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For further information please contact:

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Monkstone House

City Road

Peterborough PE1 1JY

<https://jncc.gov.uk/>

Communications@jncc.gov.uk

To view other newsletters [visit our website](#)

Nature recovery is within our grasp

Political leaders participating in the United Nations Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020 committed to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030. To mark the first anniversary of the Leaders' Pledge for Nature, JNCC, Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, NatureScot and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency launched the [Nature Positive 2030](#) report.

The report recommends nine priority actions which can be delivered rapidly by national and local governments, land owners, businesses and others, that will have a high impact on reversing biodiversity loss this decade. These include ensuring wildlife thrives within protected areas on land and at sea; better conserving wildlife habitats outside protected areas, particularly those identified as parts of nature networks or as important blue/green infrastructure; developing the market for green finance; and deploying nature-based solutions by default with decision makers asking themselves 'can nature provide a solution?'

Read the [blog](#) from JNCC and the Statutory Nature Conservation bodies on Becoming Nature Positive for People and Planet.

Collaborating for a healthy ocean

JNCC and the [UK Hydrographic Office \(UKHO\)](#) share a mutual commitment to improving the environment – with a common purpose of achieving a clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse ocean. We both specialise in marine geospatial data, supporting the monitoring and management of our seas, and our data sets are helping to mitigate the effects of climate change and protect our marine environment for the future. We also develop data solutions to help people make better decisions about the environment, especially in the blue economy. Through our partnership's first Memorandum of Understanding we are looking forward to adding value to our respective assets and applying them to a broader range of activities and customers. Working together, for example by undertaking joint surveys, we can save time, effort, resources and even reduce carbon emissions. We are already seeing the benefit of our partnership through our collaboration on surveys in the UK Overseas Territories, exchange of expertise in marine habitat mapping and our drive towards higher standards for our benthic surveys.

Black box magic on the seafloor

Our seas are home to a rich variety of marine wildlife and are also important for many human activities. We've been helping to support the identification and designation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) for over a decade and work with partners to provide scientific advice on how best to conserve MPAs located in the UK's offshore marine environment.

Monitoring the condition of the UK's offshore Marine Protected Areas is essential and our offshore surveys help us to understand if the conservation objectives of MPAs are being achieved and determine if management is being effective or needs adaptation. Our survey team recently headed back out to the Faroe-Shetland Sponge Belt MPA with [Marine Scotland](#) colleagues aboard the MRV Scotia. This large MPA is an exciting site with unique environmental conditions created by the

interaction of warm North Atlantic and cold Arctic water masses. Biologically diverse, sponge communities form dense aggregations which are nick-named 'cheese bottoms' and many fish such as fish sharks, rays and skates also make their home in the deep waters of this MPA. You can read all about the successful survey on our [blog](#).

Working across boundaries

How much more can we achieve for marine nature conservation when we work across boundaries?

This was the theme of our Head of Marine Monitoring and Evidence, Beth Stoker's, presentation at the recent Marine Alliance For Science And Technology For Scotland Annual Science Meeting, [Working To Reverse The Tide On Climate And Global Change](#). Working across boundaries is one of our strengths and a central pillar to much of our work – past, present and future – and Beth examined the multiple boundaries within the marine environment. These included the diverse range of disciplines in marine nature conservation; the ecosystem boundaries in our ocean and also at the land/sea interface; and the number of organisations working for and in the marine environment, across sectors from government to academia, the private sector, and the third sector. Beth elaborated on these through six examples of active projects at JNCC - the deep-sea science plan for Scotland; our [Marine Natural Capital and Ecosystem Assessment Programme](#); [The Big Picture](#); [International Partnership on MPAs, Biodiversity, and Climate Change](#); Turks and Caicos Government Environment Strategy and [Blue Planet Fund](#).

UK Biodiversity Indicators 2021

Indicators are useful tools for summarising and communicating broad trends, and provide a measure for reporting on international goals and targets. This year, 2021, is the 14th update to the [UK Biodiversity Indicators](#) – published almost annually since 2007, the indicators have continually been refined and revised to ensure they are based on the most robust and reliable available data, and that they remain relevant to changes to the international goals and drivers. The UK Biodiversity Indicators are dependent on a wide variety of data, provided by government, research bodies, and the voluntary sector – in total nearly 100 organisations are involved.