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## The Joint Nature Conservation Committee was established under statute in 1990\* and commenced its work in April 1991.

The Joint Nature Conservation Committee is a forum through which the three country nature conservation agencies – the Countryside Council for Wales (CCW), English Nature and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) – deliver their statutory responsibilities for Great Britain as a whole and internationally. These responsibilities, known as the special functions, contribute to sustaining natural systems. The special functions are principally to:

- advise ministers on the development of policies for, or affecting, nature conservation in Great Britain and internationally;
- provide advice and knowledge to anyone on nature conservation issues affecting Great Britain and internationally;
- establish common standards throughout Great Britain for the monitoring of nature conservation and for research into nature conservation and the analysis of results;
- commission or support research which the Committee deems relevant to the special functions.

The work falls into two broad categories: core work, which covers all of the main advisory functions, and a series of supporting projects.

The work can be done through the Committee's own Support Unit, composed of staff assigned from the three country agencies, by one country agency leading on behalf of the others, or through a network of agency staff. Work is also commissioned from outside organisations.

Increasingly, JNCC is implementing its national advisory functions on a United Kingdom basis, and is working closely with the Environment and Heritage Service, Northern Ireland.

For a full overview of UK conservation in 2003/04, this report should be read in conjunction with those of the Countryside Council for Wales, English Nature, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Environment and Heritage Service, Northern Ireland.

\*The Environmental Protection Act 1990

Above: Elliot Morley MP, Minister for the Environment (centre) bird watching at the launch of the publication *Estuarine Waterbirds at Low Tide*.  
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Barn owl in flight © Stephen Dalton/NHPA

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Cover images: the front cover is a close-up of the feathers of a barn owl (see above). The back cover features a close-up image of the fur of a red squirrel (see page 49).

Barn owl plumage © Stephen Dalton/NHPA  
Red squirrel © The Natural History Museum, London





*From the acting Chairman:*

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┌ Rt Hon Rhodri Morgan AM  
First Minister  
National Assembly for Wales  
Cardiff Bay  
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Dear First Min

As required by  
I have the hon  
covering the p

Yours sincerely

Professor Davi

┌ Jack McConnell MSP  
First Minister  
Scottish Executive  
St Andrews House  
Regent Road, 1



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Yours sincerely

Professor Davi

┌ The Right Hon Margaret Beckett MP  
Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Floor 6 Zone B6  
Eland House  
Bressenden Place  
LONDON SW1E 5DU

19th July 2004

Dear Secretary of State

As required by paragraph 10 (1) of Schedule 7 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990,  
I have the honour to present herewith the report of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee  
covering the period from 1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004.

Yours sincerely

Professor David Ingram OBE, VMH, FRSE

## Chairman's Introduction

It is a pleasure to introduce this report as Acting Chair of JNCC. This is a very important time for the organisation. We are approaching major changes in the way we operate and a great deal of work has gone into preparing for a smooth transition and ensuring that we realise the benefits for nature conservation offered by the 'evolution' we are about to undergo.



David Ingram © Royal Botanic Garden, Edinburgh

I have been Acting Chair since Katharine Bryan left JNCC in December 2003 to take up her new post as Chief Executive of the Water Service in Northern Ireland. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Katharine on behalf of all at JNCC for her contribution to the current process of transition. During her time with us, Katharine was instrumental in ensuring that recommendations from the Government's Financial, Management and Policy Review of JNCC were implemented effectively, including the legislative changes required for the organisation to become a Company Limited by Guarantee in April 2005.

She also oversaw invaluable work on the development of a UK vision for wildlife and natural features, and of a broad strategy for JNCC's future work.

It has been my job since December to lead the organisation into the next stage of its development. Working together, JNCC's excellent staff and my Committee colleagues, have made remarkable progress on the development projects, and it is a tremendous privilege to be part of that process. The strategy and forward plan now being put in place will, I am sure, further improve the effectiveness of JNCC, which is setting an example internationally as a result of its leadership role in the UK's conservation effort. The strategy brings into clear focus our particular strengths within the nature conservation community and has attracted support from our member bodies and Government.

As well as directing our efforts towards making very important choices for the organisation, we have also been engaged with JNCC's central role: providing high quality, scientifically sound advice to Government, and co-ordinating the UK's conservation effort at home, in Europe and on the global stage.

This report provides an overview of what has been a productive year on all fronts. For me, a personal highlight was the launch, at the Seventh Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Kuala Lumpur, of the UK's strategy for plant conservation,

the first national response to the CBD's Global Strategy for Plant Conservation. The UK strategy sets targets for plant conservation that must be met by 2010 and is stimulating new interest and effort. JNCC played a central role in producing the strategy, with input from many interested parties. I am pleased to report that these included the Royal Horticultural Society, an organisation with which I have worked closely for many years.

Efforts to further the conservation of the marine environment have been very high on our agenda during the year. It is a challenging area, since our knowledge of undersea ecosystems is far more limited than is our understanding of the terrestrial environment. JNCC's Irish Sea Pilot project team has achieved a great deal and its recently published report lays a strategy for marine nature conservation that could be applied to all UK waters. Indeed, the framework the report describes, with its holistic, ecosystem-based approach, has the potential to be a model for marine conservation globally.

Much of the advice JNCC provides is informed by top quality monitoring and surveillance of UK flora and fauna. I am delighted that during the year, JNCC has renewed its long-running partnership with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO), which among other services, will continue to supply us with highly detailed surveys of the UK's bird populations. It is worth noting that the key to the value of the BTO's surveys is their enormous scope, which comes from the many volunteers the organisation can call upon year in, year out, to carry out fieldwork. Over many years, the results have provided an insight into population trends that is important in itself, and has also become vital to Government as an indicator of environmental quality.

Our work with the BTO is a perfect example of strength through collaboration. It is a theme that runs through this report, one of shared know-how and skills producing results which are far more than the sum of their parts. Our achievements during this year reflect a commitment to working with, and consulting, partners, linkages that I'm sure will continue to deliver in the years to come.



In June 2003, the Committee met in Ulster. The visit gave members a chance to get to know Northern Ireland Environment and Heritage Service staff and to visit four key geological sites on the North Antrim coast, Binevagh Cliffs, Magilligan Point, Portrush and the Giant's Causeway World Heritage Site.

© Deryck Steer/JNCC

At the heart of our success, however, is the dedication of JNCC's staff, a remarkable group of men and women. I thank them for their dedication, professionalism and perseverance during the year. In particular, I thank the Managing Director, Deryck Steer, for his generous and unstinting support of me during the interregnum following the departure of Katharine Bryan. I look forward to what all of us in JNCC can achieve together, given the opportunities the future now promises.

Professor David Ingram OBE, VMH, FRSE  
Acting Chair

## Rhagymadrodd y Cadeirydd

Mae'n bleser cyflwyno'r adroddiad hwn fel Cadeirydd Gweithredol JNCC. Mae hwn yn gyfnod pwysig dros ben o safbwynt y sefydliad. Cyn bo hir byddwn yn cyflawni newidiadau mawr yn ein dull o weithredu a gwnaethpwyd llawer iawn o waith er paratoi am newidiad didrafferth ac er mwyn sicrhau ein bod yn gwireddu'r buddion o ran cadwraeth natur a gynigir gan yr 'esblygiad' sydd ar fin dod i'n rhan.

Bûm yn Gadeirydd Gweithredol ers i Katharine Bryan adael JNCC yn Rhagfyr 2003 er mwyn cychwyn ar ei swydd newydd fel Prif Weithredydd y Gwasanaeth Dŵr yng Ngogledd Iwerddon. Hoffwn achub ar y cyfle hwn i ddiolch i Katharine ar ran pawb yn JNCC am ei chyfraniad i'r broses newid gyfredol. Yn ystod ei chyfnod gyda ni, roedd Katharine yn gyfrwng i sicrhau bod argymelliadau Arolwg Cyllid, Rheolaeth a Pholisi'r Llywodraeth o JNCC yn cael eu gweithredu mewn modd effeithiol, gan gynnwys y newidiadau deddfwriaethol a oedd yn ofynnol er mwyn i'r sefydliad ddod yn Gwmni Cyfyngedig gan Warant yn Ebrill 2005.

Hi hefyd a oruchwyliodd waith amhrisiadwy ar ddatblygu gweledigaeth i'r DU ar gyfer bywyd gwyllt a nodweddion naturiol, ac ar strategaeth eang ar gyfer gwaith JNCC yn y dyfodol.

Ers mis Rhagfyr mae fy swydd wedi ymwneud â thywys y sefydliad i'r cam nesaf yn ei ddatblygiad. Trwy gydweithio, mae staff rhagorol JNCC a'm cydweithwyr ar y Pwyllgor wedi gwneud cynnydd go arbennig yn y prosiectau datblygu, ac mae'n anrhydedd aruthrol i fod yn rhan o'r broses honno. Rwyf yn siŵr bydd y strategaeth a'r darpar gynllun sy'n cael eu gosod yn eu lle ar hyn o bryd yn gwella effeithiolrwydd JNCC yn fwy fyth, sy'n gosod esiampl ar raddfa ryngwladol o ganlyniad i'w rôl arweiniol yn ymdrech gadwraethol y DU. Mae'r strategaeth yn dod â'n cryfderau arbennig ni i ffocws clir yn y gymuned cadwraeth natur a bu iddi ddenu cefnogaeth ein haelod-gyrff a'r Llywodraeth.

Yn ogystal â chyfeirio ein hymdrechion at wneud dewisiadau pwysig tu hwnt ar ran y sefydliad, rydym hefyd wedi bod yn gyfrannog yn rôl ganolog JNCC: darparu cyngor gwyddonol gadarn o ansawdd uchel i'r Llywodraeth, a chyd-drefnu ymdrech gadwraethol y DU gartref, yn Ewrop ac ar lwyfan byd-eang.

Ym Mehefin 2003, cyfarfu'r Pwyllgor yn Wlster. Rhoddodd yr ymweliad gyfle i aelodau ddod i adnabod staff Gwasanaeth Amgylchedd a Threftadaeth Gogledd Iwerddon ac i ymweld â phedwar safle daearegol allweddol ar arfordir Gogledd Antrim, sef Binevagh Cliffs, Magilligan Point, Portrush a Safle Treftadaeth y Byd Sarn y Cawr.

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Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn darparu arolwg ar yr hyn a fu'n flwyddyn gynhyrchiol ar bob tu. I mi'n bersonol, yr uchafbwynt oedd lansio, yn Seithfed Gynhadledd Cyfranogion y Confensiwn ar Amrywiaeth Biolegol (CBD) yn Kuala Lumpur, strategaeth y DU ar gyfer cadwraeth planhigion, yr ymateb cenedlaethol cyntaf i Strategaeth Fyd-eang y CBD ar gyfer Cadwraeth Planhigion. Mae strategaeth y DU yn gosod targedau ar gyfer cadwraeth planhigion sy'n rhaid eu cyrraedd erbyn 2010, ac mae'n symbylu diddordeb ac ymdrech newydd. Bu i JNCC chwarae rôl ganolog wrth gynhyrchu'r strategaeth, gyda mewnbwn gan nifer fawr o gyfranogion. Rwy'n falch o fedru adrodd bod y rhain wedi cynnwys y Gymdeithas Arddwrol Frenhinol, sefydliad y bûm yn cydweithio'n agos ag ers blynyddoedd lawer.

Bu gan ymdrechion i hyrwyddo cadwraeth amgylchedd y môr le blaenllaw ar ein agenda yn ystod y flwyddyn. Mae hwn yn faes heriol, gan fod ein gwybodaeth o ecosystemau tanfor yn fwy cyfyng o lawer na'n dealltwriaeth o amgylchedd y ddaear. Mae tîm prosiect peilot Môr Iwerddon wedi cyflawni llawer iawn, ac mae ei adroddiad, a gyhoeddwyd yn ddiweddar, yn datgan strategaeth ar gyfer cadwraeth natur y môr y gellid ei chymhwyso ar gyfer holl ddyfroedd y DU. Yn wir, mae gan y fframwaith a ddisgrifir gan yr adroddiad, gyda'i ddull cyfannol o weithredu wedi'i seilio ar ecosystemau, y potensial i fod yn batrwm ar gyfer cadwraeth y môr dros y byd i gyd.

Goleuir llawer o'r cyngor a ddarperir gan JNCC gan waith monitro a goruchwylio planhigion ac anifeiliaid y DU o'r ansawdd gorau. Rwy'n hynod falch fod JNCC, yn ystod y flwyddyn, wedi adnewyddu ei bartneriaeth hirsefydlog gyda'r Ymddiriedolaeth Adareg Brydeinig (BTO), a fydd, ymhlith gwasanaethau eraill, yn parhau i ddarparu arolygon tra manwl o boblogaethau adar y DU ar ein cyfer. Mae'n werth nodi mai'r allwedd i werth arolygon BTO yw eu rychwant enfawr, a ddaw o'r llu o wirfoddolwyr y gall y sefydliad alw ar eu gwasanaethau, flwyddyn ar ôl blwyddyn, i wneud gwaith yn y maes. Dros flynyddoedd lawer, tafodd y canlyniadau oleuni ar dueddiadau o ran poblogaeth sy'n bwysig ynddynt eu hunai, ac sydd wedi dod yn hanfodol i'r Llywodraeth fel dangosydd ansawdd amgylcheddol.



Yn ystod Ebrill eleni, arwyddodd y JNCC a'r Ymddiriedolaeth Adareg Brydeinig gytundeb partneriaeth allweddol. Gwelir yn y llun (o'r chwith i'r dde) Nigel Clark o'r BTO, Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr JNCC, Deryck Steer, Alan Martin o'r BTO, Jeremy Greenwood, Cyfarwyddwr y BTO, a Dr Ian McLean, Pennaeth Cyngor Rhywogaethau JNCC.

© Dougie Barnett/JNCC

Mae ein gwaith gyda'r BTO yn enghraifft berffaith o'r cryfder sy'n dod o gydweithredu. Mae'n thema sy'n ymddangos yn rheolaidd yn yr adroddiad, sef rhannu gallu a sgiliau sy'n cyflawni canlyniadau sy'n fwy o lawer na chyfanswm eu cydrannau. Mae ein llwyddiannau yn ystod y flwyddyn hon yn adlewyrchu ymrwymiad i gydweithio â phartneriaid ac ymgynghori â hwy, cysylltau a fyddant, rwyf y sicr, yn parhau i gyflawni canlyniadau yn ystod y blynyddoedd i ddod.

Serch hynny, ymrwymiad staff JNCC, grŵp hynod o ddynion a merched, sydd wrth galon ein llwyddiant. Hoffwn ddiolch iddynt am eu hymrwymiad, eu hagwedd broffesiynol a'u dyfalbarhad yn ystod y flwyddyn. Yn arbennig hoffwn ddiolch i'r Rheolwr Gyfarwyddwr, Deryck Steer, am iddo fy nghefnogi mewn modd hael a dibrin yn ystod yr cyfnod a ddilynodd ymadawiad Katharine Bryan. Edrychaf ymlaen at yr hyn a fedrwn ni i gyd yn JNCC ei gyflawni gyda'n gilydd, o ystyried y cyfleoedd a addewir gan y dyfodol.

Yr Athro David Ingram OBE, VMH, FRSE  
Cadeirydd Gweithredol