

Haddenham Level DDC

Biodiversity Action Plan Report 2020-21

Note on 2020-21 report

In November 2020 ADA published the new updated IDB Biodiversity Plan along with guidance and a press release here:

<https://www.ada.org.uk/2020/11/ada-launches-updated-biodiversity-action-plan-for-idbs/>



Internal Drainage Board Biodiversity Action Plan

Guidance Document

November 2020

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The Conservation Officer will begin moving Board reports into this new format as soon as possible and keep the Board informed of progress. The new reports are good news for the drainage industry as they reflect years of work by many people to ensure that the most up to date legislation, policy and approaches are accessible and practicable for those involved with water level management and, by extension, wildlife conservation. The existing BAP reports provide a good foundation on which to build and update as necessary.

Report Summary

Invasive species

None noted during visits.

Floating Pennywort continues to be found sporadically at the fringes of the Middle Level system but has not currently found its way in. All Boards are asked to keep an eye out for large rafts of a 'lily-leaf type' mass floating in the main channels as this is likely where it will turn up first. An information sheet will be shared separately and a training session has been suggested for later in the year.

Barn Owls

Sightings welcomed by the Conservation Officer. 2020 was an exceptionally poor year across the region. The Barn Owl box at Sutton Gault Pumping Station is in a state of disrepair although still used by jackdaw and stock dove. CO to enquire whether the Board would like to fund a new one.

Water Voles

Those drains where habitat is suitable appear to be well managed with consideration of marginal and bankside vegetation.

Boards are reminded to contact the Conservation Officer *before* any bank reprofiling or other works that may impact water voles take place. If unsure, please contact the Conservation Officer regardless.

Mink

Mink project underway across the Middle Level; Cambridgeshire now has a dedicated mink officer, a funded position hosted by the Countryside Restoration Trust and Waterlife Recovery East (WRE). All sightings of this and other invasive species are important. A more comprehensive update is available in the 2020 Natural Level newsletter.

The CO thanks the Board for their contribution of a fully-equipped mink raft in 2020. This has been in place since August 2020 and no mink caught – which is reassuring. The cage was dislodged in exceptionally high water levels in December 2020 but recovered and restored fully.

Kingfisher/Sand Martin

Sightings of these species in the breeding season are welcomed by the CO to help build a picture of how their populations fare across the region.

Badger

Badgers and their setts are protected in UK law but exclusion work is permissible under licence where a threat may be posed to land drainage. Such work is not always successful and can lead to further, more problematic, incursions so often the best course of action is to work around them. However, if this is not deemed possible the Conservation Officer should be contacted to determine the best course of action. Care must be taken not to disturb setts during routine management.

Otter

Sightings or reports welcomed.

Other Environmental issues

Outbreaks of Bird Flu were reported in small numbers across the fens through winter 2020. Please contact the CO if you come across dead wildfowl, birds of prey or gulls.

Training/Advice

At present, the ongoing situation regarding coronavirus means no public events are allowed, however when it is deemed safe to restart events the Boards will be notified. In the meantime, the Conservation Officer is happy to assist with any enquiries.

Peter Beckenham
Peter.beckenham@middlelevel.gov.uk
07765 597775



Figure 1 Mink raft supplied by Haddenham Level DDC

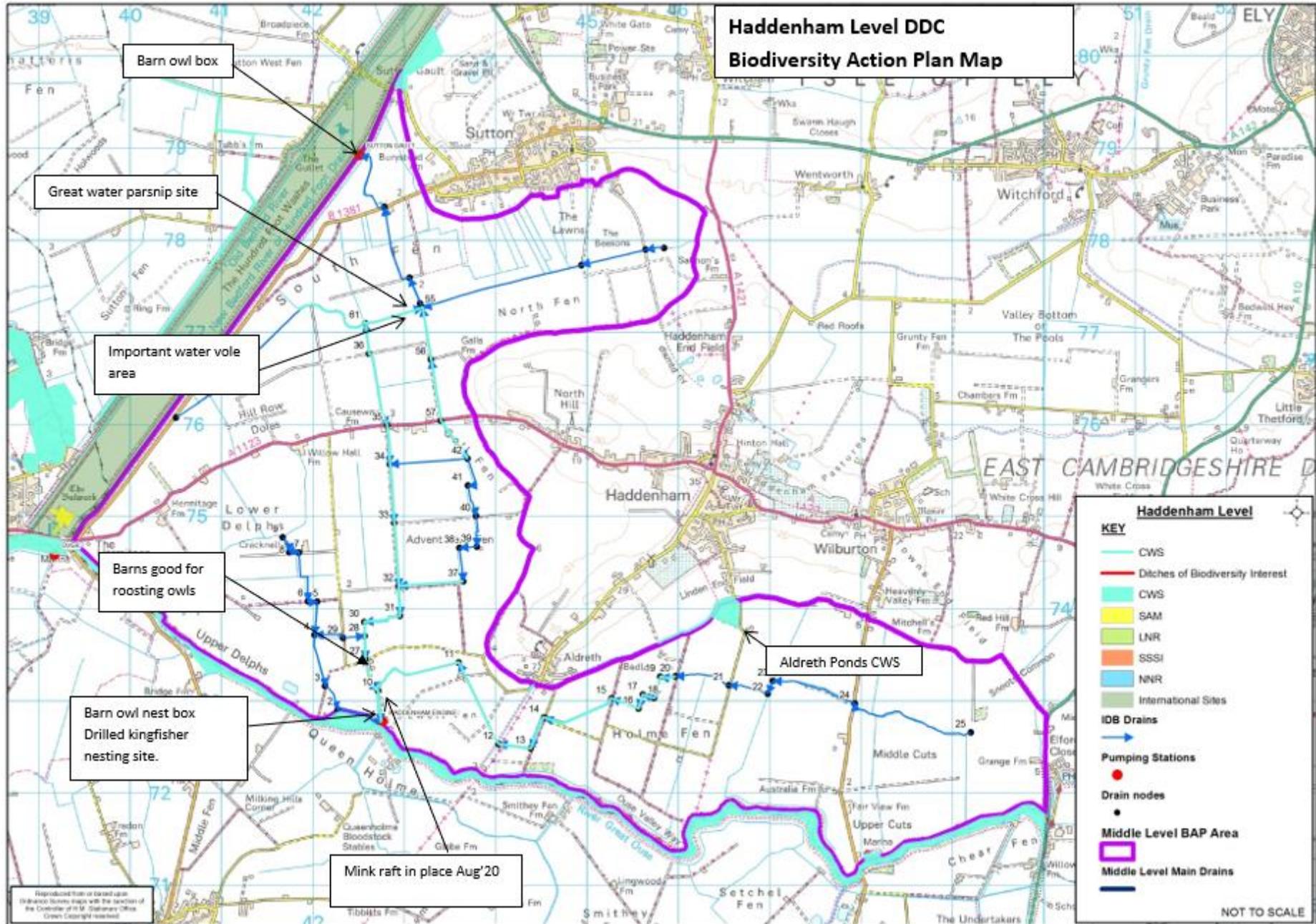


Figure 2 Water vole burrows on a Haddenham drain



Figure 3 (&4 below) Typical drains in Haddenham Level district, March 2021





Arable Margins Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Encourage use of buffer strips adjacent to watercourse	1.1	Advice	Landowners	As approached	Number of approaches	<i>Buffer strips use will be encouraged.</i>

Ponds Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Assist in maintaining Aldreth Ponds CWS	1.1	Provide assistance in management of the pond	Haddenham Conservation Society	As required	Request and help provided	<i>No approach received.</i>

Hedgerows Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Ensure no net loss of hedges as a result of the HLDC activities	1.1	Ensure that compensation planting takes place if any hedges are removed	Landowners	If required	Length	<i>Hedges monitored.</i>
		1.2	Prevent damage to existing hedges	Landowners	Ongoing	Length remaining intact	<i>Existing hedges to be mapped.</i>

Rivers Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Maintain the interest of the River Great Ouse CWS	1.1	During works on pumping station outfalls ensure that at least 50% of available bank within 50m radius remains undisturbed	Environment Agency	As required	% affected	<i>No works at PS affecting biodiversity undertaken during the period.</i>
2	Maintain water quality in the river system	2.1	Inspect all outfalls for water quality, siltation and flow	Environment Agency	Ongoing	Inspections completed	<i>Water quality at outfalls remains high.</i>

Fenland Drainage Ditches Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Maintain and enhance the biodiversity interests of the fenland drains especially Haddenham Engine/ Adventurer's Head drainage system CWS	1.1	Maintain the current regime which supports the biological interest of the CWS	Landowners	Ongoing	Length managed	<i>The annual drain maintenance management was carried out as in previous years.</i>
		1.2	Develop a management protocol for all works on the drainage ditches based on the ADA Drainage Manual and other guidance		2011	Completed document	<i>Best practice advice readily available to Boards. CO welcomes all queries.</i>

2	Control stands of invasive non-native plant species	2.1	Identify and treat	Landowner	As required	Area treated	<i>No invasive non-native species observed or reported.</i>
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Water Vole Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Monitor water vole populations	1.1	Maintain a database of any sightings of water vole	Wildlife Trust Haddenham Conservation Society	Ongoing	Data supplied to CPERC	<i>Some surveys to take place annually.</i>
2	Manage ditches according to best practice	2.1	Include management for water vole within the management protocol (5.2)		2010	Completed document	<i>See above.</i>
		2.2	Assume water vole are present when undertaking works and manage according to protocol		Ongoing	Length of watercourse under sensitive management	<i>Water voles are present on many drains throughout the District.</i>
3	Control mink if necessary	3.1	Carry out mink control	Co-operate with MLC	Ongoing as necessary	No of mink caught	<i>Board purchased a mink raft in 2020.</i>

Otter Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Monitor population	1.1	Maintain a database of any sightings of otter	Wildlife Trust	Ongoing	Data supplied to CPERC	<i>A record of otter sightings and sprainting sites in the District will be maintained.</i>
2	Improve breeding habitat	2.1	Provide artificial holts	Wildlife Trust MLC as part of pump replacement	2012-12	Number completed	<i>Otters active in the District.</i>

Kingfisher Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Monitor population	1.1	Maintain a database of any sightings of kingfisher	Haddenham Conservation Society	Ongoing	Data supplied to CPERC	<i>Frequently reported. Records of breeding sites or suspected nesting areas in the District will be maintained to guide sensitive management.</i>
2	Maintain potential nest sites	8.1	Keep earth cliffs where present		Ongoing	No of cliffs present and retained	<i>A number of sites have been used in District, maintain sensitive approach around any exposed earth banks.</i>

Barn Owl Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Monitor population	1.1	Maintain a database of any sightings of barn owl	Haddenham Conservation Society	Ongoing	Data supplied to CPERC	<i>. All sightings welcomed.</i>

		1.2	Confirm breeding in artificial nest boxes	Wildlife Conservation Partnership	Annually	Number bred	<i>Barn Owls have previously bred successfully.</i>
2	Provide artificial nest boxes in areas of suitable habitat potential nest sites	2.1	Install boxes	Wildlife Conservation Partnership	Ongoing	No of boxes installed	<i>Two boxes installed, at Haddenham PS and Sutton Gault PS. There are many other boxes privately provided in the District.</i>
	Create and manage a network of rough, tussocky grassland habitat corridors within the IDB district.	2.2	Provide buffer strips (x-ref 8 Arable margins) and maintain a rough, tussocky sward to channel banks	Farmers	Ongoing	Length provided	<i>Rough swards were maintained along the majority of the 29.5 kilometres of channel banks in the District.</i>

European Eel Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Maintain access to ditch system for elvers	1.1	Identify any possible obstructions and discuss with EA to formulate a means of providing access	EA	Ongoing	Action completed	<i>Under consideration.</i>

Great Water Parsnip Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Maintain distribution	1.1	Identify the location of plants	Haddenham Conservation Society	Ongoing – over a 5yr period	Action completed	<i>The main site for great water parsnip remains alongside Second Bridge Drove. The survey and recording of GWP distribution will continue. CO to monitor in 2021.</i>

		1.2	Undertake sensitive management in the area		Ongoing	Species present	<i>The annual cleansing management that has allowed the species to thrive at this site will be continued.</i>
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Procedural Action Plan

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Report
1	Develop best practice	1.1 (see section 12.5)	Develop a management protocol for all works on the drainage ditches based on the ADA Drainage Manual and other guidance		2010	Completed document	<i>Current practice complies with Drainage Manuals Best Practice.</i>
2	Data management	2.1	Establish database for important wildlife records	CPBRC	Ongoing	Database regularly maintained	<i>A record of important wildlife records will be maintained.</i>