



# Lake restoration

## Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites Theme Workshop Note

### Introduction

As a high proportion of lake Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) are in unfavourable, no change or declining condition the restoration of this habitat type has been identified as a priority for the Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites (IPENS) project to address. Whilst lake restoration plans are being developed for many Natura 2000 lakes, the interventions required are often relatively costly, technically challenging, and take a long time to implement.

A technical workshop was held on 27 August 2013, attended by nine experts from Natural England and other organisations.

Views were sought about what we want to achieve for Natura 2000 sites in relation to the restoration of lakes including priorities for action, how to resolve blockages to progress, and innovative approaches. The information gathered as a result of the workshop will be used to shape the content of the IPENS Theme Plan.

The Improvement Programme for England's Natura 2000 Sites (IPENS) has hosted a series of workshops with key stakeholders in order to gather views and ideas on how to resolve some of the issues affecting Natura 2000 sites. The views in this note are those of the workshop participants and do not necessarily represent those of Natural England or the Environment Agency.



# Key messages from the workshop

- The restoration of lakes is strongly dependent on **the control of the sources catchment nutrient enrichment prior to restoration commencing**. There is a need to align suitable agri-environment, Catchment Sensitive Farming and other Water Framework Directive measures where possible.
- A number of **barriers** that have restricted satisfactory lake restoration measures from being undertaken. These include **the availability of sustained funding** (high cost per unit area compared with other habitats), **expert and specialist capacity; long-term commitment of effort and resources** required to achieve successful restoration and an **incomplete knowledge of restoration techniques**.
- A **prioritised programme approach**, developed and supported by a group of interested organisations linked to local regional/local partnerships, is a potential model for delivering improvements.
- We need to build a compelling case, underpinned by a lake restoration strategy, and win support for public sector investment and external funding by **communicating the distinctive and societal benefits restored lakes can bring** including for example landscape character, tourism, water quality, recreation and angling as well as biodiversity.
- Our knowledge of the practical management interventions which have been tried and their success, requires improvement. Much of the experience gained to date relates to the Broads and work undertaken in the 1990s but often this has not been properly evaluated and so the picture is incomplete. Knowledge of which mechanisms work best in deep lakes was highlighted as a particular gap. A review and evaluation of lake restoration techniques is required to highlight good case studies and guide the development of best practice.

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## Envisaged next steps

- Work with stakeholders to scope a strategic prioritised Natura 2000 Lakes Restoration Programme and seek to progress its development.
- Find solutions to ensure critical success factors can be put in place to deliver lake restoration for priority Natura 2000 sites. These include evidence-based restoration measures, good planning, adequate resources for medium term delivery projects and improving the expertise and knowledge of lake restoration.
- Explore the opportunities for a lakes restoration funding strategy to be developed.

# Workshop participants

The following organisations and Natural England staff participated in the workshop:

Senior Adviser, IPENS	Natural England
Senior Adviser, NE/EA Lakes Restoration Specialist	Natural England
Specialist, Standing Waters	Natural England
Senior Reserves Manager for the Broads NNR	Natural England
Lead Adviser, External Funding Unit	Natural England
Lead Adviser, Broads WFD Projects	Natural England
Team Leader, NNRs Team West	Natural England
Freshwater Ecology Research Associate	Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
Broads Area Manager	RSPB

Image: Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC)  
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