

BIODIVERSITY LOSS

The UK's global rank for levels of biodiversity loss

New research from the Natural History Museum, in collaboration with the RSPB, **puts the UK at the bottom of the G7 league table for how much biodiversity it has left.**

Using the Biodiversity Intactness Index (BII) the analysis estimates biodiversity loss across an area using a combination of land use, other human pressures and species abundance data to give a simple figure for biodiversity 'intactness'— how much nature is left from a pristine state.

What is the BII?

The BII is an international index which can be used to compare countries on how nature has fared under pressures from humanity in terms of land use changes.

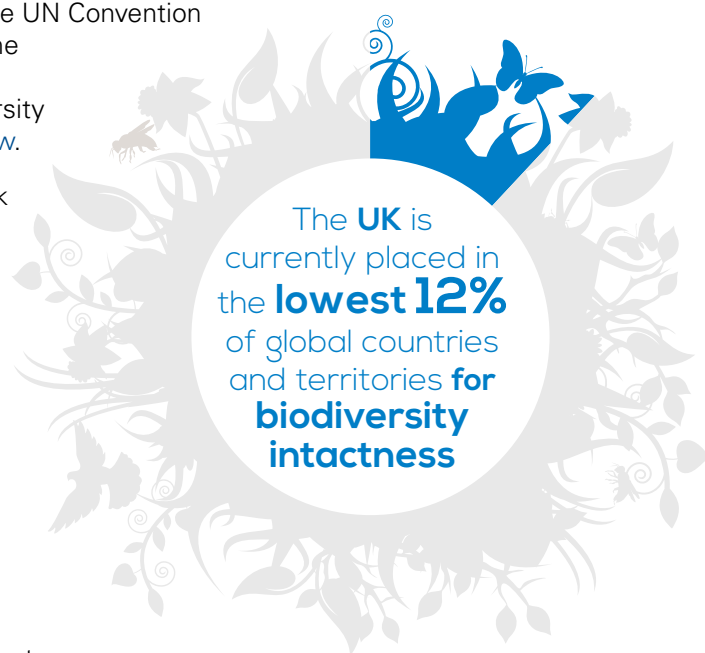
The BII and its rigorous methodology have been adopted by the UN Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and used as a core indicator for the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). This index for comparing biodiversity intactness was also incorporated in the recent [Dasgupta review](#).

The index is designed to be used alongside measures that look at ongoing trends in wildlife species. The BII also provides an insight into longer-term effects of historical pressures on species and habitats, by reflecting losses and gains that occurred before we started measuring systemic trends.

How does the UK fare on biodiversity?

The UK not only comes bottom of the list for G7 countries in terms of the amount of biodiversity retained but is also third from the bottom across all European countries, ahead of only Ireland and Malta.

The UK has a BII of 50% which means it has retained only half of its biodiversity, compared with 65% for France, 67% for Germany, and 89% for Canada, which is among the best countries or territories worldwide for retaining its natural biodiversity.



BII Index – G7 countries

Ranking (out of 240 countries and territories)

240 = highest biodiversity intactness

1 = lowest biodiversity intactness

232

Canada
BII – 89%

122

Germany
BII – 67%

101

France
BII – 65%

93

Italy
BII – 65%

85

Japan
BII – 64%

77

US
BII – 63%

12

UK
BII – 50%

What does the BII tell us about nature across the UK?

Further analysis has revealed how the four countries of the United Kingdom have performed in terms of biodiversity intactness.

Of 240 countries and territories around the world assessed and ranked, all of the four UK countries sit close to the bottom. **All the UK countries are currently placed in the lowest 12% of global countries and territories for biodiversity intactness.**

BII Index – UK countries

Ranking (out of 240 countries and territories)

240 = highest biodiversity intactness

1 = lowest biodiversity intactness

28

Scotland
BII – 56%

16

Wales
BII – 51%

12

Northern Ireland
BII – 50%

7

England
BII – 47%

Will this be another lost decade for nature?

This BII from the NHM shows the dire state of nature in the UK and demonstrates that the UK needs to do much more to halt and reverse the terrible losses in wildlife seen in recent decades. If we want nature to recover in the UK, we need to manage our land and ecosystems in a way that restores biodiversity and leaves room for nature.

For the UK to play a leading role in tackling the nature and climate emergency we need to see all four governments in the UK taking transformative action.

The last decade has been a *lost decade* for nature with the UK government failing to perform against many of their own nature targets.

In this next decade we need to see urgent action to actively protect and restore our ecosystems. We cannot simply prevent further losses of biodiversity, it is critical that we halt and reverse biodiversity loss, for a thriving planet.

National estimates of BII come from the analysis in [Sanchez-Ortiz et al. 2019](#). A detailed walk-through of how BII is estimated is provided by [De Palma et al. 2019](#), and more information about the index can be found on the [PREDICTS project website](#).