



Meres

Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Associated Species Action Plans:

- Links to associated SAPs

[White Faced Darter](#)



Ecology

What is a mere?

Meres were formed at the end of the last Ice Age, c. 12,000 years ago. Most of the UK was buried deep under a thick ice sheet, often up to 1 kilometre thick. As the climate got warmer, the ice started to melt. The ice sheet did not melt in a nice, even, gentle way - but quite rapidly, with huge chunks of ice falling onto the landscape below.

These holes are called "Kettle Holes" as they resemble the impression left by a huge kettle put down in the landscape. These Kettle Holes quickly filled with water, initially from the melting ice, but as time went by, other water filled the holes - from rain, and water from underground springs.

The Kettle Holes are still here today, a landscape legacy that is over 10,000 years old! The water-filled hollows are great for wildlife, as the water feeding them from the surrounding landscape brings with it nutrients, or food for plants and animals.

Local people call these Kettle Holes "Meres"- often beautiful lakes with distinctive plants and animals. If you look at a map of the area, you will find that there are hundreds of these Meres dotted all



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over the region.

Globally however, these Meres are unusual. They can only be found in ancient glacial landscapes affected by melting ice, and which are in parts of the countryside still undisturbed and wet enough to support them.

Current status

The Cheshire meres form a part of the internationally important North West Midland Meres, occupying hollows in the glacial drift surface of the Cheshire Plain. There are many 'meres/pools' which lie within the Cheshire region, 12 of which have been given the designation of SSSI. 8 meres are notified as Wetlands of International Importance, included in the Midlands Meres and Mosses RAMSAR sites:

Phase 1 (1994) Hatchmere, Quoisley Little and Big Meres, Tatton Mere and Mere Mere.

Phase 2 (1995) Oak Mere, Chapel Mere

Rostherne Mere is also a RAMSAR site and managed by Natural England as a National Nature Reserve.

Oak Mere is a candidate Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The UK Steering Group Report, Volume 2 (1995) contains a costed Biodiversity Action Plan for Mesotrophic Lakes. The UK Steering Group Report Tranche 2 Action Plans, Volume II (EN 1998) also includes a costed BAP for Eutrophic Standing Waters. Karen Simon of the Environment Agency, Cumbria, has been identified as the national contact point for both types of lakes.

A few meres are ground water fed whilst most others have inlet and outlet streams. Hydrosere succession is the ultimate, natural, fate of a mere. Meres where not enlarged by dams are Britain's natural mesotrophic and eutrophic lakes which often have associated endangered wetland habitats such as alder/willow carr, fen and swamp. They are a finite natural resource so the emphasis of conservation has to be maintenance and improvement by removal of anthropogenic influences. While many are maintained, others continue to deteriorate.

Threats

- * Climate Change
- * Agricultural Practices
- * Enrichment of water



- * Siltation
- * Reduced water levels
- * Introduction of alien fish
- * Recreational Activities - fishing activity (ie trampling of vegetation, introduction of fish species and ground-baiting.)
- * Habitat Change and Fragmentation
- * Invasive plants (e.g. *Crassula helmsii*, *Impatiens glandulifera*)

How are we helping to conserve meres in the Cheshire region?

- * Amend and re-submit the HLF bid to provide funding for a project with the following aims:-
 1. to conserve and enhance the priority areas of the Meres and Mosses Natural Area, aiming to achieve a sustainable and functioning landscape,
 2. To raise public awareness and understanding of the key issues in the Natural Area and promote appreciation of the area for recreation
 3. To assist understanding of the complex interactions of water, geology and land management within the Meres and Mosses
- * EA to continue to implement Stillwaters monitoring strategy with bi-annual meetings of the multi-functional stillwaters group etc.
- * EA continue to review all their function's consents and activities relating to Habitats Directive sites eg Oakmere
- * EA and English Nature to continue funding towards a project officer with FWAG to promote Agri-Environment Schemes and the Sustainable Meres project looking at sustainable use in the catchments of the Meres and Mosses - educating farmers and creation of buffer zones.

Objectives, targets and actions

Objectives, targets and actions to help conserve meres in the Cheshire region can be found on the [Biodiversity Action Reporting System \(BARS\)](#) along with full details of our progress so far

How to find out more about meres

[UK BAP Definitions](#)

www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/nnr/1006125.aspx



Contact details

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References and Glossary

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