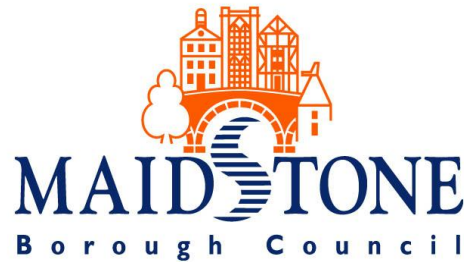


Maidstone's Biodiversity Strategy

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Phase 1: 2009 – 2014

HAP 10: Ponds



Ponds Action Plan

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Description

- 1.1 Ponds, for the purpose of UK BAP priority habitat classification, are defined as permanent and seasonal standing water bodies up to 2 ha in extent which meet one or more of the additional criteria below;
- Ponds that meet criteria under Annex I of the Habitats Directive
 - Ponds supporting Red Data Book species, UK BAP species, species fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 5 and 8, Habitats Directive Annex II species, a Nationally Scarce wetland plant species, or three Nationally Scarce aquatic invertebrate species.
 - Ponds supporting exceptional populations or numbers of key species. Based on (i) criteria specified in guidelines for the selection of biological SSSIs (currently amphibians and dragonflies only), and (ii) exceptionally rich sites for plants or invertebrates (i.e. supporting ≥ 30 wetland plant species or ≥ 50 aquatic macro-invertebrate species).
 - Ponds classified in the top PSYM (Predictive System for Multimetrics) category ("high") for ecological quality (i.e. having a PSYM score $\geq 75\%$)
 - Other important ponds: Individual ponds or groups of ponds with a limited geographic distribution recognised as important because of their age, rarity of type or landscape context e.g. pingos, duneslack ponds, machair ponds.
- 1.2 Ponds are rich wildlife habitats and collectively at least two-thirds of Britain's freshwater plants and animal species can be found in them. National comparisons on the numbers of invertebrate species recorded from ponds and rivers show that there is 10-15% more species and roughly twice as many nationally scarce species in ponds compared to rivers²⁶.
- 1.3 Ponds can develop into wet woodlands through natural succession, which are also UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitats.

National status

- 2.1 Estimates based on the pond data set from the 2007 Countryside Survey²⁷ suggest that around 20% of the c. 487,000 ponds in the Great Britain might meet one or more of the above criteria.
- 2.2 An inventory of ponds, including many high quality sites, has been established as part of the National Pond Monitoring Network and work is in progress to add further known sites to this database. About 500 high quality sites are listed on this database.

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- 2.3 The 2007 Countryside Survey Analysis indicates that the number of ponds increased by 11.1% in Great Britain between 1998 and 2007, however the overall condition of ponds has deteriorated.

Local status

- 3.1 The Kent Habitat Survey 2003 recorded 2675 ponds making a total of 79 ha of pond habitat in Maidstone borough.
- 3.2 Of the 2675 ponds a total of 6 (0.1 ha) ponds are found within Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), with a further 159 (5.1 ha) ponds are within Local Wildlife Sites (LWS). This means that approximately 2500 ponds in borough are not in a designated site.
- 3.3 Of the ponds within LWS none are currently or have been under an agri-environmental stewardship specifically for pond restoration in the last 5 years. Data on ponds within SSSI is deficient and so their current condition is unknown.
- 3.4 There are a total of 11 ponds on MBC owned land, located at Limes Tree Open Space, Mote Park, Dickens Road, Mallards Way Open Space, Whatman Park, Poyntell Pond and Bell Lane Nature Reserve.
- 3.5 Data on environmental stewardships indicate that 3 (0.6 ha) ponds have been created and a total of 4 (0.05 ha) ponds have been restored within Maidstone Borough within the last 5 years.

Factors causing decline in biodiversity

- 4.1 Pollution caused by agricultural chemicals, urban run-off and acid rain.
- 4.2 Hydrological damage caused by drainage and lowering water tables.
- 4.3 Direct loss caused by infilling.

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- 4.4 Vegetation succession.
- 4.5 Inappropriate pond management.
- 4.6 Introduction of non-native species.
- 4.7 High populations of domesticated water fowl.
- 4.8 Inappropriate stocking with fish, especially non-native carp.

Current national action

- 5.1 Ponds are targeted via the agri-environmental stewardship scheme for restoration and creation.
- 5.2 The Million Ponds project, coordinated by Pond Conservation, is a visionary project to reverse the long-term decline in countryside ponds in the UK.

Funding resources

- 6.1 The Environmental Stewardship Scheme provides funding for the restoration and creation ponds.

National plan objectives and actions

- 7.1 There is currently no national action plan for this habitat as it is a relatively newly designated priority habitat, however the Million Pond Project have published a pond habitat action plan, which contains four main objectives. The action plan seeks to maintain the number of priority pond sites and the quality of flagship pond sites. The action plan also aims to restore ponds to meet associated species action plan targets and create new ponds sites of high quality.

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Local plan objectives and actions

8.1 There is currently no Kent action plan for this habitat.

Maidstone's objectives

9.1 Maidstone's objectives are;

- 1. To identify and protect ponds of high biodiversity value and enhance the ecological quality and diversity of ponds and their associated flora and fauna**
- 2. To create 50 new ponds within the Low Weald (an IAP or important area for ponds).**
- 3. Encourage the incorporation of naturalistic ponds into sustainable urban drainage schemes (SUDS) associated with new developments.**

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Objectives and targets

Objective 1: To identify and protect ponds of high biodiversity value and enhance the ecological quality and diversity of ponds and their associated flora and fauna

Target 1: Collate and share biodiversity data ponds in Maidstone

P	ACTION	TARGET START DATE	TARGET END DATE	KEY EXTERNAL PARTNERS	PROGRESS
1.	Support the Ponds on the Downs Project.	2009	2011		Project starting in 2009 look to fund this project.
2.	Raise awareness of the high density pond area within the Low Weald to find funding for a project to survey ponds in this natural area	2009	2026		
3.	Start surveying MBC ponds 3 times in one year for each pond, to collate species data and determine the priority status of these ponds. Use Environment Agency Key Performance Indicator – Emissions to Water: Nutrient and Organic (7) Pollutants, metal pollutants (8), To land: pesticide & fertilizer (9), Resource Use: Water abstraction (14)	2009	2014	EA	
4.	Seek funding and complete any required restoration work to improve biodiversity on MBC owned ponds	2009	2014		
5.	Ensure that Maidstone's Local Development Framework contain policy to protect priority ponds	2009	2010	ALL	
6.	Designate the most important pond sites as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)	2009	2026	KWT	

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Objective 2 & 3: To create new ponds in IAP (important areas for ponds)

Target 2: Create 15 new ponds by 2014, an additional 15 by 2020 and a further 20 by 2026 (Total = 50 ponds by 2026)

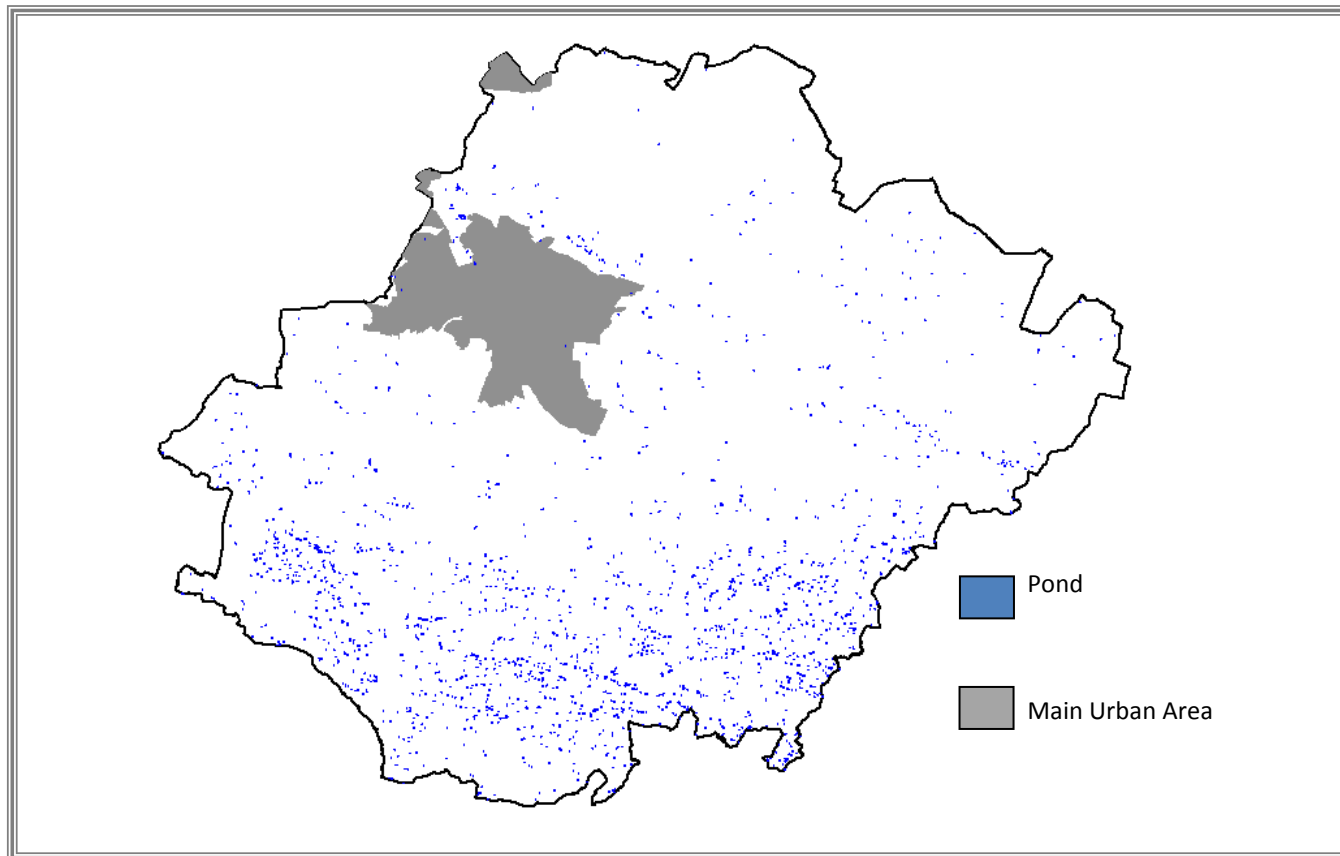
P	ACTION	TARGET START DATE	TARGET END DATE	KEY EXTERNAL PARTNERS	PROGRESS
6.	Work with developers to include creating new ponds within new housing institutional and commercial developments – including SUDS and balancing ponds developments	2009	2026	ALL	Work with Landscape and Conservation team
7.	Target agri-environmental schemes on pond creation and restoration in IAP, such as the Low Weald and North Downs	2009	2026	NE	
8.	Seek an appropriate site within MBC owned land to create 15 new ponds.	2009	2015		River Len LNR site has been discussed as possible site to create a pond
9.	Work with the Pond Conservation Trust to target sites for the creation of new pond, high quality naturally fed ponds, especially in the Low Weald.	2010	2026	PCT	
10.	Provide a policy statement for planners and developers for the creation of new ponds, advising of cost benefits compared to conventional landscaping.	2010	2011	Planning	

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Pond distribution

10.1 The distribution of ponds can be seen in figure 1.

Figure 1 Distribution of Ponds in Maidstone Borough



Data Source: Kent Habitat Survey 2003