

JNCC

# NatureNews

The national and international conservation digest

Issue 18: Summer 2008

## Creating a buzz about biodiversity



### ALSO FEATURING

- + Surveillance strategy
- + Overseas Territories
- + Seabird numbers  
and breeding success



## Chair's Introduction

Since our last issue we have had many notable activities, not least being the evening reception we hosted during the EU Green Week in Brussels in June. I am pleased to have had so much positive feedback from our event where we were delighted to play host to Mr Pavan Sukhdev, study leader for the EU's project on The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity. You are now able to hear Pavan's engaging speech on JNCC's first-ever podcast, available to download from our website at [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk). Look out for us bringing more social, economic and nature conservation-orientated issues to your iPod soon! We will be trying to improve our communications and outreach during the coming months, using these ever more accessible techniques.

During Green Week I was able to meet with the Chairs of Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Countryside Council for Wales (the Chair for Northern Ireland's Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside was unable to be with us). We had wide-ranging discussions on how we could together improve the action and delivery

of nature conservation across the UK and internationally – watch this space for changes and improvements in the future!

Committee enjoyed the hospitality of our colleagues at Scottish Natural Heritage in June, as Great Glen House in Inverness played host to our quarterly meeting. The mixture of networking and field trips in and amongst the desk-bound business I always find to be very productive for us all.

As promised last time, we have an update in this issue of developments following the public consultation on the marine sites selected as draft Species Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive. I believe that JNCC's role in ensuring a consistent UK approach to this work, bearing in mind the imperatives of the devolved administrations, demonstrates the important role we play across the entire spectrum of nature conservation, from rocks to genes!

You'll find out more about GeoHAB 2008, an overseas marine conference where JNCC was able to share its habitat mapping expertise. There's also a report

on the recent Overseas Territories conference on Réunion Island, as well as the IUCN UK Committee seminar for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wildlife and Conservation, which took place in the House of Commons with Angela Smith MP as Chair.

We touch upon JNCC's surveillance strategy – rapidly evolving and a centrepiece in our conservation efforts. You'll also find background on some of our recent publications, including our *Annual Report 2007-2008* and the latest edition of *Seabird numbers and breeding success in Britain and Ireland*.

As ever, we do appreciate questions and feedback on the issues and topics covered – if unsure, the email to use is [communications@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:communications@jncc.gov.uk)

Peter Bridgewater, Chair, JNCC

### Front cover images:

The diversity of bees and of the flowers they pollinate, has declined significantly in Britain over the last 25 years. If this pattern is replicated elsewhere, the 'pollinator services' we take for granted could be at risk. Pollinators are essential for the reproduction of many wild flowers and crops, and the economic value of pollination worldwide is thought to be between £20-50 billion each year. It's not clear as of yet what the ultimate causes of the declines are, although land use change, agricultural chemicals and climate change may be important factors. © Amanda Gregory/JNCC

Coral species in good health. © Charles Sheppard.

Black-legged kittiwake. © Matt Parsons/JNCC

This is one of a range of publications published by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee. JNCC advises the UK Government on national and international nature conservation issues on behalf of the Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage and the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside.

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You can find out more about the work of JNCC by visiting our website

[jncc.gov.uk](http://jncc.gov.uk)

# Draft Marine Bill

In April 2008, the UK Government published the draft Marine Bill for public consultation and parliamentary scrutiny. The draft Bill sets out a series of wide-ranging proposals that aim to implement a sustainable approach to the management of human activities and deliver environmental protection. Overall, the proposals have been positively received by the conservation agencies and environmental NGOs, since the Bill offers a 'once-in-a-generation' opportunity to gain effective marine environmental protection. At the core of the draft Bill is a proposal to implement a new marine planning and licensing system driven by a *Marine Policy Statement* agreed across Government. For nature conservation, the draft Bill makes provision for the designation of *Marine Conservation Zones*

(MCZs) to protect habitats, species and geological features. In a supporting policy paper, the Government states its aim to create a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) by 2012 to meet our international obligations. The Bill does not cover all the UK's seas as the territorial waters of Scotland and Northern Ireland are excluded; the devolved administrations are bringing forward their own proposals for their marine waters.

JNCC staff supported Defra in their production of guidance for the delivery of the measures outlined in the Bill. Whilst we support the overall Marine Bill, there are aspects that JNCC and the country conservation bodies have sought to amend to ensure the best outcome for biodiversity protection.

JNCC provided evidence to the Joint Parliamentary Committee that is scrutinising the proposals. JNCC also submitted comments to Defra during the public consultation. Our particular concerns relate to the designation of MCZs: we felt the Bill should confer a duty on an organisation to designate sites, and there should be provision to control unlicensed activities beyond 12 nautical miles.

In May 2008, JNCC and Natural England were provided with additional funds by Defra to take forward a project to identify a suite of MCZs by 2012. Sites will be identified through regional projects with the full engagement of stakeholders to ensure all proposals have wide public support.

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## JNCC's Annual Report 2007/2008 now available

### Plight of the orangutan inspires cover of our review of the year

The natural habitat of the orangutan is rapidly being eradicated, as vast swathes of tropical forest in south-east Asia are destroyed to make way for lucrative palm oil plantations. This was the starting point for the evolution of the design of this year's *JNCC Annual Report*.

On the outer cover, we have a close-up picture of a palm leaf – into which, along its pattern of leaves, are cut-outs that add to the mystery of the image on the inside – when we open the book we find a mournful orangutan surrounded by flames, merely hinted at in what we could see through the outer cover's foliage. Indeed, are these just lines between leaves? To some they could be the bars of a prison cell, the orangutan hopelessly entrapped by what is going on around him.

State-of-the-art technology has been used to realise these cuts in the outer cover. It has been achieved using mixed-gas laser cutting, which also means that these cuts are themselves slightly burned at the edges via this process, echoing the destruction of orangutan habitat.

Within the publication's total of 88 pages you will find not only highlights from JNCC's completed projects and ongoing work, but also our full accounts for the financial year.



Copies may be requested from JNCC Communications Team by emailing [communications@jncc.gov.uk](mailto:communications@jncc.gov.uk) or purchased online via [www.tsoshop.co.uk](http://www.tsoshop.co.uk) – as always, an electronic version of the title is also available.

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## Seabird numbers and breeding success in Britain and Ireland, 2006

The 2006 results from the Seabird Monitoring Programme, which is co-ordinated by JNCC in partnership with several organisations, have just been published. *Seabird numbers and breeding success in Britain and Ireland, 2006* describes a generally poor year in terms of breeding success, though more successful than in 2004 and 2005, when widespread breeding failures were reported.

Breeding numbers of black-legged kittiwakes reached an all-time low, following a sustained decline since the 1990s, while European shag numbers showed signs of a recovery from the effects of a mortality event in 2005.

Breeding starting later than average for many species throughout the United Kingdom. Northern gannets, which normally show little variation in timing of breeding, laid three to four weeks later than the long-term average at Hermaness (Shetland) and Ailsa Craig (south Ayrshire), while Manx shearwaters on Rum (Lochaber), the species' largest breeding colony in the world, bred later than at any time since studies there started in 1969.

Low breeding success was reported in black-legged kittiwakes, common guillemots and razorbills, attributed to food shortages during the late chick-rearing period. Sandeels, a preferred prey species for many species, appeared to be scarce, but instead relatively poor quality fish such as members of the cod family and, notably, snake pipefish were taken in many regions. Pipefish, until recent years scarce in UK waters, are indigestible, contain little nutrition and have been known to cause fatal choking of puffin chicks. The reasons for the appearance of pipefish are unknown, but appear not to be related to increases in sea temperature.



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Neil Ellis (left) receiving one of the Geological Society's Distinguished Service Awards from the President, Dr Richard Fortey, for his contribution to geoconservation, particularly for his work on the GCR. © Ted Nield/Geological Society.

## Distinguished service award

The contribution that Geoconservation Manager Neil Ellis has made to geological conservation has been recognised by the Council of the Geological Society of London. He has been awarded with one of two 2008 Distinguished Service Awards for his work as Publications Manager of the Geological Conservation Review (GCR).

In his citation, Neil was described as "an unsung contemporary hero of British geology. He has produced 31 of the 33 GCR volumes published so far of the 45-volume series that assesses and documents the Earth science Sites of Special Scientific Interest, protected by conservation law for representing Britain's rich and varied geological heritage. When complete, this project will detail some 3,000 sites conserved for their geological value. No other country in the world has attempted such a review, let alone seen it to completion.

"With infinite care and patience, Neil has managed to cajole countless academic authors to produce what they promised – and sometimes, even to length and on time".

## Assessing the state of seabird communities in the North-East Atlantic

This year, JNCC has played a lead role in developing a mechanism for assessing the state of seabird communities in the North-East Atlantic. The waters in this area are some of the most productive on the planet and sustain almost 100 million breeding seabirds. Climate change and fishing are among the pressures operating in the area, the impacts of which can be monitored potentially by observing changes in seabird communities.

In March, JNCC in collaboration with the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) organised a workshop to develop a Seabird Ecological Quality Indicator, which was hosted in Lisbon by Sociedade Portuguesa para o Estudo das Aves (SPEA), the BirdLife International Partner in Portugal. The workshop was chaired by JNCC's Seabird Colony Team Leader, Ian Mitchell, and was attended by 23 delegates from 13 countries. It was requested by the OSPAR Commission for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic. The aim was to bring together seabird monitoring data from countries bordering the North-East

Atlantic and propose an Ecological Quality Objective (EcoQO) on seabird population trends as an index of seabird community health. ICES accepted the workshop's proposals and have recommended to the OSPAR Commission that they adopt an EcoQO on seabird population trends. OSPAR's suite of EcoQOs (there are 12 at present) are intended to help achieve their goal of managing "human activities in such a way that the marine ecosystem will continue to sustain the legitimate uses of the sea and will continue to meet the needs of present and future generations".

The workshop and ICES recommended the following EcoQO: *Changes in breeding seabird abundance should be within target levels for 75% of species monitored in any of the OSPAR regions or their sub-divisions.* If adopted, an assessment will be made annually to determine if the EcoQO has been achieved; if it has not, appropriate action (i.e. further research or management) will be triggered. The assessment will be based on indicators for each of the five OSPAR regions (see Fig 1) that consist of species-specific trends in breeding

population size. Data collected by the UK's JNCC-led Seabird Monitoring Programme will contribute to the indicators for OSPAR's Celtic Seas and Greater North Sea regions.

It remains to be seen if OSPAR decide to follow ICES advice and adopt the EcoQO on seabird population trends. In any case, the workshop has achieved a way of collating data on seabird populations from across international borders that will enable OSPAR to assess the impacts of humans on seabirds at a more biologically meaningful scale.

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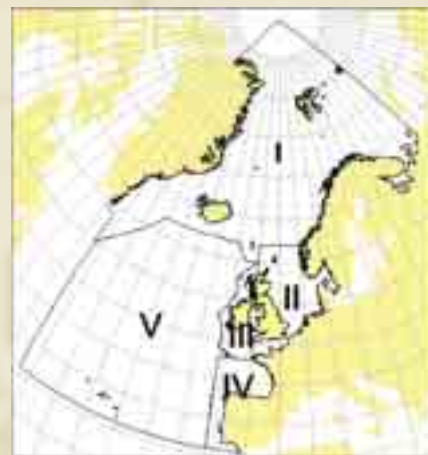


Fig 1: OSPAR maritime area and five regions: I = Arctic Waters, II = Greater North Sea, III = Celtic Seas, IV = Bay of Biscay and Iberian Coast, V = Wider Atlantic.



Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award winner David Pritchard. © IUCN

## Committee member wins Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award

The Ramsar Convention Standing Committee has presented the Ramsar Wetland Conservation Award and Evian Special Prize for 2008 in the category 'science' to Joint Committee member David Pritchard.

The award recognises David's work in supporting the development and implementation of the Ramsar Convention over the last two decades. The Standing Committee wanted to honour his dedication, consistency and effectiveness as not only a representative of BirdLife International at Ramsar meetings, but also contributing very extensively in his own right.

JNCC's Chair, Peter Bridgewater, commented: "David joined JNCC in 2006, and has already made a significant contribution to our deliberations and policy recommendations. This award is well deserved, and I would like to offer my congratulations on behalf of the whole of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, as well as my own personal congratulations as a former Secretary General of the Convention."

The Ramsar Awards will be presented to the winners at the opening ceremony of the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, to take place in Changwon, Republic of Korea, in October.

## Launch of the Invasive Non-native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain



Invasive non-native species are considered to be one of the greatest threats to wildlife worldwide, and are estimated to cost the world's economies hundreds of billions of dollars. Controlling their spread is key to conserving our native wildlife.

On 28 May this year England, Scotland and Wales launched the Invasive Non-Native Species Framework Strategy for Great Britain, the first co-ordinated plan to reduce the threat to Britain's native biodiversity from invasive non-native species. The Northern Ireland Assembly

*The GB Strategy was launched in Wales by Jane Davidson, Environment, Sustainability and Housing Minister for the Welsh Assembly Government, shown here spraying giant hogweed, an invasive non-native plant.*

# Countdown 2010

## IUCN UK Committee – parliamentary seminar



Chair of the UK Committee Chris Mahon (centre), JNCC Chair Peter Bridgewater (second from left) and attendees of the All-Party Parliamentary Seminar on Countdown 2010.

In April, JNCC Chair Peter Bridgewater was a speaker at an IUCN UK Committee seminar (to which JNCC provides the secretariat) for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Wildlife and Conservation.

Chaired by the Rt Hon Angela Smith MP, the seminar addressed the UK's progress towards meeting the targets to halt or reduce the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 – a date that is rapidly approaching.

Parliamentarians from the Commons and the Lords had the opportunity to hear about the wider global picture from Professor Gordon McGregor Reid. Biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories was explored by Dr Mike Pienkowski and a case study of shark fisheries in the NE Atlantic was presented by Sarah Fowler. Chair, Chris Mahon, gave an overview of the work of the UK Committee.

Peter Bridgewater spoke about the need to properly value, in economic terms, ecosystem services and noted that both biodiversity scientists and economists have to adapt to the new and rapidly changing milieu. Business as usual means ultimately no business at all. It is hoped that the workshop will enable some of the topics addressed to be explored further within a parliamentary context.

Further information about IUCN can be found at [www.iucn-uk.org](http://www.iucn-uk.org)

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and the Republic of Ireland Government are working on a joint strategic approach.

Following a comprehensive non-native species policy review report in 2003, and a consultation process, the strategy builds on a three-stage approach to tackling invasive species that was agreed in 2002 by the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The approach involves:

- helping to prevent introductions by raising awareness of the risks and increasing understanding of the impacts;
- enabling early detection and rapid response to introductions before they become major problems; and
- developing longer-term control programmes based on sound science.

Strategy implementation will be overseen by the GB Non-native Species Programme Board, which is the focal point for GB action by the English, Welsh and Scottish administrations. JNCC represents the country

conservation bodies (Countryside Council for Wales, Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage) on the Programme Board, providing expert advice on conservation issues to do with invasive non-natives. The strategy and more information on non-natives can be found at [www.nonnativespecies.org](http://www.nonnativespecies.org)

The strategy was discussed following its launch at the Non-native Species Stakeholder Forum, an annual one day event held this year at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. The forum programme included four workshops on aspects of strategy implementation to help develop clear roles for everyone involved in tackling this complex issue - from central to local government, from land managers to academic researchers, and from conservation bodies to trade organisations.

The strategy was well received in GB and internationally, with Britain being recognised as one of the leaders in tackling invasive non-native species in Europe. Eladio Fernandez-Galiano, Head of the Biological Diversity Unit, Council

of Europe, welcomed the “strategy for Great Britain as a strong example of a national framework that takes the European Strategy forward.”

In England the strategy was launched by Environment Minister Jeff Rooker, and in Scotland by Michael Russell, Minister for the Environment, Scottish Government. The GB strategy was launched in Wales by Jane Davidson, Environment, Sustainability and Housing Minister for the Welsh Assembly Government.

The strategy can be downloaded at [www.nonnativespecies.org/documents/Invasive\\_NNS\\_Framework\\_Strategy\\_GB\\_E.pdf](http://www.nonnativespecies.org/documents/Invasive_NNS_Framework_Strategy_GB_E.pdf)

The Northern Ireland Assembly and the Republic of Ireland Government joint strategic approach can be found at [www.invasivespeciesireland.com](http://www.invasivespeciesireland.com)

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# Overseas Territories and the European Union

In July, JNCC participated in a conference entitled “The European Union (EU) and its Overseas Entities: strategies to counter climate change and biodiversity loss.” This was hosted on Réunion Island, under the auspices of the French Presidency of the European Union. JNCC was an official supporter of the event and a member of the Steering Committee.

There were over 700 participants, including representatives from Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs), Outermost Regions (ORs), relevant European Member States, the European Commission, the European Parliament, scientific institutions and non-governmental organisations. JNCC was represented by Tara Pelembe, Overseas Territories Officer, and Deanna Donovan, Environmental Economics Adviser.

The programme included plenary sessions on the environmental challenges of the European Overseas Entities; climate change and biodiversity; adaptation and mitigation; sustainable energy; and links between ORs, OCTs and European policy. There was also a series of workshops that explored topics such as economic valuation, invasive species, the role of civil society, how to integrate

the marine environmental challenges in the ORs and OCTs into EU policy, and challenges and opportunities for regional cooperation and sustainable financing.

Nine of the UK Overseas Territories were represented and made valuable contributions to the conference. These included the Montserrat Minister of Agriculture, Land, Housing and the Environment, Mr Ruben Meade, who chaired a plenary session entitled “How can European policies help address the environmental challenges in the ORs and OCTs?”; Ms Lynda Varlack (British Virgin Islands) who gave a presentation at a workshop entitled “What partnership between ORs, OCTs, the EU member states and the European Commission to promote the protection of habitats and species?”; and Mr Kenneth Ebanks (Cayman Islands Government) who participated in a podium discussion on “Alliances between the EU, ORs, OCTs, African Caribbean and Pacific countries and Small Island Developing States to counter climate change and biodiversity loss.”

Tara Pelembe, JNCC, gave a presentation at the opening plenary session, highlighting the wealth of biodiversity in the UK Overseas

The objectives of this conference were to:

- reinforce awareness amongst the European institutions, the EU Member States, the relevant regional and global institutions and the media about the unique natural heritage of the EU's overseas entities, the threats that this heritage faces and the opportunities it can present;
- enhance the effectiveness of action and cooperation between the EU, the Member States and the ORs and the OCTs in terms of adaptation to climate change, a model energy policy as well as the conservation and sustainable management of biodiversity; and
- enhance regional cooperation between the ORs, the OCTs as well as their neighbours, and strengthen the voice of the ORs and OCTs on the international environmental scene in concert with the European Union and Small Island Developing States.



Réunion Island. © IUCN/Wiebke Herding

Territories, adding that there are many successful biodiversity conservation projects. She emphasised how this conference provided an opportunity to develop collaborative partnerships at a regional and international level to address the complex issue of climate change and biodiversity loss. She also launched a series of materials that JNCC has produced which discuss the basic science of climate change. One of these products, a DVD, was screened at a plenary session on the final day of the conference, and feedback was very positive.

Deanna and Tara co-facilitated (with the French Development Agency) a workshop session chaired by Nicholas Connor (IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas Economic Evaluation Task Force) entitled “Economic valuation of biodiversity and ecosystem services: what role in development strategies? Past experiences and future perspectives”. The workshop featured excellent presentations of environmental economic valuation case studies from Mr Stephen Mendes (Montserrat Government), Ms Samia Sarkis (Bermuda Government) and Mr Mat Cottam (Cayman Government). Deanna outlined JNCC’s environmental economics project explaining how our environmental economics toolkit on valuing the environment in small islands has been developed ([www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4136](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4136)).

This event was the first of its kind to successfully provide a platform for discussion and an excellent opportunity for collaboration and networking. The outcomes of this positive initiative need to be taken forward working with the EU, its Member States and its Overseas Entities.

Details and images of the event, and the full content of the ‘Message from Réunion’ can be found at [www.reunion2008.eu](http://www.reunion2008.eu)



JNCC’s Overseas Territories Officer Tara Pelembe © IUCN/Wiebke Herding

The outcomes of the workshops and the plenary sessions were incorporated into a ‘Message from Réunion’ which highlights, among other things, that the links between people, biodiversity and climate need to be recognised when considering issues of biodiversity loss and climate change. It also states that there is an urgent need for EU member states, the EC, the OCTs and the ORs to:

- establish a voluntary scheme for the protection of species and habitats inspired by Natura 2000, adapted to the local situation;
- highlight the importance of species-level conservation outside of protected areas;
- develop a network of stakeholders;
- strengthen involvement in regional cooperation;
- make stronger reference to OCTs and ORs in the EC white paper on climate change adaptation;
- encourage participation in international initiatives such as the Global Island Partnership (GLISPA);
- recognise that energy is at the heart of development policy as well as climate change; and
- recognise that marine and coastal areas of the OCTs and ORs deserve to be part of a long-term, geo-strategic vision.

It was also highlighted that there is a need for earmarked additional funding for biodiversity conservation. The French Presidency of the Council of the European Union also issued a statement supporting these outcomes.

JNCC has produced a series of materials on climate change in the UK Overseas Territories which include brochures for individuals, policy and decision makers and businesses; guidance for practitioners on planning and managing biodiversity; and an overview of the basics of climate change.

There is also a DVD on the basic science of climate change. All of the materials are available on the JNCC website: [www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4362](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4362)





Mark Crick, a member of JNCC's Environmental Management Group, is on the organisation's composting rota. © Cathy Gardner/JNCC

# JNCC's environmental credentials

JNCC's Environmental Management team has kicked off 2008 in style.

In May, JNCC's Peterborough Office was accredited with BS8555 Phase 3 for the Environmental Management System by NQA (National Quality Assurance) auditors. "This is fantastic news" said Environmental Manager Amanda Gregory. "The team have worked hard at pulling all the procedures and documentation together. Later this year we shall undertake internal audits and a management review in support of our aim for full ISO accreditation within the next two years".

Special thanks have been received from the Built Environment Sustainability Team at Defra for being one of two Non-Departmental Public Bodies (NDPBs) completing the Sustainable Operations on Government Estates questionnaire. This work helps show where JNCC needs to take action to measure and control our operations. It is also important to note that this work will

be mandatory in 2010 for all departments, agencies and NDPBs. One feature of the reporting particularly stood out – the work to measure our video-conferencing usage and travel emissions. Basic results from the 2007-2008 financial year show that the savings from using video-conferencing have already covered its capital costs. In addition there are CO<sub>2</sub> reductions and travel and subsistence savings.

In 2007, JNCC was awarded the Business Environmental Training Initiative Plus (BETI+) Best Small to Medium-sized Enterprises, Cambridgeshire runner-up award. We also received the Travel Choice Travel Plan level 2 award from Cambridgeshire County Council and entered the UK Sustainable Development 2008 Awards with our Sustainable Development Action Plan.

JNCC had a very successful launch of the Travel Plan Salary Sacrifice Cycle Scheme,

and the Executive Management Board agreed to carbon offsetting all air travel, as well as establishing a monitoring system for travel.

Future environmental management work for 2008 includes:

- Sustainable Development Action Plan progress reporting;
- sustainable procurement workshops and further work to progress to level 2 on the Government's Flexible Framework;
- Travel Plan level 3 and 4 (embedding the Peterborough Office travel plan); and
- promoting the 2008 Salary Sacrifice Cycle Scheme.

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## Clarification

In the last issue of *Nature News* we incorrectly identified the bird of prey image on page 11. The image was of a South African greater kestrel, not a lesser kestrel as stated.

# GeoHAB 2008

Mention Alaska, and most people think of snow-capped mountains, brown bears or Baked Alaska dessert... not a gathering of marine scientists partial to a spot of seabed habitat mapping. But at the end of April, over 100 scientists, researchers and students from a dozen countries met in Sitka, Alaska for an international marine geological and habitat mapping conference known as GeoHAB.

Since it was established in 2001, GeoHAB has brought together a diverse range of geologists, biologists, ecologists and fisheries scientists around the globe to exchange ideas and discuss technological developments at annual conferences. "GeoHAB provides a unique mix of geologists and biologists, two disciplines that you don't normally associate with each other, but having both on your 'team' leads to a much deeper understanding of the seabed from mapping studies," said Offshore Data and Survey Manager Neil Golding.

The theme of this year's conference was *Deep-sea marine benthic habitats and high seas Marine Protected Areas*. Neil presented JNCC's progress with its offshore survey programme and demonstrated how the survey results help identify the best areas of the seabed to protect from damaging human activities, for example by designating an area as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Neil noted that "2008 has been a busy year so far for us with successful offshore surveys of Dogger Bank in the North Sea, carbonate structures formed from methane gas in the mid Irish Sea, and an area of rocky reef known as Solan Bank off Cape Wrath in Scotland."

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Crescent Harbour, Sitka, Alaska. Sitka hosted the GeoHAB 2008 conference. © Neil Golding/JNCC



# The Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is one of the three global conventions born out of the Rio summit in 1992. Its goal is to promote a three-pronged approach to biodiversity that balances conservation with sustainable use and the sharing of economic benefits that are derived from biodiversity.

In many ways the convention has similarities with JNCC in that it works by agreeing global standards, frameworks and coordination processes to assist countries to undertake actions. Some of its more notable achievements have been the global 2010 target, the biodiversity indicator framework and the ecosystem approach.

The ninth Conference of the Parties to the CBD took place in Bonn, Germany from 19-30 May 2008. JNCC provided four staff to give technical support to the Defra-led UK delegation and staged its own side event on UK efforts to implement the Convention. Other JNCC staff were involved in other side events and meetings held on the back of the conference, which provided an excellent opportunity to experience this type of international stage first hand.

Proceedings were hectic, long and difficult, as always, but a few notable successes were achieved. A typical day for JNCC staff started with breakfast at 0715, travel to the venue for a short UK debrief at 0800, formal EU coordination 0830-1000, formal conference negotiations 1000-1300, coordination by EU expert groups 1300-1500, more formal conference proceedings 1500-1800 and then some form of informal EU or international expert group negotiations on problems that arose during the day. If you were lucky this finished by 1900 or 2000, but more normally between 2200 and 2300 and occasionally 0300 or 0400. Keeping track of the 16-strong UK



Delegates at the conference hosted by the UK Government in Bonn.

delegation through this hectic and unpredictable timetable was the job of the UK office manager (JNCC's Tasha Chick at this meeting) which has to be one of the most challenging tasks imaginable.

Since the inception of the CBD, the developed countries never manage to accelerate global implementation as much as they would like, and the developing countries never receive sufficient support for implementation. Prioritisation is always difficult and last day bartering always causes a great deal of stress both between and within delegations. At Bonn this entailed trading the establishment of protected areas as a legitimate funding stream for climate change mitigation activities, for a climate change expert group to make sure all activities relating to climate change progress more quickly between Conferences of the Parties.

The other notable successes related to enhancing actions relating to marine conservation in the high seas, climate change adaptation and mitigation and applying the ecosystem approach. Steady progress was made on incentive measures, invasive alien species and scientific assessment processes including indicator frameworks and global environment assessments.

All decisions taken, and further information about the meeting and the CBD more generally, can be found at the CBD website ([www.cbd.int](http://www.cbd.int)).

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## Martyn Ibbotson

Martyn Ibbotson was tragically killed in a road-traffic accident in London on the evening of 9 June 2008. Martyn was the Head of Genetic Resources and Kew Sponsorship Unit at Defra. Most recently he worked on Government policy relating to access to genetic resources and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits derived from these resources (ABS) under the CBD, as well as the International Treaty on

Plant Genetic Resources. He had spent considerable time abroad, most notably as Agricultural Attaché at the UK Embassy in Rome, and had also spent a number of years heading up the Department's wine-sponsorship Branch.

JNCC's Paul Rose commented: "As well as a respected, admired and immensely likeable person, Martyn was

a skilled negotiator, and his input was tremendously valued within the UK, EU and international scenes for his understanding of the issues as well as his legendary language skills. His recent input at the Biodiversity Conference in Bonn was typically invaluable, and all his colleagues and friends will miss his courtesy, friendship, generosity of spirit, and kindness."



Beech in mature woodland, New Forest. © Natural England

# UK BAP an update on progress

The *UK Biodiversity Action Plan* (UK BAP) was published in 1994 and outlined 59 steps towards achieving the goal to conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK. Since 1994, the focus of the UK BAP has been on priority species and habitats whose conservation action has been delivered through Species and Habitat Action Plans (SAPs and HAPs). Other conservation work in the UK, including that listed in the 59 steps, has been delivered partly through these action plans but mainly outside the UK BAP.

In 2005 a review of the UK BAP priority species and habitats was started, leading eventually to a new list of species and habitats. A new way of delivering UK BAP conservation action has emerged, which takes account of devolution (which happened after the UK BAP was published), modern conservation thinking, and more than 10 years' experience with the UK BAP. It incorporates the original 59 steps, where appropriate.

The approach being adopted is for countries to deal with the priority actions for the UK BAP species and habitats at the most

appropriate level (species, habitat, landscape, policy, etc.). Single Species Action Plans may be developed but responsibility for some actions for that species could shift to government policy (e.g. agri-environment schemes) or to habitat groups who will now be more responsible for species than in the past. Habitat groups will also continue to address habitat condition and expansion targets.

The outcome will be that a wide range of biodiversity experts in the UK will take species, habitat, landscape and policy actions that deal with threats to the UK BAP priorities. This approach, involving the statutory and non-statutory sectors, will benefit both the priority species and habitats and a much wider range of biodiversity in the UK.

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# Building the evidence base for the future

JNCC has long been known for its partnerships to deliver biodiversity data; our partners include the Biological Records Centre at the Centre for Ecology & Hydrology, British Trust for Ornithology, Bat Conservation Trust and Butterfly Conservation. However, these partnerships are just the tip of the iceberg. Biodiversity surveillance is a large and complex area, with many organisations providing a very wide range of data and information. Similarly, accessing policy-relevant evidence can be complex, with a single piece of policy advice likely to need complementary data from a range of surveillance programmes.

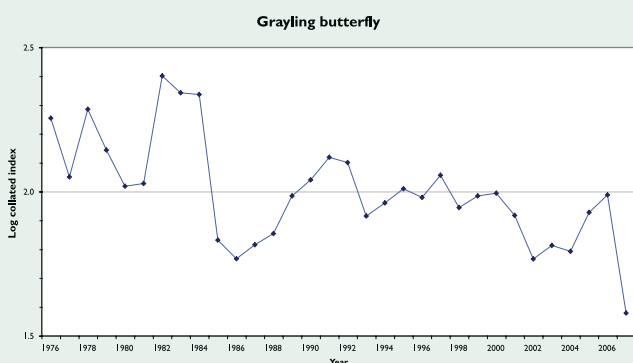
JNCC has produced a strategy for terrestrial biodiversity surveillance that sets all of the complexity into a framework allowing both an analysis of evidence needs and a review of surveillance coverage. Results from this work can be found at [www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3173](http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-3173), the surveillance and monitoring section of the website, including all of the work that has been completed on the strategy so far. The strategy will help biodiversity surveillance become a central component of the UK Environmental Observation Framework (EOF), which has recently been launched, and which considers surveillance of the whole of the environment; JNCC is a key partner in UK-EOF.

## Grayling

© Ian Draycott



Grayling *Hipparchia semele* is one of 71 species monitored through the **UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme**. The Scheme is a key contribution to a range of UK and European biodiversity and agricultural indicators and is led by CEH and Butterfly Conservation with other funding partners.



Key components of the strategy work are:

- an easy-to-use database of existing biodiversity surveillance programmes and their results;
- an analysis of policy needs and how this relates to current coverage;
- a design tool for selecting the appropriate scale of surveillance;
- a set of documented examples of using the strategy in decision-making; and
- an analysis of gaps in current surveillance.

This work will eventually ensure that policy advice is based on the best available biodiversity evidence, and that UK biodiversity surveillance remains relevant for the future.

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CS field surveyors © Centre for Ecology & Hydrology

Schemes such as *Countryside Survey* contribute important data on vegetation status and change at UK and country levels. Combining vegetation and plant data from several schemes may help address gaps in plant species change detection, and in attribution of change to pressures.



Guest of Honour Pavan Sukhdev (left) with JNCC Chair Peter Bridgewater. © veldeman-photo-brussels.be

# Green Week reception

## An evening with Pavan Sukhdev

The UK Nature and Landscape Office (UKNLO) held a successful evening reception at the residence of the UK Ambassador to the European Union in Brussels in early June. The reception coincided with the European Commission's Green Week - where events, conferences and talks intend to raise awareness of environmental issues. JNCC's reception subject matter mirrored the Green Week theme 'Only One Earth - don't waste it'.

Peter Bridgewater, JNCC Chair, welcomed guests and colleagues from the European institutions, EU Member States governments and other key organisations as well as the chairmen and chief executives from the UK country conservation bodies. The UK Ambassador's residence is a truly grand location and guests enjoyed champagne and locally sourced food.

JNCC Committee member and Chairman, Countryside Council for Wales, John Lloyd Jones OBE (right) with David Sears from the European Economic and Social Committee. © veldeman-photo-brussels.be



The evening's Guest of Honour was Mr Pavan Sukhdev, Managing Director and Head of Global Markets, Deutsche Bank India. He is also study leader for the review of The Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) - a study initiated by the G8 +5 governments in 2007. An interim report was published in Bonn at the ninth Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in May.

Mr Sukhdev explained how the essentials of life that come from ecosystems and biodiversity have no market and no price. He suggested that only when we "capture" their value and give it a price, will we be able to persuade society, and governments, to attach sufficient priority to protecting these vital services for ourselves, our children and grandchildren. He said his hope for the future was that "the business community and society will get together at a very fundamental level to redefine their cooperation in order to secure these resources".

The residence of the UK Ambassador to the European Union, venue for the UKNLO reception. © veldeman-photo-brussels.be



The subject matter of his speech was supported by a visual presentation of work being carried out in JNCC's Global Impacts programme, linking UK consumption and production patterns and overseas investment to global biodiversity.

The UK Nature and Landscape Office is the Brussels office for JNCC and the nature conservation bodies for England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and aims to enhance the quality of advice provided to the UK Government, the devolved administrations and the European institutions. Hugh Laxton, Head of the Office said: "The evening was a great success and while I am sure it reflects the importance of our Guest of Honour, it is also reflects the respect JNCC and the country conservation bodies have among the EU institutions with regard to their advice and support".

A podcast of Mr Sukhdev's speech is available on the JNCC website [www.jncc.gov.uk](http://www.jncc.gov.uk).

The TEEB report can be downloaded from [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/pdf/teeb\\_report.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/economics/pdf/teeb_report.pdf)

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# Conservation Conversation



In this issue we focus on Professor Lynda Warren, Deputy Chair and independent Joint Committee member, currently a Commissioner on the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, on the Committee on Radioactive Waste Management and previously an Environment Agency Board Member. She is Emeritus Professor of Environmental Law at Aberystwyth University and a Fellow of the Institute of Biology.

**Q** Species that inspired you as a child?

**A** Worms – my mother loathed them which made them even more interesting to me. So much so that I finished up doing my PhD on them. Birds – we lived in south London and one of my treats was to go for walks with my dad and look at the wildlife. He bought me Ladybird Books on birds which I still have. My first husband was a bird watching fanatic so maybe that says something about me too. Fossil ferns – we found one in a piece of coal once when I was a child and it fascinated me. My second husband is a palaeobotanist specialising in Carboniferous pteridophytes – pre-destiny?

**Q** What concerns you most about the natural world in the next two decades?

**A** We are more and more concerned about the impacts of climate change on humans and because of this nature conservation will suffer. Too many people are failing to recognise that without the natural world there is no world for humans.

**Q** What would you do with a £1 million grant for nature conservation?

**A** I can't think of anything better than to spend it on land purchase. Ownership is still the best protection you can get.

**Q** What do you do when you're not saving the world?

**A** If only I was saving the world! My favourite activities are reading, going to the cinema and sleeping.

**Q** What would you like to achieve in your time at JNCC?

**A** Getting to grips with how we look at nature conservation from a UK perspective when we have devolved administrations. Also, continuing with the good progress we are making with marine nature conservation and ensuring that any new legislation is underpinned by policy that recognises the fundamental importance of conserving our marine resources.

**Q** What is your favourite place?

**A** Ross Island, Antarctica. I spent a wonderful time there working at Scott Base with the New Zealanders. In this country, it would be impossible to choose between the Langdale Pikes in the Lake District and the Dale Peninsula in Pembrokeshire – both places I visited on field courses in the sixth form at a time when I had hardly travelled outside south-east England. Glorious, atmospheric scenery and wonderful wildlife.

**Q** Who is your human hero in the natural world?

**A** An unsung one. Chris Tydeman, former Chief Scientist with WWF-UK and now chairman of the Herpetological Conservation Trust. His knowledge and enthusiasm for nature conservation inspired me and made me change direction from physiology and cell biology to ecology and conservation.

**Q** What's your pet hate in nature conservation?

**A** Laws and policies that treat nature conservation as just one more sectoral

interest that needs to be balanced against all the other sectoral interests. We should put the protection of biodiversity first but we never do. If you haven't got natural resources you don't have anything else.

**Q** Desert Island disc?

**A** An impossible choice between Bob Dylan's *Forever Young* – because he's been part of my life since I first went to see him in concert in 1964 – and Bach's *Violin Concerto for 2 violins in D minor* – because it takes my breath away.

**Q** Place you'd most like to visit?

**A** When I was doing my PhD on polychaete worms, I found some specimens in the Natural History Museum that had been collected from Tierra del Fuego. They were enormous and I've wanted to go see the place they were found ever since. I would also love to see the Aurora Borealis but, so far, trips to the north have failed to deliver.

**Q** When I'm reincarnated, I'm coming back as.....?

**A** I'm sorry, I know it's not very environmentally sound, but it would have to be a domestic moggy – all that sleep in the lap of luxury would be bliss.

One of Lynda's favourite places is Langdale Pikes, Lake District.  
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Natural England

