir roll to stabilise banks and provide marginal vegetation	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	(a) Sites considered (b) Measures taken	<i>Annual</i>

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3	Monitor water vole populations	3.1	Set up a survey programme to monitor water vole populations	Environmental Officer, Wildlife Trust	2010	Surveys carried out	<i>Annual</i>
		3.2	Provide data on water vole to the relevant Biological Records Centres	Environmental Officer, CPBRC, NBIS	Ongoing	Data sent via Environmental Officer annually	<i>Annual</i>
4	Control mink as necessary	4.2	Carry out mink control as part of the Middle Level programme and report all sightings to the Environmental Officer	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	(a) Number of trapping days (b) Number of mink caught	<i>Annual</i>

**Otter Action Plan**

<b>Target Reference</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>IDB Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
1	Improve otter habitat	1.1	Identify and maintain existing key bushes and trees near watercourses likely to be important for otters	Environmental Officer	2012 and ongoing	Sites identified and listed in management plans	<i>Annual</i>
2	Monitor otter populations	2.3	Ensure any dead otters are reported to the Environmental Officer and transferred to the Environment Agency for post mortem	Environment Agency	Ongoing	Otters reported to Environmental Officer, if found	<i>Annual</i>
3	Reduce otter deaths related to eel and crayfish trapping and road traffic	3.1	Report incidents of suspected illegal netting, trapping or fishing to the Environment Agency Fisheries Officers and the MLC Environmental Officer	Environment Agency, Angling Clubs & syndicates	Ongoing	Incidents reported, if discovered	<i>Annual</i>



## Bats Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Improve habitat for bats	1.1	Put up at least one bat box at an appropriate site, e.g. a pumping station	Bat Conservation Trust	2015	Number of bat boxes sited	<i>2015 with annual progress report</i>
		1.2	Pollard suitable trees to provide bat roosts		Ongoing	Number of trees pollarded	<i>Annual</i>
		1.3	Identify potential sites for a bat hibernaculum, e.g. in disused buildings or tunnels	Environmental Officer , Bat Conservation Trust	As opportunities arise	(a) Potential sites looked for (b) Site created	<i>Annual</i>
2	Collect information on bat populations	2.1	Monitor bat boxes	Bat Conservation Trust	2015 onwards	(a) Number of boxes monitored (b) Number of boxes used by bats	<i>Annual</i>
		2.2	Pass bat box information to CPBRC and NBIS	Environmental Officer, CPBRC, NBIS	2015 onwards	Data via Environmental Officer annually	<i>Annual</i>

## Kingfisher Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Improve the quality of kingfisher habitat	1.1	Provide at least 2 potential nest holes in sheet pilings	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	Number of nest sites provided	<i>2015 with annual progress report</i>
		1.2	Leave kingfisher fishing perches where possible (e.g. occasional branch)	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	Number of perch sites left	<i>Annual</i>

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2	Collect records of kingfisher breeding between March and July	2.1	Note sightings of potential breeding kingfisher and pass information to CPBRC and NBIS via the Environmental Officer	Environmental Officer, CPBRC, NBIS	Ongoing	Data sent via Environmental Officer annually	<i>Annual</i>
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## Barn Owl Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Improve the quality of barn owl habitat	1.1	Put up at least one barn owl nest box in a suitable location	Wildlife Conservation Partnership	2015	Number of nest boxes provided	<i>2015 with annual progress report</i>
		1.2	Pollard suitable trees to provide natural nest sites	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	Number of trees pollarded	<i>Annual</i>
2	Collect records of barn owl presence	2.1	Monitor nest boxes for use. Have occupied boxes checked for success by licensed barn owl ringers.	Wildlife Conservation Partnership	2015	(a) Number of nest boxes checked by licensed ringers (b) Number of nest boxes used	<i>Annual once boxes installed</i>
		2.2	Pass barn owl box information to CPBRC and NBIS	Environmental Officer, Wildlife Conservation Partnership, CPBRC, NBIS	2015	Data sent via Environmental Officer annually	<i>Annual once boxes installed</i>

## Procedural Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Provide training on IDB BAP and conservation management of drainage channels for all relevant staff by 2013	1.1	Establish programme of 1-day courses for IDB staff and members	Environmental Officer, Wildlife Trust, Natural England, other specialists	2013	(a) Number of courses held (b) Number of Board members / staff attending courses	<i>Annual</i>
		1.2	Establish suitable training for contractors' staff	Environmental Officer, Contractors	2013	Contractors attended training course	<i>Annual</i>
2	Take biodiversity into account when planning and undertaking capital works	2.1	Consult with the Environmental Officer and choose the best possible mitigation solutions for biodiversity, e.g. fish-friendly pumps	Environmental Officer	Ongoing	(a) Number of capital schemes undertaken (b) Number of schemes commented on	<i>Annual</i>

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Species list for March Third DDC using data from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biological Records Centre:

<b>Designation</b>	<b>Taxon Group</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>Scientific Name</b>
UKBAP	bird	Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>
UKBAP	bird	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
UKBAP	bird	European Turtle Dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
UKBAP	bird	Grey Partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>
UKBAP	bird	Northern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
UKBAP	bird	Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>
UKBAP	bird	Sky Lark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
UKBAP	bird	Yellow Wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
UKBAP	bird	Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
UKBAP	insect - butterfly	Wall	<i>Lasiommata megera</i>
WCA Schedule 1	bird	Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
WCA Schedule 1	bird	Eurasian Marsh Harrier	<i>Circus aeruginosus</i>
WCA Schedule 1	bird	Hoopoe	<i>Upupa epops</i>
WCA Schedule 1	bird	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>
WCA Schedule 5	amphibian	Great crested newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>
WCA Schedule 5	bat	Bat unspecified	<i>Chiroptera</i>
WCA Schedule 5	bat	Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus</i>
WCA Schedule 5	terrestrial mammal	Water Vole	<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>