

Impact Review 2023 to 2024

JNCC. 2024. Impact Review 2023 to 2024. JNCC, Peterborough, ISBN 978-1-86107-647-2. <https://hub.jncc.gov.uk/assets/a6af9b01-f602-4fdc-8bdb-99eed90bbe5c>.

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Introduction from our Chief Executive

Last year, building on over 30 years of evidence heritage, we published our new strategy, *Together for Nature*. Our vision – *thriving nature for a sustainable future*, mission – *turning science into action for nature, people and the planet*, seven strategic priorities, and values – *inclusion, collaboration and innovation* – set our ambition, direction and culture to 2030.

Our focus is on impact – tackling the pressures leading to biodiversity loss, habitat degradation and ecological collapse; mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policies; reconceptualising natural systems as critical natural infrastructure essential to national security, economic prosperity and societal wellbeing; and developing our organisational capability to drive delivery in line with our values.

This is our first Impact Review, bringing you the highlights of the last year – year one of implementing *Together for Nature*. I am incredibly proud of all our people, of everyone who has contributed to the creation of this review, and to all our partners in progress. I am grateful to our Chair, Cath Denholm, and Joint Committee for their continued guidance, challenge and support.

Robust scientific evidence and advice is critical to helping decision-makers develop their nature recovery strategies and determine whether their targets are being met. JNCC's statutory ability to provide a 'bird's eye' view of the UK's nature – convening across both the four countries of the UK and reaching out to the rest of the world through our international work – means we are uniquely placed, operating at multiple geographic scales across land and sea, to facilitate collaboration, learning and innovation.

At the heart of everything we do is our commitment to inclusion – embracing, respecting and accepting difference, recognising its importance to our culture and our success in delivering our mission.

We have made an excellent start to implementing *Together for Nature*: facilitating partnerships, championing citizen science, generating data, innovating analysis, curating knowledge, hosting collaborative events and influencing decisions for nature conservation and recovery.

Corporately, we continue to modernise and evolve, with new systems, policies and guidance. I am particularly proud of our progress on sustainability and our commitment to ISO 14001, achieving Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation status, being a Disability Confident Leader, achieving the bronze standard in the Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion, progress towards White Ribbon accreditation, support from our Mental Health First Aiders, and our leadership development programme graduates.

Our work is both for today's generations and for future generations – our guiding principle is to be a good ancestor. New work on youth participation is challenging us

to widen our horizons to ensure we play our part in achieving thriving nature for a sustainable future.

I hope you enjoy reading this review – please do provide us with feedback – and I look forward to another year of progress. Together for nature!

Dr Gemma Harper OBE, Chief Executive, JNCC

A year in review

From April 2023 to March 2024, we...

- Spent **390 days at sea monitoring offshore seabed habitats** including Marine Protected Areas, regions at sea which protect habitats and wildlife from human-caused damage. We also monitored two of three newly created Highly Protected Marine Areas, which were designated based on advice from us and Natural England.
- Continued to fund, coordinate and analyse data collected from **ten monitoring schemes**, run with partners throughout the UK. More than **18,000 volunteers** collect information on over **17,000 species**. This essential data helps tell us how the UK's nature is faring
- Updated a tool used to create the **first ever indicator to measure the UK's global environmental footprint**. The update includes new data, allowing more countries to use it, and was visited **by 4,300 new users in 73 countries** over the year. Our work is helping the UK to be at the forefront of understanding global impacts on the environment.
- Gave advice on international trade in endangered species and illegal wildlife trade. Last year we advised on around **20,000 different applications**, covering everything from snakeskin handbags to falcons and live eels. We also **train police and Border Force officers** on these issues.
- Published the fourth census of Britain and Ireland's internationally important populations of breeding seabirds, *Seabirds Count*. Over 10,000 sites and 25 species were surveyed between 2015 and 2021 by roughly 1,000 volunteer and professional surveyors. The results are being used to prioritise conservation in our seabird colonies.
- Gave advice, with our partners the Marine Management Organisation, which led to the **removal of bottom trawling activity from 13 offshore Marine Protected Areas**. These measures will protect valuable reef and rocky habitats covering an area of **almost 4,000 km²**, equivalent to the size of Essex.
- Published **almost 50 reports, datasets and project outputs** on a range of topics, from the methodology used to monitor Marine Protected Areas in the UK, to a report on a new indicator which quantifies the globally threatened species in the UK Overseas Territories.

Respond to the global biodiversity crisis

We are using our scientific expertise to facilitate a collective response to the global biodiversity crisis.

Nature is in crisis around the world, with species and habitats declining, ecosystem processes failing rapidly and people becoming disconnected from the natural world on which they depend. There is an urgent need to understand the changes we are seeing and to use this knowledge to help nature recover.

Action is still possible, and the seven strategic priorities set out in our '*Together for Nature*' strategy outline the areas of work that JNCC will undertake, focusing on our role in terrestrial and marine nature conservation and recovery, at the UK level, across the UK Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies, and internationally. JNCC is in a unique position to collaborate and input evidence and advice on both UK and global nature issues.

Protecting migratory species

In February 2024, the UN Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) held its 14th Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14). This significant international meeting enables governments, and observers to agree strategies for the conservation of migratory species and their habitats.

JNCC provides scientific and technical advice to the UK Government on treaties such as CMS. We supported Defra as part of the UK delegation across the more than 100 papers considered by CoP14, both feeding into positions in advance of the meeting and in real-time as negotiations took place, for example on climate change and on wildlife disease. JNCC's expertise was recognised with James Williams being elected as an alternate for Europe on the Sessional Committee of the Scientific Council.

International trade in endangered species and the illegal wildlife trade

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) is a Multilateral Environmental Agreement whose aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of animals and plants does not threaten their survival in the wild; trade should be legal, sustainable, and traceable. JNCC is the UK CITES Scientific Authority for fauna and one of our roles is to advise whether a trade is likely to be sustainable or not, for which we make assessments known as non-detriment findings (NDFs).

One such assessment was for imports of live stony corals from Indonesia for the aquarium trade. Taking into consideration factors such as the conservation status, estimated levels of offtake and a shift away from wild to maricultured corals, JNCC

has determined that exploitation is being kept to sustainable levels and where this isn't the case have recommended not accepting imports of certain species until the stock has recovered.

From April 2023 to March 2024, we advised on over 20,000 licensing consultations, for a variety of purposes from scientific to commercial to zoo transfers, and including species of birds, fish, invertebrates, mammals, and reptiles.

We provided CITES training to 183 Police and Border Force officers last year, including 30 Saudi officers, and gave advice on wildlife crime matters and the illegal wildlife trade.

Supporting the Global Biodiversity Framework

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) Ad Hoc Technical Expert Group (AHTEG) on Indicators was established to support the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF); an ambitious pathway to a world living in harmony with nature. The GBF goals and targets include conserving at least 30% of the world's land, water and seas, reducing pollution and halting species extinctions.

The group is comprised of 45 global experts. JNCC's [James Williams was elected as co-chair in May 2023](#). The group has produced a substantial body of technical advice which was reviewed by Parties and is expected to be part of the Decisions to be taken at CBD CoP16 in October 2024.

Highlights

- We trained 183 Police and Border Force officers in CITES.
- We advised on over 20,000 CITES permits.
- We supported more than 100 papers at CoP14.

Advise on policy to progress nature recovery

We are using our trusted expertise and judgement to evaluate effectiveness of existing policies and advise on the design of new policies and action to progress nature recovery.

Robust data are the fundamental baseline to ensuring that the UK is on track to halt and reverse biodiversity loss. Monitoring species and habitats over time can tell us a great deal about the state of the natural environment, how it is changing and why.

JNCC, in partnership with other organisations, has been funding schemes to monitor biodiversity across the UK for over 30 years. Thanks to these schemes, and the many experts and volunteers who give their valuable time, we're able to better understand how nature is faring in the UK.

What does monitoring species tell us?

Our species monitoring collects large amounts of data using consistent methods every year, and this means we can use it in many ways, including informing the development of conservation and recovery policy and determining what effect this has. JNCC species data include birds, bats, butterflies, plants and pollinators.

With protected areas being seen as a key part of UK conservation and recovery policy, we looked at how this protection can contribute to nature recovery. Using data from multiple sources, including the BTO/JNCC/RSPB Breeding Bird Survey, we found that protected areas provide the greatest benefit to rare and declining bird species. The benefits also vary depending on the type of protected area. Some protected areas are in a better state than others (for example some experience pressures from pollution, non-native species, or unsustainable practices), which also makes a difference.

The work provides evidence that protected areas can be important, but that this policy will be most valuable to nature recovery if targeted towards particular species and habitats and if it is complemented by working to reduce pressures.

Most of our species monitoring is used to produce Official Statistics describing how species in the UK are changing. These statistics are further used in producing country-level and UK Biodiversity Indicators which are used in international reporting.

The biodiversity monitoring datasets are also well-suited to predicting the effect of policy options and comparing different ways of achieving biodiversity targets, as we are working towards in our Biodiversity Pathways project. For instance, we are building on the protected areas work to start comparing approaches to expanding and managing this network in future.

Making Seabirds Count

Annual species surveys, such as the BTO/JNCC Seabird Monitoring Programme, provide robust trends which can highlight problems, but entire population censuses help identify why changes might be happening.

[Seabirds Count](#), the fourth census of Britain and Ireland's internationally important populations of breeding seabirds, was published in November 2023. This momentous task was achieved with the aid of approximately 1,000 volunteer and professional surveyors. Over 10,000 sites and 25 species were surveyed between 2015 and 2021 to provide a comprehensive update on the state of these populations.

The results of the seabird census come at a critical time, creating a baseline for progressing sustainable offshore industry plans, especially those linked to energy security, and to help conservationists better understand the continuing impacts of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). The census will also help in prioritising and measuring the effectiveness of conservation actions in our seabird colonies and at sea.

Highlights

- **1,724 plant species** have been recorded through the National Plant Monitoring Scheme.
- Around 3,000 volunteers take part in the Breeding Bird Survey each year.
- Nearly **8 million** records have been submitted through the Breeding Bird Survey since its launch in 1994.

Align nature and climate change actions

We are leading the discussion to align action for nature and climate change to deliver outcomes that tackle climate breakdown and accelerate nature recovery.

Climate change is one of the largest threats facing our natural world and its impacts have long been recognised. However, climate change not only affects species and habitats but also the services which benefit us. Coastal environments protect us from extreme weather events, peatlands and wetlands absorb and store carbon, all can help minimise the impacts of a changing climate.

This is why JNCC's work is so important. We strive to improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change, both on biodiversity and the benefits and services nature provides. We undertake analyses and evaluations to identify and test approaches to adapting to, and mitigating, climate change impacts, and the costs and benefits of such actions.

Adverse impacts of climate change are already affecting migratory species

A major report by authors at JNCC and the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), commissioned by Defra, has found that a changing climate is having adverse effects on many migratory species and their ability to provide essential ecosystem services.

Migratory species, such as hammerhead sharks, may travel thousands of miles, across multiple borders, so conservation measures need to be a collaborative effort. The Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) is a multilateral treaty that brings together the different States these animals fly, swim or run through, providing a focus for coordinated conservation action.

The [report](#) was produced as a significant contribution to the work of CMS and calls for urgent action to address the impacts on migratory species that are already happening: for example, consideration of appropriate actions to take where a changing climate may lead to species ranges changing.

The report was launched at the UN Climate Change conference (UNFCCC CoP28), and then presented at the CMS conference (CMS CoP14). Recommendations are provided on global conservation actions, specific CMS actions, and research and monitoring needs. The UK has provided funding for an expert group (anticipated February 2025) to provide further advice to Parties at CMS CoP15.

Meeting global crisis with global action: the International Partnership on Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), Biodiversity and Climate Change

JNCC has spearheaded a global initiative to collaborate with international climate and marine conservation experts to mobilise evidence that supports climate-smart decision-making in the marine environment.

The International Partnership on MPAs, Biodiversity & Climate Change has successfully produced and published a number of key resources to support decision-makers in mainstreaming climate change considerations in the context of marine biodiversity conservation. This includes JNCC's work on climate-smart MPAs; allowing us to inform progress globally in achieving 30% effective protection of our marine environment by 2030, as enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity post-2020 framework.

The Partnership's latest collaboration is with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature to develop guidance on establishing MPAs and MPA networks in a changing climate; the first of its kind globally.

This work will support purposeful and targeted establishment to allow MPAs to confer enhanced climate adaptation and mitigation benefits and help to limit the potential negative impacts that climate change may have on targeted species, habitats and ecosystems.

Innovate and advance our learning:

We are continuing to innovate and advance our learning on nature recovery so that science, technology and new digital knowledge are applied to drive positive environmental outcomes.

At JNCC, innovation is one of our core values. Only through innovation can we strive for excellence; our agile ways of working allow us to play a courageous role in nature conservation and recovery. We're adapting cutting-edge techniques and unique solutions and employing them to help nature recover.

Monitoring Marine Protected Areas

Highly Protected Marine Areas (HPMAs) are areas of the sea that allow the protection and full recovery of marine ecosystems. By setting aside some areas of sea with high levels of protection, HPMAs will allow nature to fully recover to a more natural state, allowing the ecosystem to thrive.

The first three HPMAs in English waters came into force in July 2023 and were designated on advice from JNCC and Natural England. Following this designation, JNCC undertook a four week- long baseline survey covering two of the sites, Dolphin Head and North East of Farnes Deep.

These surveys differed from our usual Marine Protected Area monitoring approach as HPMAs take a 'whole-site' approach, protecting the whole ecosystem rather than the specific habitats or species within them. Our monitoring team had to come up with a new expanded range of tools to better understand the current condition of the sites that will enable us to monitor change over time.

Working with the Marine Institute of Ireland from their research vessel 'Tom Crean' we deployed grabs to sample the seabed and still and video imagery to record what was living on it. Using Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV) we were able to record mobile species such as fish, and gather water and seabed samples to analyse for nutrients, contaminants and potentially environmental DNA (eDNA).

Understanding the UK's global consumption

In 2021, the UK's consumption of crops, timber and cattle linked to deforestation of an area equivalent to roughly 43,000 football pitches. We know this, thanks to an innovative project funded by Defra, JNCC and the Stockholm Environment Institute. The Global Environmental Impacts of Consumption (GEIC) Indicator explores a variety of impact types, including biodiversity loss, water use, deforestation and cropland area associated with a country's consumption.

It is the first indicator that allows for a detailed breakdown of impact by commodity and country, and gained international traction after its inclusion in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). The GBF consists of 23 global targets to be achieved

by 2030 and beyond to safeguard and sustainably use biodiversity. The GEIC Indicator is included under Target 16, which aims to reduce waste and overconsumption. An update in 2023 increased the number of countries/territories included from 44 to 141, now representing 96.4% of the world's population.

Using innovative new technologies

Developments in technology are providing opportunities to expand and improve the biodiversity monitoring we support. We are working with the Bat Conservation Trust to trial using sound recordings as part of the National Bat Monitoring Programme. This allows us to monitor all bat species present at the time, providing more comprehensive data than by traditional methods.

Highlights

- In 2021, the UK's consumption of crops, timber and cattle was linked to deforestation of roughly 43,000 football pitches.
- The GEIC Indicator is included in target 16 of the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- 4,300 new users in 73 countries visited the GEIC Indicator dashboard over the year.

Support transitions to blue/green economies

We are working collaboratively to support the transition to sustainable blue/green economies, linking nature recovery to economic prosperity and societal wellbeing.

The competing demands for energy, food, housing, infrastructure, forestry and more, puts pressure on finite resources on land and at sea, and can limit nature recovery. We work to provide strategic advice on prioritising the use of land and sea to benefit both the economy and nature. We also give practical support to innovative demonstration projects that aim to build sustainable livelihoods for local communities in the UK Overseas Territories and other countries.

Supporting seas on an international scale

The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP) is a UK Government-led programme funded through official development assistance (ODA) as part of the UK's £500 million Blue Planet Fund.

Through this programme, JNCC, in partnership with Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas) and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO) provides technical assistance to deliver tangible and positive impacts on the livelihoods of coastal communities that depend on healthy marine ecosystems.

Over the year, the OCPP, including JNCC staff, have worked in countries such as the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Ghana to help tackle and mitigate marine pollution develop sustainable seafood practices and establish Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) to support healthy ecosystems.

[In the Maldives](#), JNCC led the delivery of the first Protected and Conserved Areas Forum in partnership with the Ministry of Environment. Held over four days, the event was attended by over 85 stakeholders including H.E Thoriq Ibrahim, the new Minister for Climate Change, Environment and Energy, and other ministers. The first event of this kind provided an opportunity to exchange knowledge with stakeholders from across Maldives, exploring opportunities to work together, and providing a platform to learn from global partners.

The OCPP team also held a workshop on how environmental impact assessments are conducted throughout Maldives and ran a table-top oil spill scenario based around a local atoll which included a protected turtle nesting beach.

Funding biodiversity projects in the UKOTs

Darwin Plus Local is a relatively new fund, designed and run by Defra, JNCC and NIRAS as part of the UK Government's wider Darwin Plus funding offer to UK

Overseas Territories (UKOTs). Darwin Plus Local [supports small-scale environmental projects](#), with the aim of building capacity and contributing to local economies.

Since launching in January 2023, JNCC has delivered three full application rounds with an excellent success rate of over 70%. Across the three rounds, Defra has awarded funding to 93 projects, totalling more than £3.4 million, including an innovative project rearing young coral in a hatchery and planting them onto reef habitat in Bermuda.

Highlights

- JNCC provided marine protected area and marine pollution emergency response technical assistance to nine countries under the OCPP.
- £3.4 million awarded to support small-scale environmental projects in the UK Overseas Territories.
- Darwin Plus Local awarded £49,977 to help a coral hatchery in Bermuda.

Integrate nature into decisions

We are seeking opportunities to integrate the value of nature into decision-making by mainstreaming nature recovery into social and economic policy areas.

Our aim is to ensure that government and businesses are embedding nature's value in key strategic decisions and investments. Nature recovery can only be effective when the right information and data are in the hands of decision makers. JNCC's ability to synthesise complex information to build a shared understanding of the evidence facilitates better communication across the science-industry-policy sectors.

Protecting marine wildlife from noise

Human activities at sea, such as explosive detonations, military sonar and piling (the process of driving foundations into the bedrock to support offshore structures), can be harmful to the UK's marine wildlife, from whales to invertebrates. However, [a recently upgraded tool](#) is helping to monitor and manage underwater noise in UK waters.

The UK Marine Noise Registry (MNR), hosted by JNCC since 2015 on behalf of Defra, monitors impulsive sounds from human activity within the marine environment. The upgrade, sponsored by Defra and the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), has several new functions, including allowing users to view and download tables and maps and a cooperation tool to allow users to communicate with each other to coordinate their activities to ensure advised noise limits are not exceeded.

Working with the four countries of the UK

As the only cross-UK statutory nature adviser, effective engagement with the four countries has been pivotal to how we integrated nature into decision-making in 2023 to 2024.

We recurrently convened the four countries in the 4 Countries Biodiversity Group (4CBG) and 4CBG Management Group, bringing together officials of the four Governments and County Nature Conservation Bodies (CNCBs) in workshops to progress key policy topics such as conserving 30% of land, water and seas by 2030.

Similarly, through our convening of the Chief Scientists' Group of the Statutory Nature Conservation Bodies (SNCBs), JNCC has facilitated strategic planning to ensure policy advice is informed by the best available science and evidence on biodiversity. Through our "Spotlight on..." webinar series, we have showcased the value of JNCC's latest evidence and projects to aid the decision-making of country officials and conservation practitioners across the UK.

Our 2023 to 2024 engagement extended to working bilaterally with each country. For example, in summer 2023 we travelled to each nation to begin planning for the development of the UK's response to the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). JNCC subsequently managed a programme to draft the UK's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan which will bring together hundreds of Government policies and commitments for the restoration of nature.

In June 2023, we hosted our Joint Committee Engagement Event in Northern Ireland, where we invited around 120 stakeholders involved in nature conservation across Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, to highlight JNCC's role and share how to make progress towards meeting the GBF in NI.

Finally, in September 2023 [our reception event at the Scottish Parliament](#) – “Restoring Scotland's Nature” – in collaboration with NatureScot, strengthened our relationships with key Scottish decision-makers while showcasing the importance of nature and JNCC's value as an adviser to an audience of Ministers, Members of Scottish Parliament and Government Officials.

Invest in our people

We are investing in our people and culture to ensure an inclusive, collaborative and innovative learning organisation, where staff wellbeing is prioritised and our partners are engaged and respected

People are at the heart of JNCC; only by investing in our staff and building a culture of respect and shared understanding can we become an inclusive organisation that is committed to nature.

Celebrating success

Two of our team leaders – Jane Hawkrigde and Pete Chaniotis – were recognised on the [ENDS Report Power List 2023](#). The Power List names the 100 UK environmental professionals who have made the greatest impact over the past two years – as nominated by their colleagues, clients and competitors.

Helen Baker, JNCC's Marine Species Team Co-Leader, was awarded the British Ornithologists' Union's Janet Kear Union Medal for distinguished service to the Union and to ornithology.

Our culture

During the year ending 31 March 2024 JNCC employed, on average, 294 full-time equivalent staff, based primarily in offices in Peterborough and Aberdeen. During 2023 to 2024 established staff-led groups on Diversity, Equality and Inclusion (DEI) and Neurodiversity continued their work alongside HR colleagues to prepare and review policies to support all staff.

JNCC is proud to be a Disability Confident Leader, the highest level possible in the Government's Disability Confident scheme. The scheme helps us to draw from the widest pool of talent and helps us to provide valuable opportunities by employing disabled people.

We are pleased that in 2023 we were awarded a Bronze Standard in [Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation](#) (TIDE) from the Employers Network for Equality and Inclusion. We are working towards [White Ribbon](#) Accreditation which encourages people to take action and change the behaviour and culture that leads to abuse and violence against women and girls.

This year, we have also initiated a working group focussed on how JNCC can improve youth engagement and participation. The working group, made up of staff from across the organisation with a passion for the topic, have attended external training delivered by a youth development consultancy and will be working to apply the insights gained to initiatives at JNCC. JNCC has an established team of 10 qualified Mental Health First Aiders who can provide support to an employee who may be experiencing poor mental health or a period of emotional distress

Our Leadership Programme continues to engage, develop and retain talented individuals across JNCC. The 2023 Graduates (left) have been learning leadership skills that they can use in their future careers. Maddy Long, 2023 Leadership Graduate commented: *“Having the opportunity to work with colleagues across the organisation on our leadership journey has been invaluable. Going forward I’m excited to utilise what I’ve learnt about myself and how to be a better leader, not only in my role at work, but also in my personal life.”*

Highlights

- JNCC has a team of 10 qualified Mental Health First Aiders who provide support and guidance.
- JNCC employed on average, 294 full-time equivalent staff.

Looking ahead and future highlights

A strategy for nature in the UK

Working with biodiversity leads from the UK's four countries, JNCC has been coordinating the development of the UK's National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (NBSAP). This plan will set out how the UK intends to achieve the ambitious targets set out in the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), which aims to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.

As statutory nature advisor to the four countries of the UK, and due to our strong links with the devolved governments, JNCC coordinated the joint whole-UK development of the NBSAP, which is due to be published in 2024 ahead of the sixteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP16) CBD.

Understanding impacts of offshore wind on seabirds

[An exciting new project – ProcBe \(Procellariiform Behaviour and Demographics\)](#) – is exploring the evidence gaps in relation to how Manx Shearwaters and storm-petrels may interact with offshore wind farms. This project will help our understanding of seabird behaviour in a variety of weather conditions and for species which are difficult to detect using current survey methods.

This 3-year project started in November 2023 and is being led by JNCC with the University of Oxford, RSPB, and University of Gloucestershire. ProcBe forms part of the Offshore Wind Evidence and Change Programme, led by The Crown Estate in partnership with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero and Defra.

Supporting air pollution risk assessments in the UK

JNCC is leading on the launch of the UK Air Pollution Assessment Service (UK APAS) – a tool to risk assess air pollution effects on ecosystems in the UK to inform decisions and statutory reporting requirements.

The tool will be initially launched in Northern Ireland, with the aim of rolling out to the rest of the UK. UK APAS conservatively estimates a saving for UK agencies and users of around £3 million based on time savings for assessment, decision-making and advice to better protect the environment from air pollution effects. This tool will offer an option to enable a step change in the way emission sources are modelled.

New project to understand pathways to thriving nature

With many competing priorities for land across the UK we need to understand the possible pathways and choices for achieving biodiversity recovery. Projections of how biodiversity could change in future are central to this understanding. Interest in biodiversity projections is growing, because these can help evaluate policy options,

compare approaches to reaching biodiversity targets, or examine effects of broader societal choices.

[Biodiversity Pathways](#) is a new collaboration to support this developing field. We are working with government, environmental NGOs, and academics to identify what changes are priorities to focus upon (e.g. options for habitat creation, reducing pollution) and to help build awareness of this initiative.

JNCC Events

Seabirds Summit

To help kickstart discussions in relation to future seabird conservation that the results from the latest seabirds census posed, we held a conference at Edinburgh Zoo in December 2023 for decision-makers, conservation practitioners and seabird researchers. The event featured talks from the Seabird Count partners, volunteers and species experts, followed by an afternoon of interactive workshops.

The outcomes of the conference will act as the springboard for future collaborations on monitoring and applied research that can help inform seabird conservation strategies, actions, and policy going forward.

JNCC in the community

To celebrate Great British Spring Clean week, the Sustainability team organised a litter pick near both offices. In Aberdeen, JNCC, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and NatureScot went scouting the local beach for rubbish, whilst in Peterborough, JNCC, Natural England, Environment Agency, Defra, and the Passport Office went litter picking in Peterborough City Centre.

Our most 'unusual' finds included a set of false teeth and an old fire extinguisher!

Hosting the UK Overseas Territories Association

JNCC had the pleasure of hosting UK representatives from the UK Overseas Territories, as part of our long-standing relationship with the UK Overseas Territories Association (UKOTA) at our offices in Peterborough in April 2023.

Representatives from each Overseas Territory met with JNCC staff to discuss and learn more about JNCC's work with the UK Overseas Territories in recent years. Defra and the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) were also in attendance. The event showcased a wide range of projects and was an exciting opportunity to further strengthen relationships and explore future collaborations.

Sustainability

As the provider of science and evidence advice on biodiversity and nature conservation at the UK and international level to governments across the UK, JNCC plays a key role as a leader in tackling the twin threats of climate breakdown and ecological collapse. Embedding sustainability into all aspects of our operations demonstrates to all stakeholders, including our staff and local communities, our commitment to this mission.

In 2023 to 2024, JNCC established its environmental management system (EMS) based on the requirements of ISO 14001:2015. JNCC aims to be ISO 14001 accredited in the coming year, a commitment reflected within our Together for Nature 2023 to 2030 strategy. Our first internal audit was completed in January 2024 and a stage 1 external certification audit in March 2024.

As part of our EMS, we have refreshed our environmental policy, which was finalised in December 2023. Our current objectives focus on reducing our emissions from business travel, reducing the environmental impact of our electrical and electronic equipment lifecycle, and increasing the proportion of goods and services procured that have a minimal environmental impact across their lifecycle.

In June 2023, JNCC's internal Sustainability Group was launched. The group have fed into sustainability updates in the travel and subsistence policy, organised cross-building litter picks, influenced procurement of more sustainable goods within Quay House, and ran an engaging internal communications campaign for Veganuary.

JNCC has also received Bronze Carbon Literate Organisation status thanks to training provided through Defra. Training consisted of a day's- worth of learning on climate change science and action. Trainees must then each make a significant individual and group carbon reduction pledge that is within their influence at work. More than 10 staff members, including the Sustainability Group and several members of the Executive Leadership Team, have undertaken the training, which has now been widened to the whole organisation.

Highlights

- “The training made me look at both my home and work life and highlighted new ways I can make activities more sustainable.” Daisy Leadbetter, JNCC Offshore Industries Advisor.

JNCC's digital engagement 2023 to 2024

Social media

Social media average engagement rate is when people have shared, liked/reacted to, replied or commented on a post.

Our social media engagement rates are higher than average. According to Hootsuite, as of July 2024, the average engagement rates for the public sector on social media posts are:

- X/Twitter: 1.26%
- Facebook: 1.54%
- LinkedIn: 2.26%

LinkedIn

- 15,490 followers: up 4.4%
- Average engagement rate: 5.9%

Facebook

- 2,250 followers: up 2.7%
- Average engagement rate: 6.0%

X/Twitter

- 9,920 followers: up 2.1%
- Average engagement rate: 3.8%

Website

Jncc.gov.uk

- 275,000 website visitors
- 900,000 website page views
- 75,000 downloads
- 2,500 resources downloaded (once or more)

How we are funded

JNCC is funded primarily by grant in aid, with additional monies received for other work related to non-core activities.

Our budget for core activities is set each year by Defra Ministers after consultation and in agreement with their Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish counterparts.

Grant in aid for JNCC's core activities is from four sources:

- UK co-ordinating work funded through Natural England, NatureScot and Natural Resources Wales (the GB conservation bodies) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland, for work which applies across the UK, including marine waters.
- Funding provided by Defra for work relating to territories outside of the UK and work in support of, or on behalf of, UK Government in contributing to international, European or regional bodies.
- Funding provided by Defra for operational work in offshore waters (beyond 12 nautical miles).
- Governance and corporate services, funded by all funding bodies, in proportion to their contributions to the other three funding streams.

Other income activities are funded from a range of sources, including from EU grants, royalties and fees.

More information is published in our Annual Report and Accounts, available on our website and at www.gov.uk/official-documents

JNCC 2023/24 Turnover

- Grant in aid: 86.17%
- European Union funding: 4.29%
- Scientific advice and information: 8.69%
- Secondment income: 0.82%
- Royalties: 0.03%