



JNCC Bulletin March/April 2021

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30 years at the heart of nature

The beginning of April saw us celebrate our 30th birthday! As part of the celebrations our [Spring 2021 edition](#) of JNCC Nature News marks our 30th anniversary and features some of our key achievements on our journey from 1991 to the present day. These include our work on Marine Protected Areas in UK waters, how we've been at the forefront of how Earth observation data can be translated into practical applications that benefit nature conservation and how, through pioneering work on ecosystem services and nature-based solutions, we've influenced the development of management plans and environmental policies in the UK's Overseas Territories.

This special 30 year issue also features farewell reflections from Marcus Yeo and welcomes our new Chief Executive Dr Gemma Harper OBE.

Throughout our anniversary year, we'll be sharing some of our key achievements and milestones in future editions of JNCC Nature News, on our website and via our social media channels.

7th Quinquennial Review

One of our many roles is our work with the UK country nature conservation bodies (CNCBs) to ensure that UK legislative lists of species are up-to-date, including species that are protected in Great Britain under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

Every five years, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, and NatureScot, working with JNCC, review Schedules 5 and 8 of the Act through a Quinquennial Review (QQR). Planning the QQR process is no mean feat, and planning for QQR 7 started in early 2020 with the formation of a JNCC/CNCB working group.

Delayed until 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the [7th QQR](#) of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (QQR 7) launched in April 2021 with the data-gathering phase. As a result of a review of the QQR criteria, this phase has been greatly simplified, and will be undertaken through an online survey which will run until 7 July 2021.

Nitrogen pollution – more ambition?

The [Nitrogen Futures project](#) suggested that current policy to meet national targets for reducing emissions must be supplemented with extra actions at local level to restore 75% of protected sites.

This prompted JNCC to organise a roundtable at [CAPER 21](#) (Community for Air Pollution Effects Research conference) where 81 scientists discussed ideas on how to be more ambitious in relation to Nitrogen reduction.

Kevin Hicks from the International Nitrogen Initiative hosted the session with an inspiring panel – Alastair Burn (Natural England), Jenny Hawley (Plantlife) and Ed Rowe (UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology).

The group concluded that an integrated approach is paramount to be more ambitious with reducing air pollution. Scientists advised that different forms of nitrogen, other pollutants, geography and sector interactions need consideration together. Recognition of multiple benefits for environmental quality, biodiversity, ecosystems, human health, climate change adaptation and sustainable consumption and development is needed alongside new data.

Global impacts' reports

Our [recently published research](#), produced for Defra, explores options for measuring the global environmental impacts of UK consumption.

The consumption of products such as food and other commodities can have a huge global environmental impact and cause issues such as deforestation, water stress and pollution.

The 25 Year Environment Plan recognises this problem, and calls for the UK to “avoid improving our domestic environment at the expense of the environment globally.” In order to measure progress against this, we have been contracted by Defra to begin development of an indicator to measure the global environmental impacts of UK consumption.

Our preliminary research, produced in the form of two reports explore alternative strategies for taking this indicator forward, and are available on [Defra's research platform](#).

Waterbirds in the UK

The latest annual report of the Wetland Bird Survey (WeBS), [Waterbirds in the UK 2019/20](#), has been published. WeBS is the principal scheme for monitoring the UK's wintering waterbird populations and provides an important indicator of their status and the health of wetlands. Highlights from the latest report include a record number of registered counters – 3,450, and a record breaking number of sites surveyed – 2,964! The report also shows positive news for Spoonbills but concerning trends for the Scaup. Thank you to all the volunteer counters and local organisers who help make the WeBS report. The [Wetland Bird Survey](#) is a partnership jointly funded by the British Trust for Ornithology, JNCC, and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, in association with the Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust, with fieldwork conducted by thousands of volunteers.