

Annex B – Species prioritisation methodology

To support South Yorkshire Combined Mayoral Authority in conducting a review of the species prioritisation work for South Yorkshire’s Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), Natural England have been reviewing work carried out by RSK to compile a long list and subsequent priority shortlist of species for the LNRS. The work we have completed so far is as follows:

- Collate all the evidence collected by RSK into a single spreadsheet, including comments made by specialists and representatives from the supporting authorities (Natural England and local planning authorities) and other key partners.
- Cross-check the list with newly available evidence in the form of priority species lists for neighbouring LNRS areas.
- Agree criteria for removal or additions to the priority shortlist with the Species Task and Finish Group, which were as follows:
 - Added to list if requested by a specialist
 - Added to list if present on at least two neighbouring LNRS shortlists and represented on the longlist for South Yorkshire
 - Removed from list if requested by a specialist.
- Review the list using the above criteria.
- Share reviewed priority list with Species Task and Finish Group.
- Share RSK’s suggested assemblages with Natural England specialists for comment.
- Review comments made by local experts and specialists and make changes as required, including adding species to assemblages as required.
- Assess whether there is adequate representation within the final priority species list across different taxa.
- Populate the priority species list with appropriate actions (measures) to support species recovery.

We would recommend that the following additional overarching measures are included to apply to all short-listed species:

- Further survey work, monitoring and other research is needed to understand population and distribution trends and drivers of decline.
- Sharing of data as appropriate to focus efforts in order to have the greatest impact on species recovery.
- Opportunities for citizen science to contribute to knowledge and understanding, including monitoring population and distribution trends. This could include

highlighting existing opportunities such as the Big Butterfly Count and Big Garden Bird Count.

- Education and awareness raising about species' needs.
- Volunteer opportunities to learn more about species and become the experts of the future.
- Support and funding for landowners and land managers to maximise impact on species recovery.

Summary of actions and changes

- Reviewed between October and December 2025 with a small amount of tweaking in January 2026 for responses received in late December 2025.
- Received responses from 16 local and national specialists to feedback on the original priority species list created by RSK and the first draft of the reviewed list
- Initial review of original comments from specialists contacted by RSK as part of their work
 - Added 28 species
 - Removed 35 species
- Following review and advice from local and national specialists
 - Further 41 species were added
 - 15 species removed
- There was no change to 135 of the species originally shortlisted by RSK
- There were also 44 species added onto the list as requested by local specialists,
 - Birds - 11
 - Fungus - 14
 - Stonewort – 15
 - Others - 4
- Longlist – 780
- Shortlist – 248 (73 if counting assemblages as 1, 21 assemblages, 52 individual)
- Reintroduction candidates – 11 species
- Shortlist species coverage
 - Amphibian – 2
 - Bird – 70
 - Bony fish – 5
 - Crustacean – 1
 - Fern – 3
 - Flowering plant – 56
 - Fungus – 15
 - Insect & spider – 56
 - Jawless fish -2
 - Lichen – 2
 - Mollusc – 1
 - Moss – 1
 - Reptile – 4
 - Stonewort – 15
 - Terrestrial mammal - 15