

# What is Biodiversity?

**Biodiversity is the volume of life on Earth, as well as how different species interact with each other and the physical world around them. We share our planet with millions of other species, and we all need each other to survive and thrive.**



## Humans and nature

There are 66.97 million people living in the UK (2022) and the global population is growing quickly. With more people, there is more pressure on land for houses and food as well as pressure on the water supply and sewage system. Nature provides us all with food, sunlight, air and water and is now struggling to cope.



## Woodland

Woodland covers 13.2% of the UK's land surface today but only half of this is made up of native tree species, the other half are non-native conifer plantations which are not as beneficial for wildlife. Woodlands soak up carbon and provide habitat and food for birds and insects.



## Bechstein's Bat

The Bechstein's bat used to be the most common bat in the UK. It relies on ancient woodlands as they have more holes or cracks to roost in. Sadly, the loss of ancient woodlands has reduced the species to less than 10 breeding locations in the UK, making it the rarest species of bat here.



## Rivers

There are over 200,000 kms of rivers in the UK. Rivers provide homes for many aquatic species as well as fresh water for people, wildlife and farmers. Our rivers face a threat from pollution from sewage, farming, roads and litter entering the water.



## Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs have lived in the UK for over half a million years! 10 years ago, we saw a 46% decline in hedgehogs across the UK. Numbers are now looking better in urban areas but are declining still in rural areas, particularly the East Midlands and East of England due to busy roads, climate change and fewer hedgerows and invertebrates for their food.

Have a look at our **'Wildlife Outside your Window'** booklet to see what can you do to help biodiversity - [orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/eco-hub/wildlife](https://orbitcustomerhub.org.uk/eco-hub/wildlife)



## BUDDIES

## Bumblebees

Did you know there are 24 species of Bumblebee in the UK? Bumblebees do not make honey like Honeybees, but they pollinate our plants for us, and many fruits and vegetables will not grow without being pollinated. Our wild pollinators (bees, moths, butterflies, flies, beetles and hoverflies) pollinate £690 million worth of crops a year! Bumblebees are facing a decline due to pesticide use across farms and urbanisation, reducing the amount of wildflower meadows and nectar sources but Orbit Homes is helping to provide food and shelter for insects and bumblebees across our developments through planting wildflower meadow areas. The flowers provide a much needed source of nectar for bumblebees and help to link up habitats making sure they don't have to go too long without food.



## Seas

Our beaches and seas are important for our holidays but also for wildlife and fishing as well as renewable energy production (tidal power and wind farms). Our UK seas hold over 330 different types of fish as well as corals and marine mammals such as basking sharks. The basking shark is the second largest fish in the world and can grow up to 11m long, the same as a double-decker bus! Unfortunately, our seas are being overfished, polluted with sewage and litter, and are heating up which could cause flooding!

