# Wales risks missing 2030 biodiversity targets as progress stalls



Llŷr Gruffydd, chair of the Senedd’s Climate Change Committee, has drawn attention to the slow pace of biodiversity initiatives in Wales, highlighting discrepancies between government claims and real progress. During a debate on May 7, Gruffydd expressed frustration over the timeline set by the Welsh Government, suggesting that the ambitious targets for biodiversity protection are “unlikely” to be established until 2029. This timeframe contradicts statements from government officials asserting that halting nature loss is a priority.

The inquiry convened by the committee revealed that Wales is far from achieving the internationally recognised “30 by 30” goal, which aims to protect 30 per cent of land and sea for nature by the year 2030. Gruffydd pointed out that the groundwork for establishing these targets began over two years ago, raising questions about the feasibility of further delays. He noted, “It seems inconceivable that it will take another four years,” underscoring a growing concern that these targets might fall victim to bureaucratic inertia.

Critics, including Gruffydd, have called for a more ambitious timeline, yet this plea was ultimately rebuffed by Welsh ministers. They maintained that the recommended changes are “simply impossible,” a stance that seems at odds with similar initiatives undertaken by the UK and Scottish governments, which have reportedly made significant strides in less than a year.

The urgency of this issue is magnified by findings from the 2023 “State of Nature” report, which revealed alarming trends in biodiversity across Wales. The report indicates a 20 per cent average decline in Welsh wildlife since 1994, with one in six native species now threatened with extinction. Gruffydd remarked, “That report details the devastating scale of nature loss across the country,” reinforcing the need for immediate and effective action.

Delyth Jewell, another member of Plaid Cymru, voiced her concerns about society's increasing desensitisation to environmental destruction, stating, “I'm concerned that our society and the world has become used to the destruction.” This sentiment reflects a broader anxiety that the plummeting health of Wales’ environment is being overlooked amidst political inaction.

Further complicating these efforts is the criticism levelled at the Environment (Wales) Act 2016, which many argue has had little tangible impact on reversing biodiversity decline. An Audit Wales report supported this view, highlighting fundamental shortcomings in the legislation's implementation.

Despite these setbacks, reports from the Welsh Government indicate some progress. Although many aspects of biodiversity remain in decline, the 'Wellbeing of Wales, 2024: a resilient Wales' report acknowledges areas of improvement. However, it stresses the necessity for intensified efforts to address the underlying issues leading to loss and degradation of species. The Welsh Government's Biodiversity Deep Dive update, published in May 2023, identifies the steps required to increase the effectiveness of ongoing initiatives, hinting at a commitment to accelerating biodiversity recovery.

In December 2022, the Welsh Government had called for a “game-changing” global biodiversity agreement at COP15 in Montreal, aligning their efforts with the global agenda to protect natural environments. Their plans include creating a National Forest to safeguard ancient woodlands and promote new tree planting, initiatives that reflect Wales’ commitment to the broader ambition of biodiversity recovery.

Ultimately, while the Welsh Government has reiterated its intentions to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience, concrete actions and accelerated timelines remain crucial if the nation is to meet its international commitments and avert further nature loss.

### Reference Map

1. Paragraphs 1-2, 3, 4
2. Paragraphs 5, 6
3. Paragraph 7
4. Paragraphs 8, 9
5. Paragraphs 10, 11
6. Paragraph 12
7. Paragraph 13

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.southwalesargus.co.uk/news/25150678.senedd-members-demand-action-nature-loss-wales/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2025/jan/20/wales-failing-to-tackle-alarming-decline-in-nature-report-finds> - A report published in January 2025 highlights Wales' failure to effectively address the alarming decline in biodiversity. The Welsh Government's biodiversity targets, initially promised in June 2021, are now unlikely to be set until 2029, raising concerns about the nation's commitment to halting nature loss. The report also criticizes the outdated Natural Resources Policy and the under-resourced Natural Resources Wales, which has been stretched thin due to years of under-investment, limiting its ability to lead biodiversity recovery effectively.
3. <https://www.gov.wales/wellbeing-wales-2024-resilient-wales-html> - The 'Wellbeing of Wales, 2024: a resilient Wales' report outlines the nation's progress towards maintaining a biodiverse natural environment. It acknowledges that while some indicators show improvement, overall biodiversity is declining. The report emphasizes the need for further action to reverse this trend, highlighting that the distribution of species in Wales has decreased over the long term, mirroring the global picture of declining biological diversity.
4. <https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-publication-biannual-update-biodiversity-deep-dive> - In May 2023, the Welsh Government published a biannual update on the Biodiversity Deep Dive, focusing on the '30 by 30' target to protect and effectively manage at least 30% of land, freshwater, and sea for nature by 2030. The update recognizes progress and milestones achieved against each recommendation but also outlines the next steps required to accelerate action towards nature recovery.
5. <https://www.gov.wales/welsh-government-annual-report-2023-html> - The Welsh Government's Annual Report 2023 highlights initiatives aimed at enhancing biodiversity, including the Biodiversity Deep Dive published in October 2022. The report details efforts to expand protected sites on land and sea to achieve the 30% biodiversity coverage by 2030, as per UN recommendations. It also outlines plans for a National Forest to protect existing ancient woodlands and promote new tree planting.
6. <https://www.gov.wales/cop15-minister-calls-for-game-changing-global-biodiversity-deal-in-montreal> - In December 2022, the Welsh Government called for a 'game-changing' global biodiversity deal at COP15 in Montreal. The Minister emphasized the need for ambitious and integrated action to put nature on the path to recovery, aligning with the '30 by 30' target to protect and effectively manage at least 30% of land, freshwater, and sea for nature by 2030.
7. <https://www.gov.wales/section-6-biodiversity-and-resilience-ecosystems-duty-summary-report-2022-html> - The Section 6 Biodiversity and Resilience of Ecosystems Duty Summary Report 2022 outlines the Welsh Government's efforts to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem resilience. It details projects addressing biodiversity loss and habitat improvement, including peatland restoration and the creation of the National Forest for Wales. The report also highlights funding for community projects to create or enhance woodlands for local communities.