



## **JNCC Bulletin November 2021**

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## **CITES stakeholder engagement success**

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora ([CITES](#)) is an international agreement between countries, aimed at ensuring that international trade in wild species does not endanger their survival. JNCC was appointed as the UK CITES Scientific Authority for fauna in 1991 and we celebrated our 30th anniversary earlier this year. JNCC staff, Becky Austin, Sarah Hearn and Luis Oliveira, recently supported Defra with their programme of stakeholder engagement by joining them (and representatives from the [Animal and Plant Health Agency](#)) at various trade exhibitions. Both APHA and Defra act as the UK CITES Management Authorities, responsible for the licensing and policy roles respectively. Having Defra-led stands at the exhibitions provided the opportunity for traders of CITES listed specimens to engage with the CITES Authorities, ask questions about the process of CITES Licensing, or about any common trade issues. The stands proved to be very successful and also gave the opportunity to get more up close and personal with some of the more slippery customers!

## **New global impact indicator published**

We published a [new experimental statistic](#) and associated [interactive dashboard](#), providing estimates of the hectares of deforestation, the biodiversity loss and the scarcity weighted water use associated with UK (and international) consumption, for each commodity type and producing country. With 78% of agricultural crop commodities consumed within the UK originating from overseas, and no previous way to measure the impacts associated with this, the indicator fills a vital niche in improving our understanding and targeting action. The work to produce the indicator was funded by Defra, with JNCC leading on its development, and analyses undertaken by the Stockholm Environment Institute at the University of York.

To find out more, take a look at the [indicator](#) itself, the [dashboard](#) and the [technical documentation](#). We're really interested in any feedback you have, both in terms of potential utility within your work, and potential improvements for the future – please email [enviro.statistics@defra.gov.uk](mailto:enviro.statistics@defra.gov.uk)

## **Impacts of abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear**

Abandoned, lost or discarded fishing gear (ALDFG) is becoming of increasing concern for the marine environment across the globe. It significantly adds to the amount of global marine plastic pollution and results in a range of impacts on marine habitats and species, such as ghost fishing or bycatch. Although there are a number of schemes and initiatives which are working to remove ALDFG from UK waters, knowledge on its extent is currently limited. Alongside removing existing ALDFG, there is a need to identify ways of preventing it from entering the marine environment. These include entanglement in underwater obstructions (rocks, wrecks, etc.); adverse weather; gear conflicts; cost of gear retrieval and cost, access to and availability of shoreside collection facilities.

To help mitigate ALDFG, JNCC has begun a 6-month project to understand the scale and distribution of its associated impacts. Through identifying where the drivers of ALDFG are occurring, such as underwater obstructions, and collating records, this project will identify hotspots and high-risk areas around the UK. This will enable

recommending priority areas for action, alongside options for mitigation and management. Using information on the bycatch rates associated with ALDFG, the project will also calculate the net benefits to marine ecosystems of implementing such measures. The project is due to deliver in March 2022 and is funded by Defra's Impacts Evidence Group. For more information, please contact [ellen.last@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:ellen.last@jncc.gov.uk)

## **Monitoring seabirds at sea**

As seabirds spend most of their lives at sea, it is vital that we monitor them in this environment but at sea surveys can be expensive and logistically challenging. As a result, surveys have often been opportunistic with very little, if any, regular monitoring. Volunteer Seabirds at Sea ([VSAS](#)) is an initiative led by JNCC using ferries as platforms for citizen science surveys, gathering data on the distribution and relative abundance of seabirds and other marine species, as well as raising awareness among both visitors and locals using the routes.

This work was presented on Twitter by JNCC's Seabird Ecologist, Danni Thompson, at the recent British Ornithologists Union Developments in Monitoring Science conference (#BOUsci21), which ran both virtual talks and Twitter presentations.

Danni's presentation can be viewed via [Twitter](#).

Daisy Burnell, JNCC's Seabird Count Project Co-Ordinator, also delivered a presentation at the conference talking about her work on urban gull surveys, and her accompanying Twitter presentation can be viewed via [Twitter](#).

## **Rare breeding birds in the UK**

The Rare Breeding Birds Panel ([RBBP](#)) supports the recording and reporting of rare breeding birds in the UK. The Panel collates data on species with fewer than 2,000 breeding pairs in the UK and reports annually on their numbers, trends and distribution. These data play an important role in setting context for the conservation of some of our most iconic breeding bird species, such as Eurasian Bittern and Osprey. The RBBP's latest report, [Rare breeding birds in the UK in 2019](#), is now available. The report gives details on the populations of 99 species of rare breeding birds reported in the UK in 2019. JNCC co-funds the RBBP Secretary with our partners the RSPB, with additional support to the Panel from the BTO, and we are represented on the panel by our Marine Species Team Leader, Dr Helen Baker.