



Freshwater Habitats Trust

Organisational Strategy

2020 - 2035



Presentation overview

1. Review of the process
2. Reflecting on the previous strategy
3. Strategic Plan Framework
4. What do we want to achieve?
5. The Freshwater Network
6. Targets
7. Timetable



Freshwater Habitats Trust – Strategy Management Process

Planning Team

Senior Management Team | FHT Staff | Trustees | Key Partners

Reflect

Develop Strategy

Build the Plan

Monitor Progress

Defining the issues

*Do we still share the same vision and values?
Are we clear about the priorities?*

Are we meeting our aims?

*Are all our activities in line with our vision and values?
Is what we're doing working?*

Organisation + finance

Do we have a sound organisational and financial base?

SWOT analysis

Do we have effective systems, people + processes in place to deliver results.

Vision

Our narrative for the image of what success will look like at the end of the new strategy

Our USP

*What is our unique position?
What part will we play?
What will others do?*

Strategic direction

*Establish our approach and how we will succeed.
Do we have the skills to deliver?*

Forecast

*Develop a financial framework and long-term objectives
3-5 years*

Organisational goals

Gateway analysis of existing/new projects to ensure that they meet strategic aims

KPIs

*Track annual progress against
3-5 year forecast*

Staff

*Cascade goals to individuals
Provide clear pathway for them to track progress*

Budget

*Align one-year budget with the
3-5 year forecast*

Rollout

*Communicate strategy to whole organisation/
stakeholders*

Report

*Build communication plan around delivery of the strategy.
Annual reporting against KPIs*

Review

Undertake review of strategy every 3 years

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Strategic framework (2013-2020)

Our aim: To protect freshwater life for everyone to enjoy

What do we do?

Evidence-led implementation of practical actions to protect freshwater habitats and species.
Our core values remain sound.

We are:

- An evidence-based conservation charity, with a strong science grounding.
- Highly strategic – we target our work where evidence suggests it will be most effective.
- Concerned with all freshwaters including those that are small and undervalued like headwater streams, ponds, flushes and ditches.
- Working in partnership with people, communities and organisations to get the best results for freshwater wildlife.



Strategic framework (2013-2020)

We undertook c.70 projects 2013-2020. All were in line with one or more of our strategic aims.

Percentage of projects delivering each strategic aim:

- 30%** To protect and enhance the best freshwater habitats
- 22%** To build out from the best freshwater habitats
- 25%** To protect the most threatened freshwater species and increase their populations
- 27%** To increase the quality of the wider landscape for freshwater species by increasing the extent of clean water and naturally functioning freshwater habitats
- 21%** To restore the connectivity of the freshwater landscape

20 projects were monitoring or research, underpinning one or more strategic aims



Strategic framework (2013-2020)

Analysis of past performance:

STARS

Projects that are particularly strong and have real potential for growth.
Projects which demonstrate our values and USP.

Predict - c.25% of the organisation

Actual - 25%

Cash Cows

Reliable, safe projects that have an entrenched position and provide a degree of security. Often yesterday's stars and tomorrow's dogs.

Predict 50-60% of the organisation

Actual - 37%

Dogs

Activities that take up resources and efforts and produce little return.

Predict <10%

Actual - 13%

Question Marks

Activities which take up resources, but, as yet, produce little return.
Often innovative projects which could turn out to be a star, cow or dog.

Predict 10-20% of the organisation

Actual - 25%

We are innovative, but need to increase reliable income to support this approach

Strategic framework (2013-2020)

Strengths:

Core strengths:

- Expert – being the recognised expert body
- Research – finding the evidence, having the data, analysing the data
- Innovator – finding new and effective ways of delivering services
- Information provider – to the public at large or to specific audiences
- Policy role – influencing, monitoring and responding to new policies and practices.
- Service provider – managing and delivering projects that make a difference

Secondary activities:

- Network organiser – coordinating, supporting and leading individuals and agencies
- Campaigner – raising public awareness to win support and achieve change

Peripheral activities:

- Educator and trainer – offering programmes to develop skills
- Advocate – working on behalf of others to influence decisions and policies



Strategic framework (2013-2020)

Weaknesses:

External pressures:

- Status 'vogue' of freshwaters (especially small waterbodies) low
- Popular narrative around freshwaters misleading and incorrect
- Important questions (research) difficult to fund

(but many e.g. WWF have highlighted that the decline of freshwater is an international crisis)

Within our control:

- Sitting on a lot of information – failure to disseminate
- Maintaining continuity of really good projects
- Growing the organisation

Uncertainty (may be opportunity and threats):

- e.g. ELMs, Brexit, Covid-19, etc.



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Freshwater Habitats Trust - 15 year Strategic Plan Framework

MISSION

Reversing the long decline of life in freshwater by creating a national network of healthy unpolluted interconnected freshwater landscapes.

Wilder, Wetter, Better, Connected

In the Freshwater Network, rich freshwater and wetland habitats, clean water ponds, repaired rivers and rewilded floodplains will create a space where freshwater wildlife can thrive. Above all, it will be a place where everyone can get the benefits of wilder, wetter, better, connected freshwaters.

VISION

Core values

Evidence-based | Highly strategic | All freshwaters | Working in partnership

Strategic Directions 2020 - 2035

FINANCIAL

Develop and deliver a 3-5 year fundraising strategy that increases long term stability.

Reduce reliance on short term contracts - obtain one major bid per year

Increase ability to maintain projects/ people in dips, and to support core activities

Develop offsetting/ compensation funds

ORGANISATIONAL

The team (staff and partnerships) drive our success.

Promote personal growth and develop the skills of our team, recruit new staff when necessary

Strengthen management systems to allow expansion

Optimise IT, physical infrastructure and consider new ways of working post Covid-19

POLICY

Successfully influence the development of policies and legislation that will fund / support / protect freshwater biodiversity.

Increase credibility and value of freshwater habitats

Become the driving force for a change in the way freshwater landscapes are managed in England and Wales

PRACTICAL

Delivery on the ground - fundamental to realising the Freshwater Network.

Strategic regional working - trialing, demonstrating, testing, influencing, building

Working with partners to co-manage sites, encourage strategic land purchase

Embed freshwater habitat creation/ management in all landscape schemes

RESEARCH

Focus on research that will provide evidence of critical relevance to our aims.

What works and what doesn't (we already have a lot of this evidence)

Landscape scale processes/ outcomes/ multiple benefits

Evidence from different land-use types

National small waters monitoring network

Cross-cutting themes

COMMUNICATION: Disseminate our information/knowledge, and use that to achieve Freshwater Network targets/obtain resources

RESULTS: Drive measurable results, be flexible to new information and review approach accordingly

COLLABORATION: Strengthen delivery of the Freshwater Network through win-win partnerships

FHTs 15 year Strategic Plan

Wetter, wilder, better, connected



Freshwater Habitats Trust

Wetter, wilder, better, connected

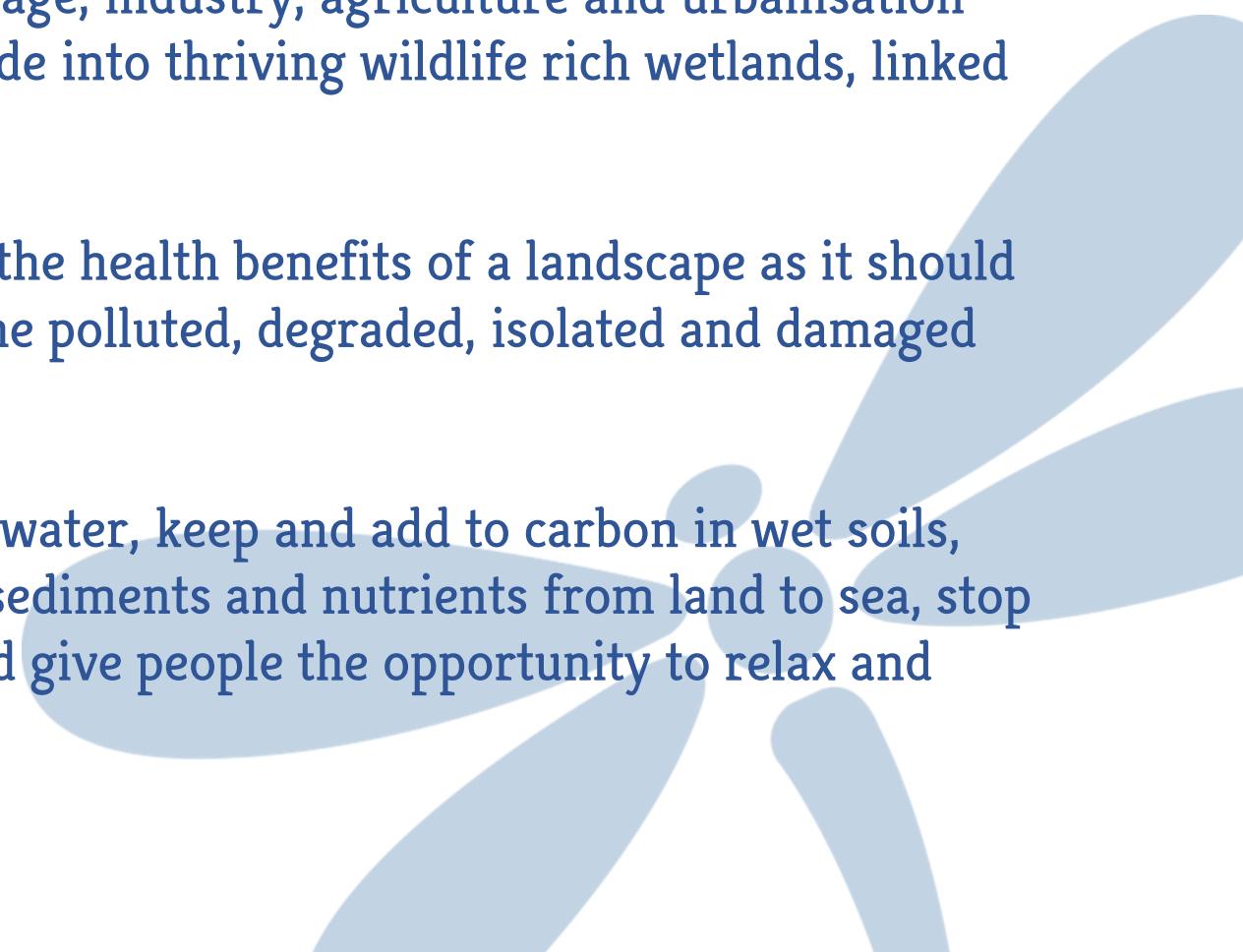
Our mission is to reverse the decline of life in freshwater by establishing a new national freshwater network, comprised of healthy unpolluted interconnected freshwater landscapes.

The freshwater network will help us end the easy acceptance that polluted water is normal, that the gradual disappearance of the plants and animals that depend on clean water is just par for the course.

It's time to repair centuries of damage cause by drainage, industry, agriculture and urbanisation – transforming large swathes of our parched countryside into thriving wildlife rich wetlands, linked by expansive networks of clean water habitats.

It will also be a place for people, where we can enjoy the health benefits of a landscape as it should be: wetter, wilder, better (cleaner), connected – not the polluted, degraded, isolated and damaged substitute for the real thing.

We can make the most of water too – hold back floodwater, keep and add to carbon in wet soils, achieve net gains for biodiversity, reduce the loss of sediments and nutrients from land to sea, stop polluting the water we drink, increase well-being, and give people the opportunity to relax and enjoy nature.



Vision: The Freshwater Network

In the Freshwater Network, rich freshwater and wetland habitats, clean water ponds, repaired rivers and rewilded floodplains will create a space where freshwater wildlife can thrive. Above all, it will be a place where everyone can get the benefits of wetter, wilder, better, connected freshwaters.



Wilder, Wetter, Better, Connected

Freshwater Horizons

Wetter, wilder, better, connected

The Freshwater Network will:

- Protect and enhance the best freshwater and wetland habitats and help stop their decline.
- Build out from and link these areas, with new networks of clean water habitats, either by making new habitats, or by restoring existing damaged habitats.
- Stop and reverse the decline of threatened freshwater plants and animals.
- Restore the quality and connectivity of freshwater floodplain landscapes.
- Increase the quality of the wider landscape for freshwater species by increasing the extent of clean water and naturally functioning freshwater habitats.
- Help people get the most from clean unpolluted freshwater: guarding against floods, trapping carbon, and providing people with places to engage with freshwater habitats and species.

The Freshwater Network will link together ...



Important Freshwater Areas

... existing special places for water



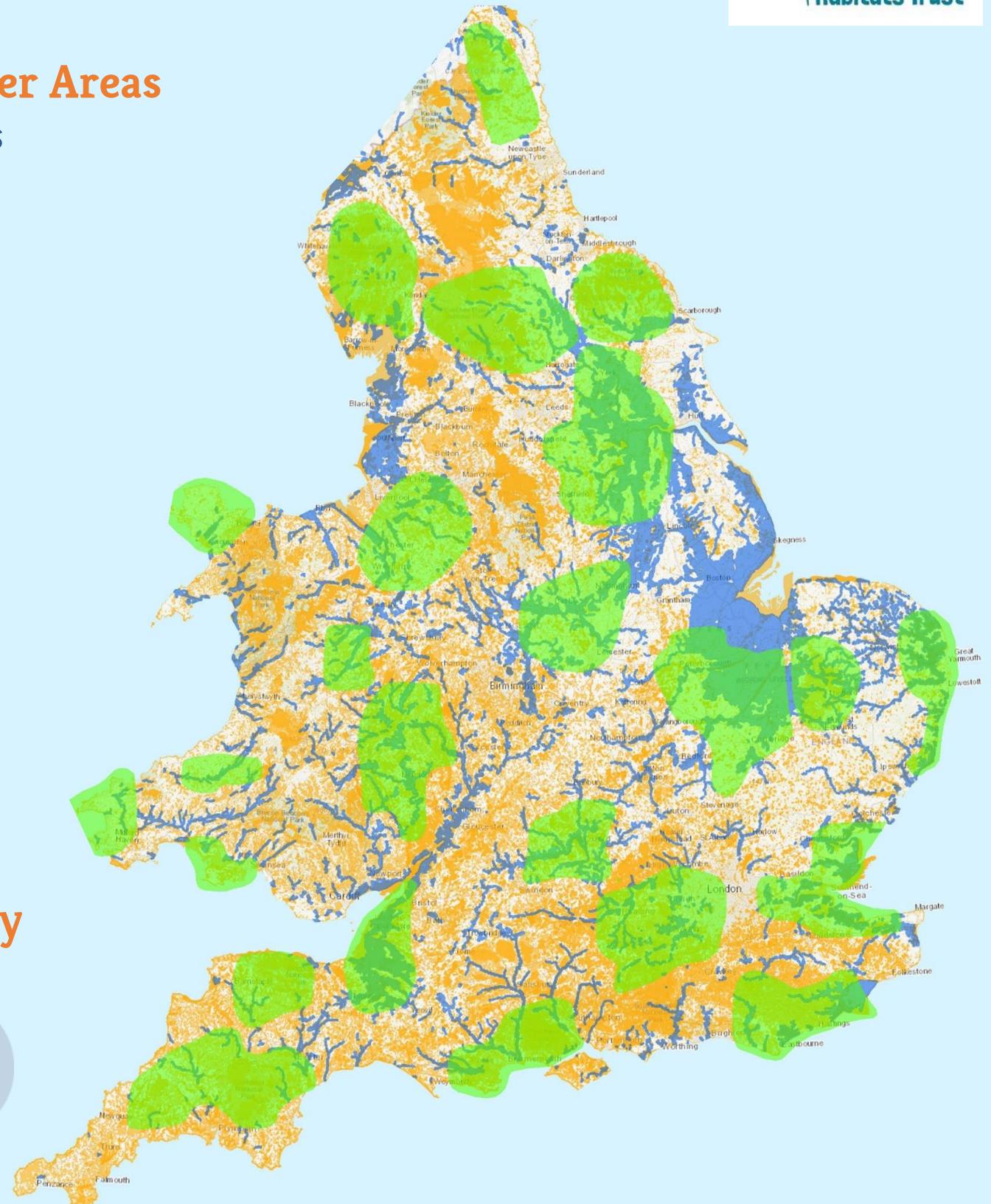
National Floodplain Reserves

... repaired rivers and rewilded floodplains



Wetland Opportunity Areas

... a network of new and restored, wildlife rich clean freshwater and wetland habitats



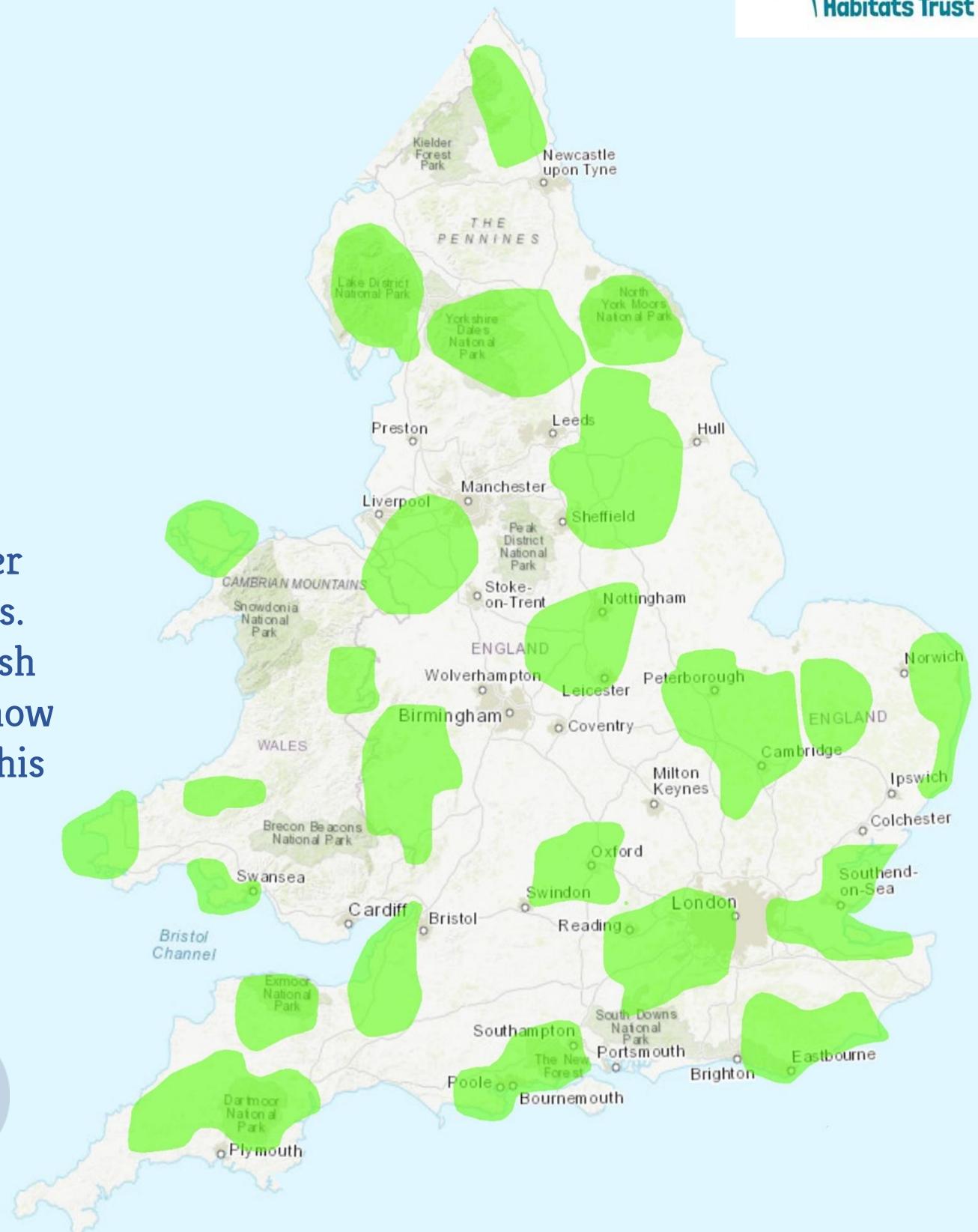
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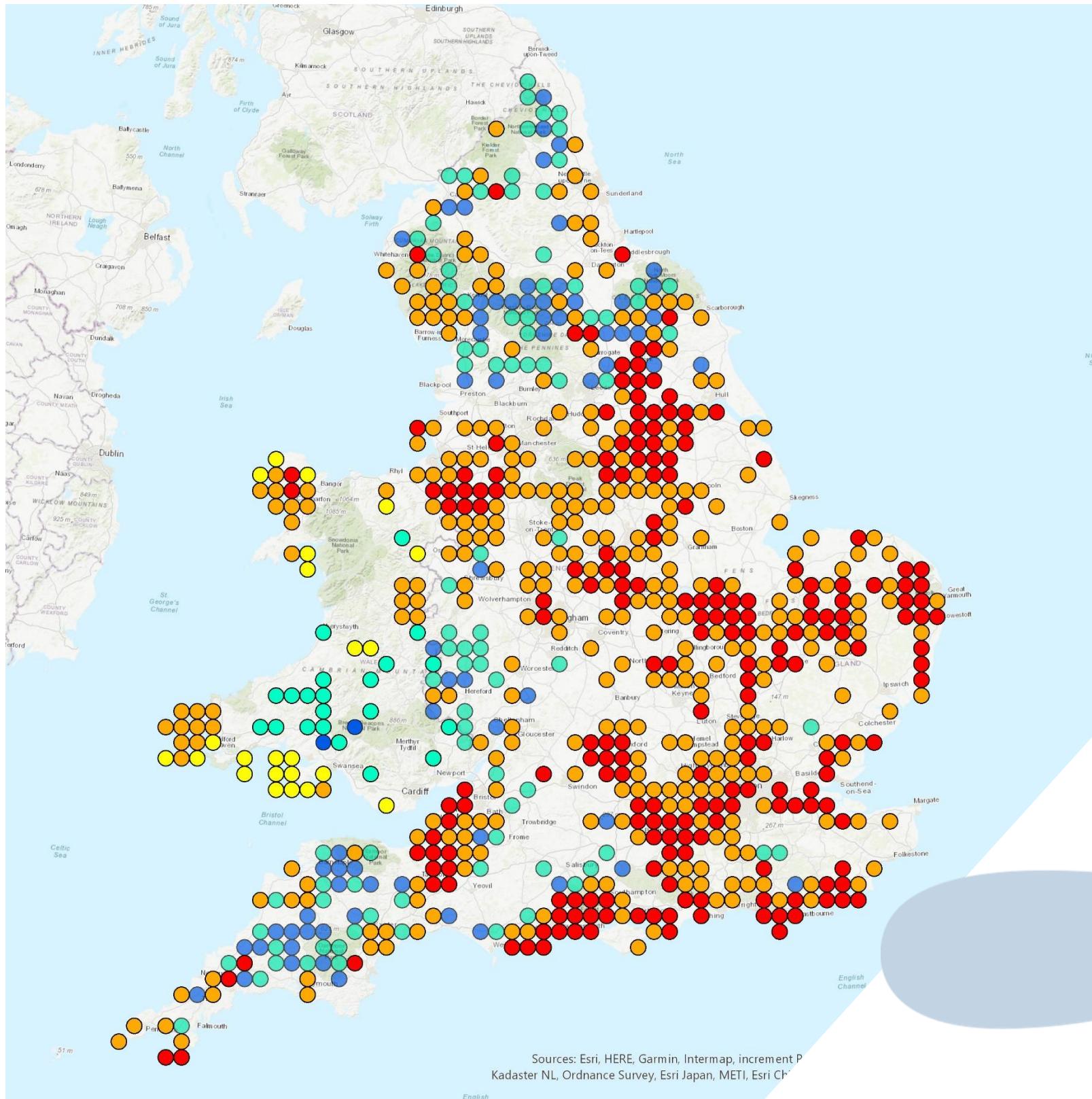
... existing special places for water

Important Freshwater Areas

A registered network of 24 of the best freshwater landscapes, rich in threatened plants and animals. These places, from upland river landscapes to lush lowland ponds, are under threat, perhaps now as never before. We need to act now to protect this most special resource.



Important Freshwater Areas



Species and river WFD invertebrate hotspots combined

Low diversity areas omitted for clarity

Species

- 20+ per 10 km²
- 10-19 per 10 km²

High status invertebrate rivers

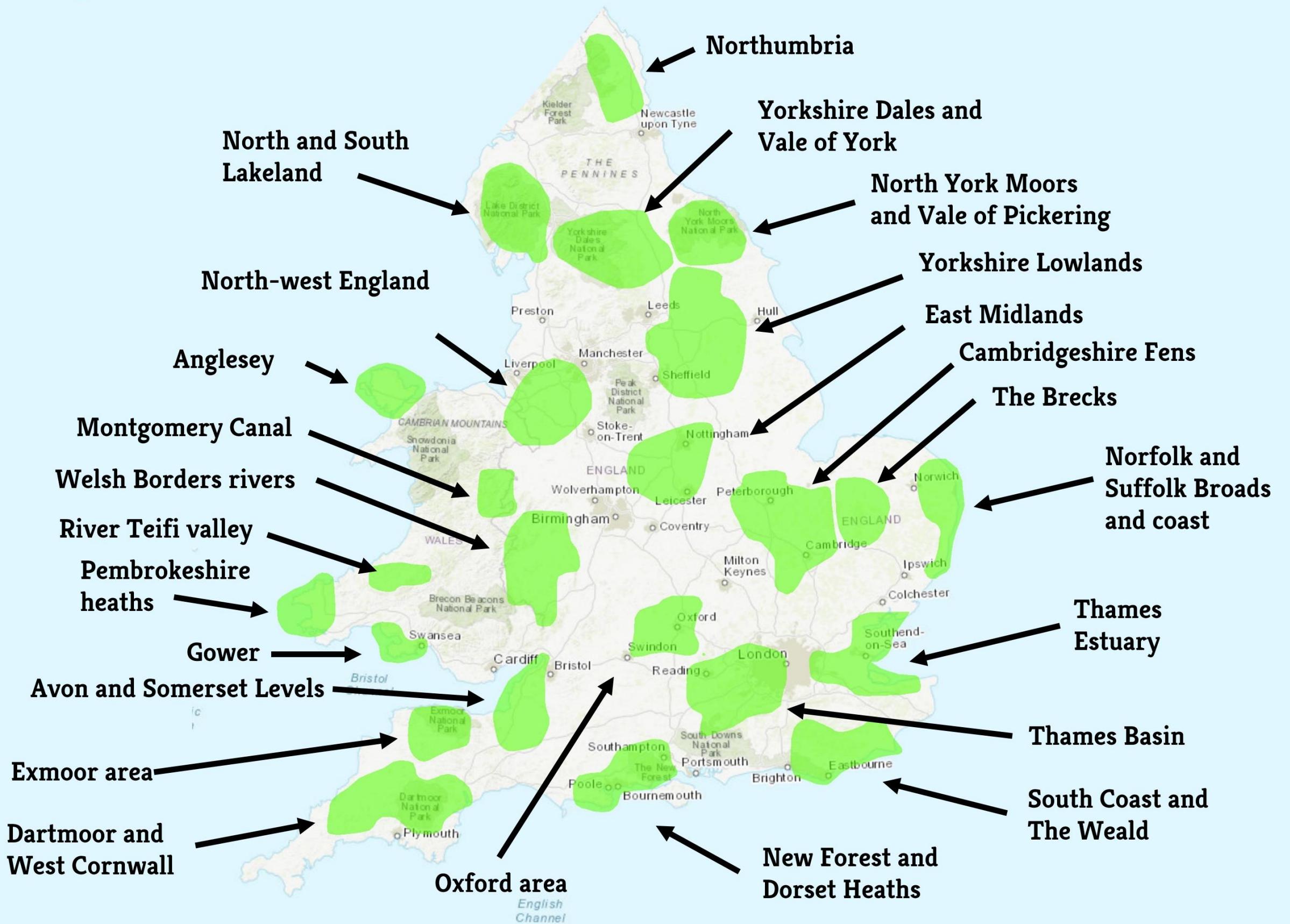
- >40 km per 10 km²
- 30-40 km per 10 km²
- 20-30 km per 10 km²

Wales - Uncommon wetland plants

Species

- 9-10 per 10 km²
- 5-8 per 10 km²
- 3-4 per 10 km²

Important Freshwater Areas



Important Freshwater Areas

TARGETS: Apply to all IFAs

- Delivered by us
- Delivered in partnership
- Delivered by others

Prepare a baseline and assessment for each IFA

Zero tolerance of pollution within IFAs

All priority species and habitats within IFAs recognised in policy

Less isolated – bigger resilient

Good in and of themselves

Double the number of sites ~~with~~ for most endangered species ~~very rare things~~

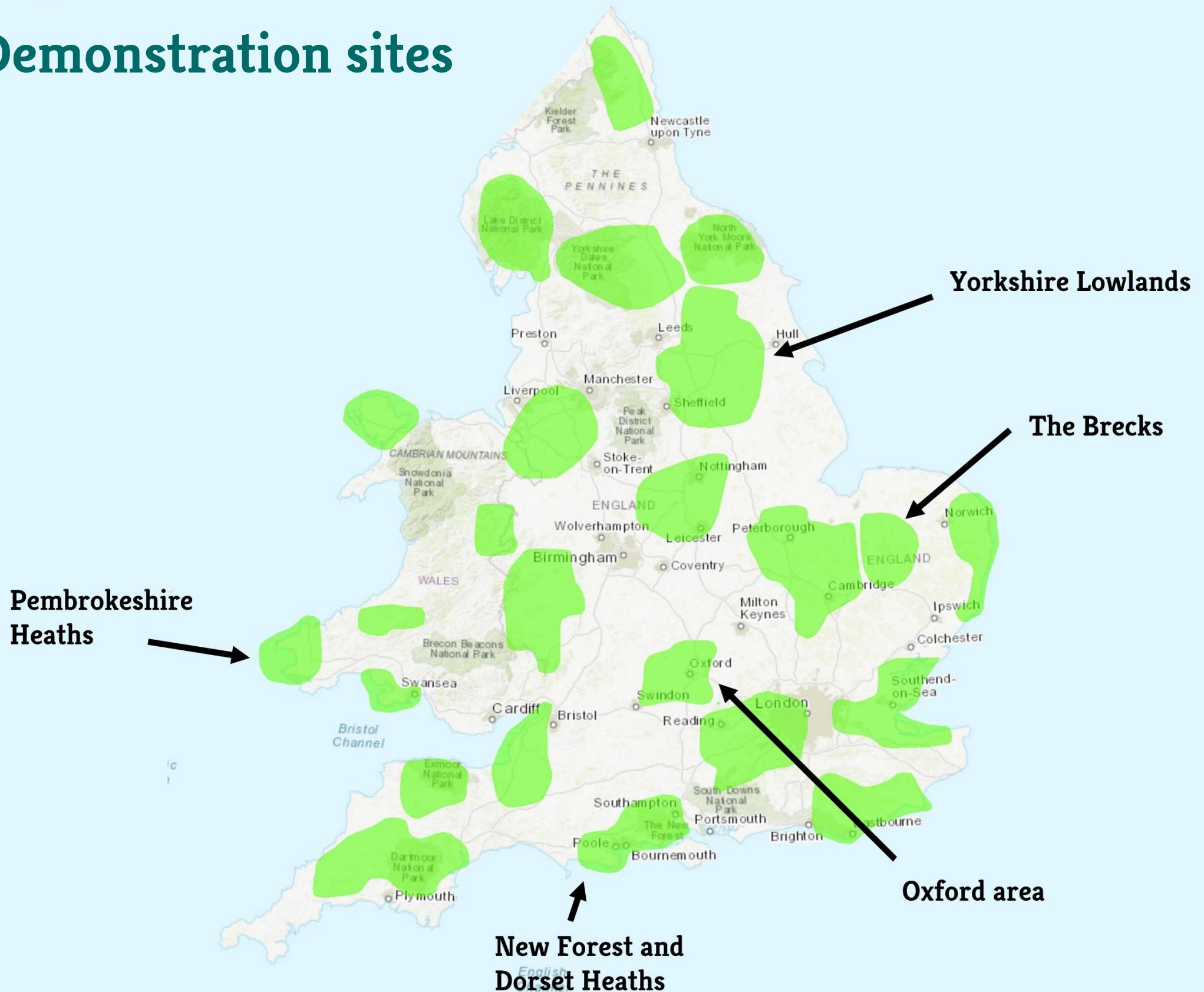
No deterioration of key species

Double the number of priority ponds within IFAs

Double the length of high quality running water within IFAs

Important Freshwater Areas

Demonstration sites



Important Freshwater Areas

OBJECTIVE: Protect the best, restore and build out from each of the IFAs in England + Wales
 Highlight the importance of small waters in each IFA
 Acknowledge what others are doing, make them part of a whole
 Concentrate on demonstration IFAs – lead by example

Financial

Offsetting
 Heritage Lottery Fund
 Water companies
 Catchment partnerships/WEIF

Organisation

Acknowledge what others are doing
 Bring benefits of small water to existing schemes
 Concentrate on demonstration IFAs – lead by example
 Disseminate + educate

Policy

Highest National level
 Local IFAs
 Apply principles of IFAs at different landscape scales
 Safeguard best places (e.g. designation of SSSI)

Practical

More clean water within the IFA

- Create, manage + restore
- Change land use
- Remove WWTW + overflows

Linking within and outside the IFA

- Corridors
- Restoring habitats
- Bring back missing habitats
- Building out and linking IFAs

Safeguard species pools within the IFAs

- Translocation/introduction of species
- Bringing back recently lost species
- Restore floodplain assemblages
- Allow expansion

Research

Monitoring

- Need landscape scale metrics which people can understand
- Need to confirm the basis of the baseline for each IFA
- Validation of the data we have.
- What's still there, what's missing?

Research priorities

- Evidence declines in the running water network
- Evidence landscape scale change in high quality landscapes



The Freshwater Network will link together ...



... repaired river and rewilded floodplains

National Floodplain Reserves

A transformative network of landscape scale floodplain reserves. Centered on land inside the 1 in 100 year floodplain, these reserves will benefit people and freshwater nature from city to countryside, from rewilded wet forests to rich riverine grasslands. Sometimes farmed, sometimes set-aside for wildlife, always unpolluted, always rich in nature.



National Floodplain Reserves

A network of the larger rivers and their floodplains, repurposed for recreation, amenity, ecosystem services and biodiversity.

England's floodplains - which make up the most of the river environment - have probably never been in worse condition.

In 2015, about three quarters of floodplain were intensive farmland (75%). Fen, marsh, ponds, swamp and bog - all wetland habitats - have been devastated, with fundamental floodplain units all but lost.

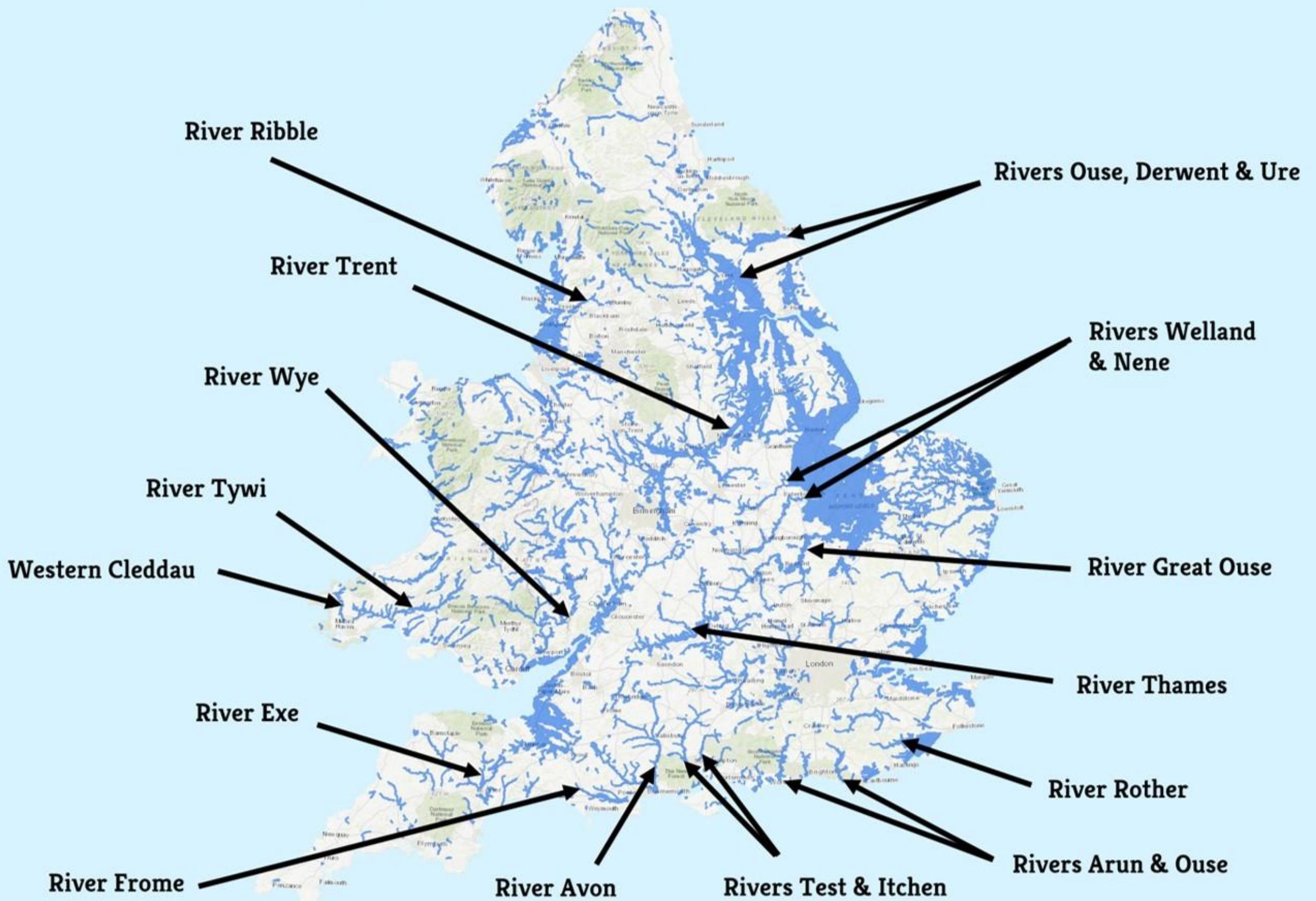
Upland and lowland areas are both severely impacted with a near ubiquitous loss of natural floodplain functioning.

National Floodplain Reserves could be the biggest conservation change in England and Wales.

Large swathes of the landscape had been left parched and scarred by heavy industry (including agriculture) and mismanagement of water.

We have a vision to change the way floodplains are managed in this country. The benefits for wildlife would be revolutionary, the benefits for people unparalleled.

National Floodplain Reserves



National Floodplain Reserves

TARGETS: **Within the floodplains of all IFAs**
Large landscape scale demonstration site
Within all 1 in 100 floodplains

Prepare a set of criteria, outline clear goals

Deintensification

Regenerative agriculture

Rewilding

Multiple benefits

Landuse change - 30% of land out of intensive landuse

Double the area of priority freshwater habitats in NFRs

Double the number of priority ponds within NFRs

Increase credibility and value of freshwater through large landscape scale floodplain reserve

National Floodplain Reserves

OBJECTIVE: FHT delivers one or two major National Floodplain Reserve
 Develop criteria and principles for NFRs (identify national opportunities)
 Policy concept that applies to all floodplains

Financial

Offsetting
 Heritage Lottery Fund
 National Parks
 Net Zero

Organisation

Acknowledge mega partnerships (e.g. Thames 21)
 Provide some clear examples
 Need a coherent approach if we want others to buy in
 Demonstrate the value of the floodplain reserves

Policy

Highest National level
 Facilitating
 Partnerships
 Link people and landscapes (mental health and wellbeing)

Practical

More clean water within the NFR

- Create, manage + restore
- Change land use
- Big floodplain

Multiple benefits

- Biodiversity net gain
- Natural flood management
- Amenity and recreation

Restore communities

- Restore floodplain assemblages
- Translocation/introduction of species
- Bringing back recently lost species

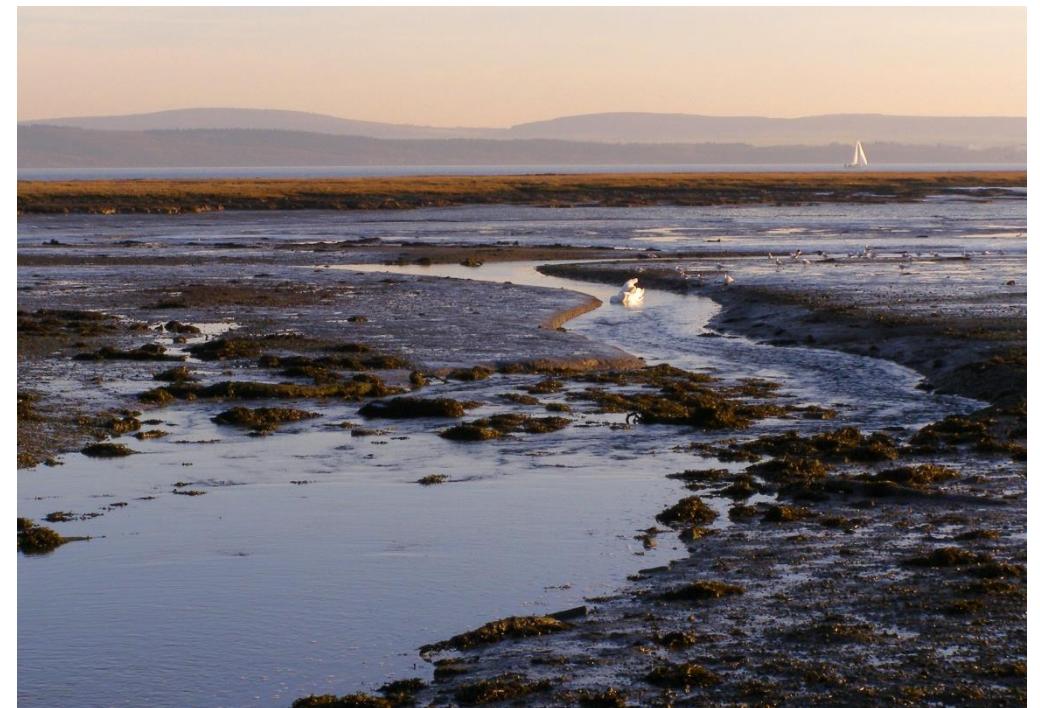
Research

Monitoring

- Need landscape scale metrics which people can understand
- Need to clearly define the baseline
- Need to monitor/evidence change
- Engage with citizen science monitoring in NRF

Research

- Evidence multiple benefits
- Evidence landscape scale change in connected landscapes



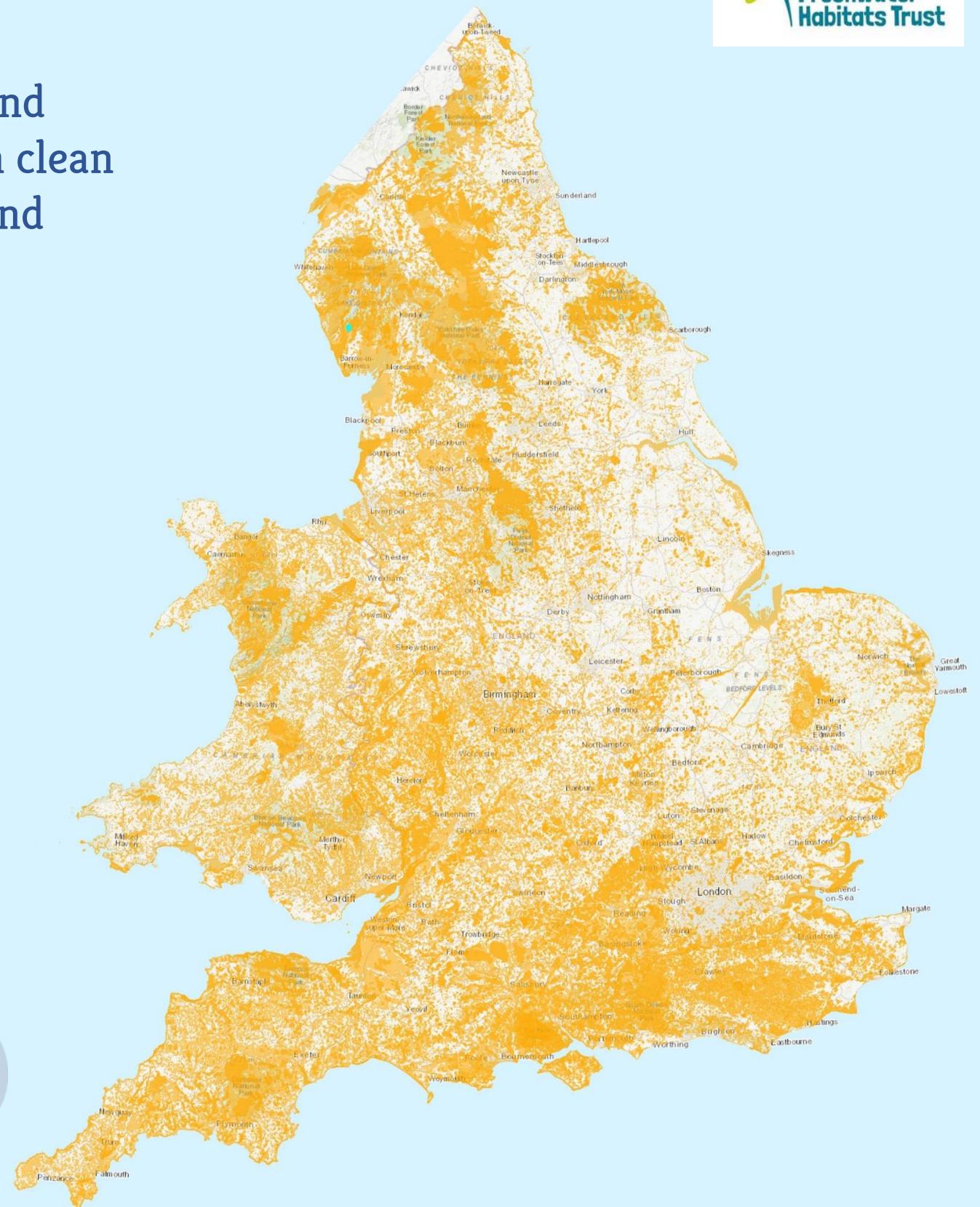
The Freshwater Network will link together ...



... a network of new and restored, wildlife rich clean freshwater and wetland habitats

Wetland Opportunity Areas

Landscapes where clean freshwater ponds, small lakes and new wetland habitat can be created or restored, and where cleaning up land can make clean streams and rivers. Letting freshwater life spread back into our countryside and towns - everywhere from protected sites and nature recovery networks, within unfertilised grasslands, through new woodlands, to retired farmland and moorland bogs.



Wetland Opportunity Areas

Opportunity areas are the landscapes outside of IFAs and the National Floodplain Reserves. They demonstrate the value of small waters to achieve net biodiversity gain, and link landscapes for species and habitats.

LANDSCAPES

- High quality landscapes outside IFAs (high quality sites include flagships, SSSI, priority habitats)
- Major landowners
- All floodplains
- Agricultural landscapes (land retirement)

FHT DEMONSTRATION SITES

- Water Friendly Farming project
- The Newt Partnership
- East-West Rail project
- Million Ponds Project



Wetland Opportunity Areas

OBJECTIVE: Letting freshwater life spread back into our countryside and towns – everywhere from protected sites and nature recovery networks, within unfertilised grasslands, through new woodlands, to retired farmland and moorland bogs.

Financial

Environmental Land Management Scheme
Offsetting, Million Ponds Project II, Newt Partnership
National parks, National Trust + other major landowners
Net zero

Organisation

FHT continues to evidence benefits
Landscape targets – national policies
Embed small water creation/ management into land reform schemes

Policy

Highest National level
Farming
Carbon
Local authority

Practical

Sector:
- Woodland planting @ 300 sq km of tree per year
- 10 ponds in every 1 km square of tree planting
- 100,000 waterbodies in 30 years (20% of the Million Ponds Project total)

National:
- e.g. ELMS, major landowners
- 1 new pond per 1 km²
- Double area of wetland habitat adjacent to WB

Research

Monitoring
- Need landscape scale metrics which people can understand
- National monitoring network
• Include all waterbody types
• Citizen science + professional ongoing surveys

Research
- Demonstrate benefits in diff. landscape types
- Demonstrate benefits all waterbody types
- Multiple benefits of e.g. newt mitigation
- Evidence benefits/limitations of management



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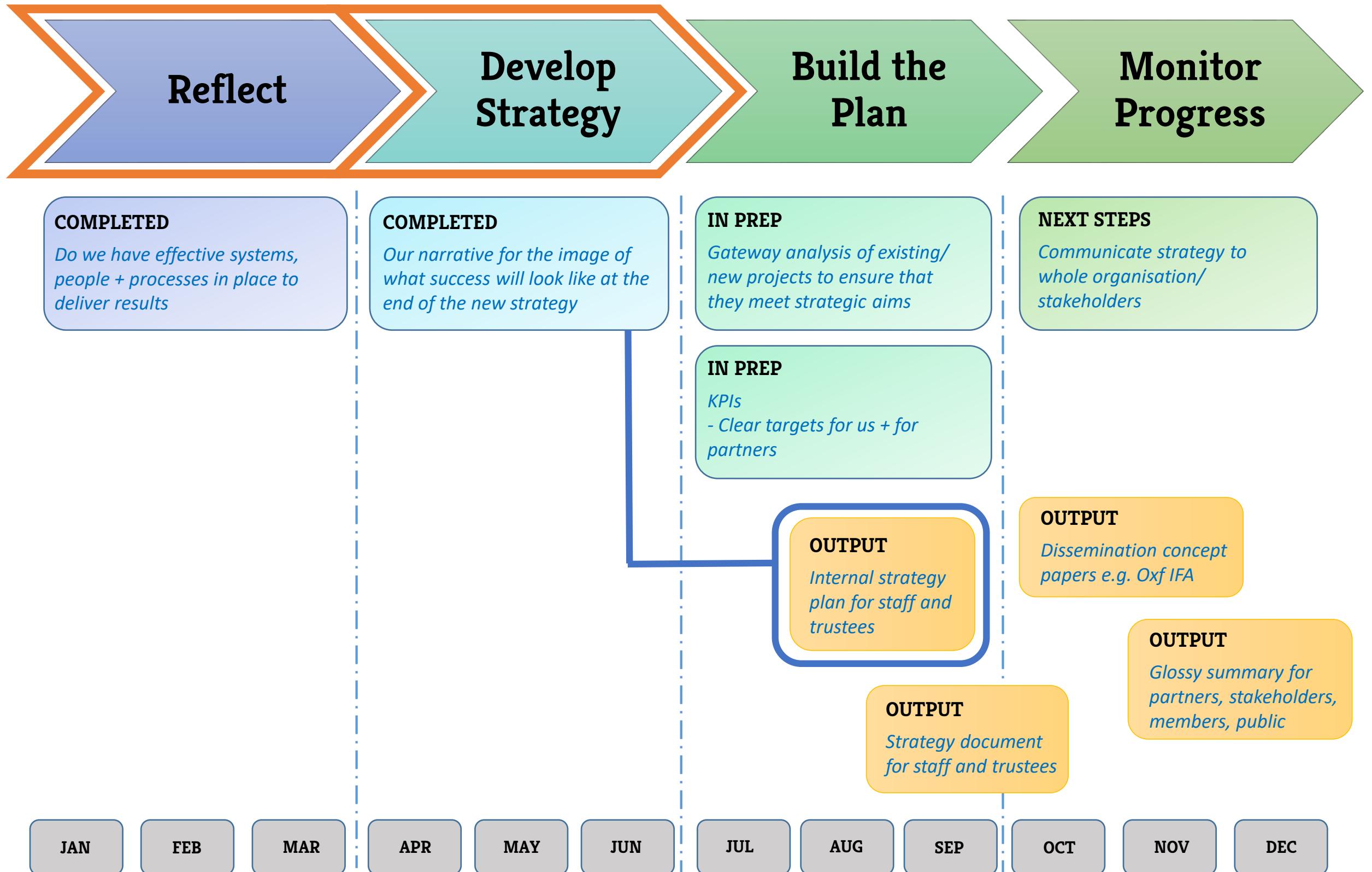
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