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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](#)

Providing marine science technical assistance

The [Ocean Country Partnership Programme \(OCCP\)](#) is a new UK-Government-led programme delivering under the Blue Planet Fund. The OCCP will provide demand-led technical assistance in marine science to partner countries, supporting them to overcome challenges that threaten marine environments and the livelihoods that depend on them. The programme will work across three themes, recognising the interdependencies and incorporating an integrated approach between Marine Pollution, Sustainable Seafood and Marine Biodiversity. Through this programme, JNCC, in partnership with Cefas and the MMO, leads on biodiversity and Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to support countries to establish designated, well-managed and enforced MPAs, supporting healthy ecosystems with thriving biodiversity and fisheries. During year one of the OCCP, the biodiversity theme has built partnerships with the Maldives and Belize. During a recent delegation trip to Belize to launch the OCCP with Belize, JNCC's International MPA Lead Specialist, Louisa Fennelly, met colleagues from key ministries in the Belize government and the British High Commission to discuss the work under the OCCP. JNCC along with colleagues from MMO and Cefas, also held a workshop with key stakeholders within the Belize government and NGOs to introduce the OCCP and the work already underway within this programme. Through the OCCP, JNCC will bring expertise to support partner countries in building capacity to enable sound and robust decision making on MPAs, increasing the understanding of their value in supporting sustainable livelihood, food security, health and well-being.

Marine Natural Capital report published

The marine environment provides important services to people. It is a source of food, its habitats provide flood protection for coastal communities, and its very existence contributes to people's wellbeing. The Marine Natural Capital Approach develops methods to understand and quantify how nature benefits society and the economy. This understanding will improve how we manage marine ecosystems and help us better communicate their importance. JNCC led a critical analysis of the work done on this topic in the UK, as part of Defra's Marine Natural Capital Ecosystem Assessment (mNCEA) programme, and published [a report](#) of the findings.

The report highlights strengths and identifies areas that need further development. This has led to recommendations for future projects. For example, it suggests that there is opportunity to increase our knowledge of how the benefits, from ecosystem services, are distributed amongst social groups. The project recommendations will set direction for nature conservation and recovery practitioners and will help shape future government priorities.

Turks and Caicos Islands asset register

The Turks and Caicos Islands are one of the UKs overseas territories in the Caribbean Sea. In a project funded by Darwin Plus, JNCC worked with the Islands Department of Environment and Coastal Resources to produce the Islands first shallow-water [marine natural capital asset register](#). This asset register describes and quantifies the extent of the shallow-water seabed assets of the Islands, including

habitat assets such as sandy basins, seagrass beds, seaweed-dominated and coral-dominated reefs. It also includes a data matrix showing any ecosystem services that may be provided by each seabed asset, such as food provision, carbon sequestration and recreational potential. This information forms the basis of a larger project to trial the use of marine natural capital management approaches in the Islands.

Renewing biodiversity through a people-in-nature approach

The '[Renewing biodiversity through a people-in-nature approach](#)' (RENEW) project will work with landowners, businesses, and communities to restore woodlands, wetlands and farmland across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. The project will put people at the centre of action on biodiversity renewal and build expertise across different sectors and communities to address the environment and climate crisis.

JNCC is delighted to support this project – a collaboration between the University of Exeter and the National Trust which has received funding through a grant from the Natural Environment Research Council. Our Chief Scientist, Professor Christine Maggs, will chair the project's Programme Advisory Group and engage in Partner Forum activities, which will provide us with the opportunity to interact with research institutions and cross-sectoral stakeholders to understand important new challenges.

We look forward to working with the University of Exeter and National Trust team to put people at the heart of nature recovery.

Celebrating women and girls in science

We celebrated the 7th *International Day of Women and Girls in Science* which recognises the critical role women and girls play in science and technology.

JNCC is proud to have a high proportion of female staff who work across all areas of our organisation from Governance and Accountability, to Corporate Services, to Digital and Data and to our Science teams. We regularly celebrate the many achievements of all our staff on our social media channels. You can keep up-to-date by following us on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).