

Global nature conservation advice

- Nature conservation in the Overseas Territories
- UK's global impact on nature conservation
- European nature conservation advice
- UK nature conservation advice
- Marine mapping and area protection
- Standard and target setting for nature conservation goals
- Surveillance and monitoring
- Access to information
- Policy-relevant information and reporting
- Support services



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1. Global nature conservation advice

JNCC provides authoritative advice on global nature conservation matters, in particular making a key UK contribution to international conventions and agreements.

Contribution to international conventions and agreements

During the reporting year, we provided advice and support to the UK Government in developing and implementing international conventions and agreements that protect wildlife and natural features, not just in the UK, but throughout the world. Our contribution to these (see the list opposite) is the core of our work in this programme, especially in advising on the likely success and conservation benefits of proposals under consideration at conferences or meetings of parties.

A significant number of conferences were held during the reporting year (some during the UK Presidency of the European Union). These addressed a wide range of issues specific to each convention, but there were also common issues across conventions, such as work on protected areas, the outcome of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, invasive alien species

Conventions and websites

Convention on Biological Diversity
www.biodiv.org

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
www.cites.org

Convention on Migratory Species ('Bonn Convention')
www.cms.int

Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the 'Ramsar Convention')
www.ramsar.org

World Heritage Convention
whc.unesco.org

and the need for closer working between conventions.

Much other work is undertaken between conferences through participation in working groups or in direct implementation of the conventions and agreements.

We also provided the secretariat to the UK national committee of the World Conservation Union (IUCN; **www.iucn-uk.org**). Scottish Natural Heritage, on behalf of JNCC, led on IUCN issues during the reporting year.

World Summit on Sustainable Development

The World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, 2002, established a

1. Aquatic warbler *Acrocephalus paludicola*

© Martin Woike/Foto Natura

As part of the Convention on Migratory Species (the 'Bonn Convention' – see page 12) the UK is a signatory to a number of agreements, including the Memorandum of Understanding aimed at safeguarding this small migratory bird. International research, collaboration and concerted action by signatories will help conserve this species, the population of which was estimated to have declined by more than 50% in the decade leading up to 2003.





number of significant targets, including one to reduce the rate of global biodiversity loss by 2010. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has produced a range of plans to meet these targets. JNCC supported relevant elements of Defra's plan for international biodiversity, *Beyond Johannesburg: delivering our international biodiversity commitments* (www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/international/wssd/documents/biodiversity-2005.pdf).

Adrian Darby, JNCC Chairman, was invited to participate in the Inter-Departmental Ministerial Group on Biodiversity, which comprises Ministers with environment/biodiversity responsibilities from Defra, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Department for International Development. JNCC undertook for the Group

a comprehensive review of the UK's obligations and policies on international biodiversity, assessed the effectiveness of the various international mechanisms in mitigating the direct and indirect causes of biodiversity loss (derived from the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, see page 14) and provided recommendations for future UK actions. This work is ongoing.

Vin Fleming of JNCC is an *ex officio* member of the Darwin Advisory Committee (aiming to promote biodiversity conservation, particularly in those countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources; see www.darwin.gov.uk). As well as helping to assess applications for funding, JNCC advised the Committee on ways in which they could make better use of information and reports from the legacy of previous and ongoing Darwin projects.

2. Guillemot colony at Marwich Head, Orkney

© Matt Parsons/JNCC

JNCC acted as UK link to the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF; www.caff.is), a working group of the Arctic Council, who launched their circumpolar biodiversity monitoring programme in Cambridge in September 2005. JNCC also contributed to the work of the circumpolar seabird working group, which enables information to be exchanged on trends in seabird colonies and populations, and places UK seabird populations in a wider context.

Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention is concerned with the conservation of biological diversity, its sustainable use and the sharing of benefits from the use of genetic resources. The 8th Conference of the Parties was held in Curitiba, Brazil in March 2006, and JNCC provided support to Government through its participation as part of the UK delegation. JNCC played an active role on several conference issues.

Marine nature conservation

The conference renewed the call for urgent action to tackle destructive fishing practices, inviting the United Nations General Assembly to establish a follow-up process to its last working group meeting on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biodiversity in Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction, including



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assessing the need for an agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law Of the Sea. The Convention on Biological Diversity has a key role with regard to marine protected areas, focusing on scientific and technical input, for example the scientific and ecological criteria for the identification of marine protected areas.

WSSD 2010 target and indicators

The Conference reached agreement on a framework of global targets and indicators for measuring progress towards the target to reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 (see page 9).

Thematic programmes

Global targets were integrated into the thematic programmes of work for Inland Waters, Forests, Coastal and Marine, Mountains, Islands, and Dry and Sub-Humid lands. This will help these programmes to work together in meeting the 2010 target.

Protected areas

The main effort was to ensure that the role of protected areas in contributing to biodiversity conservation was not overshadowed by the other two major themes of the Convention ('sustainable use' and 'benefit sharing'). A second meeting of the working group on protected areas was agreed.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

JNCC continued to act as the UK's Scientific Authority for animals for the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

3. Professor David Ingram, independent member and Deputy Chairman of the Joint Committee. David has also been prominent as Chairman of the Darwin Advisory Committee, from 1999 to April 2005

© JNCC

The Darwin Initiative is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), and aims to assist countries rich in biodiversity but poor in resources to implement the Convention on Biological Diversity through collaborative projects that draw on UK expertise. Since 1993, when the scheme was first established, up to March 2006, it has awarded £52 million in grants to nearly 500 projects in over 100 countries.





(CITES) (advice on plants is provided by Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew), representing the UK at meetings of the European Commission (EC) CITES Scientific Review Group and the CITES Animals Committee (Geneva, 20–25 May 2005).

We also provided scientific advice on around 32,480 applications for import, export or commercial use of species listed under the EC CITES regulations. Our scientific advice to Defra included a range of issues relating to international trade in animals.

The suspension of imports of birds into the EC during the year because of the discovery of avian influenza in a bird in quarantine, and related campaigns by some organisations to make this a permanent ban, generated additional demand for advice. JNCC also published updated versions of our checklists of CITES species.

Convention on Migratory Species (the 'Bonn Convention')

In addition to being a party to the Convention, the UK is also a signatory to a number of its subsidiary agreements, namely:

- the Agreement on the Conservation of Populations of European Bats;
- the African–Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (see below);
- the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans of the Baltic and North Seas;
- the Memorandum of Understanding on the Conservation and Management of Marine Turtles and their Habitats of the Indian Ocean and South-East Asia (see under 'Overseas Territories', page 19);
- the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (see under 'Overseas Territories', page 17);

4. Giant clams

© Vin Fleming/JNCC

Giant clams, such as these *Tridacna* species, are heavily exploited for food, for their shells and, to a lesser extent, as live specimens for the aquarium trade (as shown here). As a result, this group of species has been entered into the CITES review of significant trade which seeks to ensure that any trade is at sustainable levels. The UK is a range state for some of these species through its Overseas Territories of Pitcairn and the British Indian Ocean Territory.

5. Corncrake

Crex crex

© Jill Pakenham/Avico Ltd

This bird breeds in traditionally managed grasslands across western Eurasia. Following agricultural intensification promoted by the Common Agricultural Policy, it is increasingly threatened in eastern Europe. A full revision of the action plan first adopted in 1996 focussing on key conservation needs, was made in the reporting year for the African-Eurasian Waterbird Agreement (AEWA).

- the Memorandum of Understanding on the Aquatic warbler.

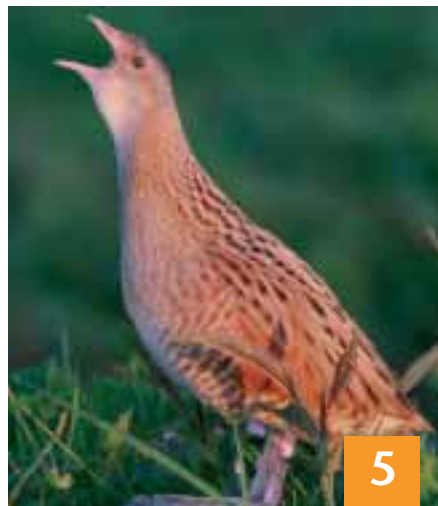
JNCC staff actively supported each of these agreements through the year, working closely with colleagues from Defra.

At the thirteenth Scientific Council (16–18 November 2005) and the eighth Conference of the Parties (20–25 November 2005), both in Nairobi, JNCC’s Ian McLean was scientific adviser to the UK delegation. Between these events, the UK participated in meetings about the effects of climate change on migratory species and the impacts of avian influenza. At the Conference, the basking shark and Henderson petrel were added to the Convention’s appendices following UK proposals to counteract threats such as bycatch and alien species respectively. The role of sustainable use of natural resources was debated intensively in Nairobi. A resolution was adopted that will enable the guidelines to be evaluated for use in conserving

migratory species at the next Scientific Council meeting. UK resolutions on climate change and a possible new subsidiary agreement for raptors, in which JNCC played a key role, were also adopted.

JNCC made a significant input to the third Meeting of the Parties of the African–Eurasian Waterbird Agreement held in Dakar, Senegal in late October 2005.

The UK, on behalf of the EU, strongly promoted the need to focus the implementation of the



6. White-headed duck
Oxyura leucocephala

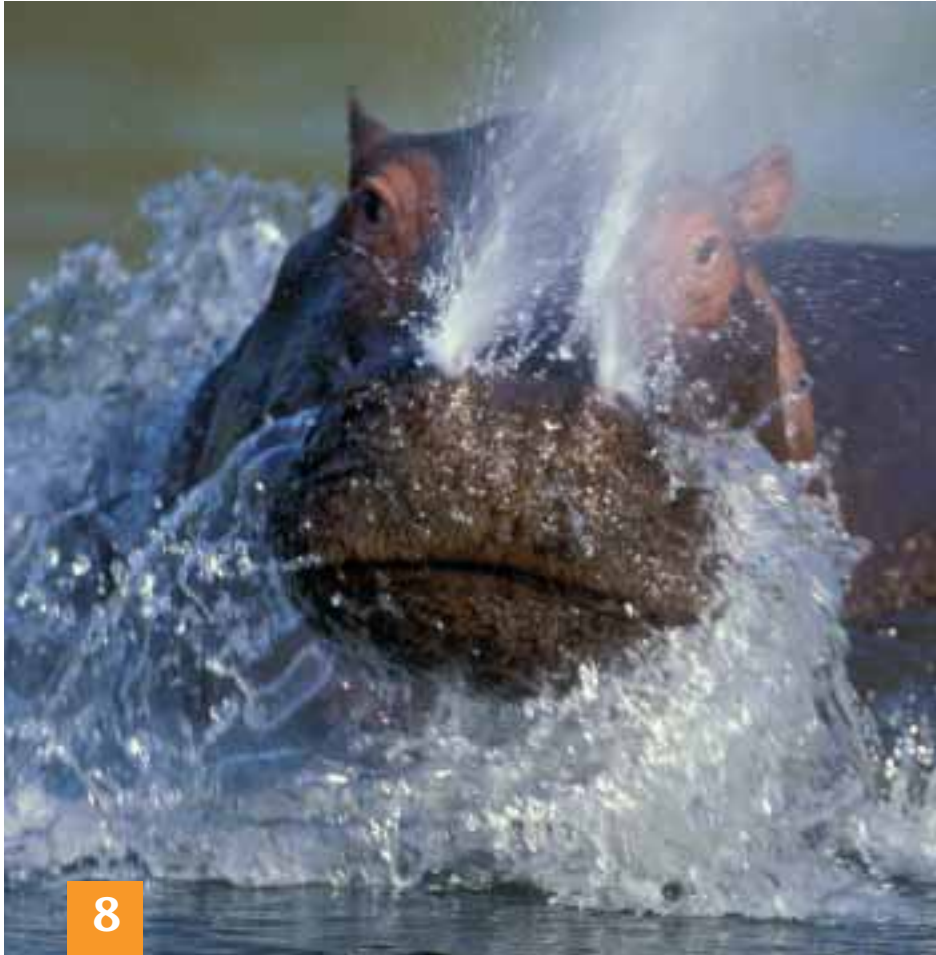
© Rod Williams/naturepl.com
The globally threatened white-headed duck is threatened by hybridisation with the North American ruddy duck *Oxyura jamaicensis*, first introduced into the UK accidentally. The updated international species action plan adopted by AEWA re-emphasises the need for eradication of ruddy ducks in Europe to sustain white-headed duck populations.



7. Northern bald ibis
Geronticus eremita

© Hanne & Jenns Eriksen/naturepl.com
The world population of wild northern bald ibis is restricted to Morocco (100 pairs) and Syria (two pairs). The main threats are a combination of direct persecution as well as loss of steppe and low-intensity agricultural areas. The international species action plan adopted by AEWA is the first for the species and will aid the further development of collaborative international action.





Agreement on waterbirds in Africa. An agreed resolution, promoted by the UK delegation, set out measures to respond to the challenges of climate change on waterbird habitats.

The significant contribution David Stroud, JNCC's senior ornithologist, has made to waterbird conservation and sustainability, was given international recognition at the Waterbird Conservation Awards, in the individual category, to honour his work in this field.

JNCC's Mark Tasker continued to act as Chair of the Advisory Committee to the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans

of the Baltic and North Seas. Much work was carried out on an international recovery plan for harbour porpoises in the North Sea. JNCC, working with the Department of Trade and Industry, also provided a comprehensive review of seismic exploration activity since 1995 in UK waters.

Ramsar Convention

The ninth Conference of the Parties to the Convention was held in Kampala, Uganda in November 2005. Consideration was given to a report building on evaluation of the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (www.millenniumassessment.org) This review concluded that:

8. Hippopotamus *Hippopotamus amphibius* © Nigel J Dennis/NHPA

At the ninth Conference of Parties to the Ramsar Convention, a new criterion was agreed – focusing on non-avian wetland animals – that will provide a rapid qualitative means of assessing the international importance of wetlands for species such as the hippopotamus.

The degradation and loss of wetlands is more rapid than that for other ecosystems. The status of freshwater dependent species (in both inland and coastal areas) is deteriorating faster than those of other ecosystems.

(http://ramsar.org/cop9/cop9_conf_rpt_e.htm)

As well as reaching agreements on a range of guidance related to wetland and water management, and wetland inventory, monitoring and assessment, a revised framework and guidelines for the development of the list of Wetlands of International Importance was agreed. A new criterion for large aquatic animals will aid the identification of possible Ramsar sites, especially in Africa and other tropical regions. JNCC's David Stroud made a substantial contribution to the Conference in his capacity as a member of the Convention's Scientific and Technical Review Panel. An emerging issue, actively discussed at both the Ramsar and African–Eurasian Waterbird Agreement conferences, was the international spread of highly pathogenic avian influenza (H5N1) and resolutions were agreed, setting out requirements for international collaboration on research and information exchange, important to help contain and manage the spread of this virus.

International Earth heritage conservation advice

Although there is no international convention specifically for Earth heritage conservation, JNCC

continued to promote UK experience through two international programmes, Geoparks (www.unesco.org/science/earthsciences/geoparks/geoparks.htm) and the World Heritage Convention. During the year, a review of the role of geology in this Convention was completed with JNCC as joint author (www.iucn.org/themes/wcpa/pubs/pdfs/heritage/Geological%20World%20HeritagGlobalFramework2005.pdf).

We continued to manage a website, www.geoconservation.com, for the Geological Society of London, and JNCC staff participated in international conferences in Taiwan and Portugal, promoting the UK's experience in geological conservation to a worldwide audience. During the year, we published the *Geodiversity and People* booklet with English Nature, sharing international experience of geoconservation originating from the discussions at the 2004 Wareham conference *Earth Heritage: World Heritage*, organised by JNCC.



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9. Children collecting fossils from Charmouth Beach, Dorset

© Richard Edmonds/Dorset County Council

This area is part of England's first natural World Heritage Site, which was added to the World Heritage list in 2001, particularly for its Earth heritage features. The site encompasses 95 miles of coastline (Dorset–East Devon), within which the 'rock record' covers 185 million years of Earth history.