

News story: Golden opportunity for Scottish fishing industry

UK Government plans to make the fishing industry much more sustainable and profitable have been welcomed by the Scotland Secretary.

Fishing is a hugely important industry for Scotland, which is home to almost half of the UK's fishers – an estimated 4,823 people.

[The Fisheries White Paper – 'Sustainable Fisheries for Future Generations'](#) – charts the course for managing fisheries after Brexit.

It outlines how powers to be proposed in the Fisheries Bill, which will be introduced in this session of Parliament, will give the UK full control of its waters and the ability to set fishing opportunities.

It also proposes a suite of measures to improve the sustainability of the fishing industry, supporting the next generation of fishermen while protecting the UK's precious marine environment.

Scotland Secretary David Mundell said:

Leaving the EU provides us with a golden opportunity to develop Scotland's fishing industry and ensure it has a thriving and sustainable future. This white paper is an important step towards achieving this.

Our vision for UK fisheries can only be delivered if all four parts of the UK work in partnership with one another. The UK Government will continue working closely with the Scottish Government and other devolved administrations to develop a fishing policy that works for the whole of the UK.

It is right that we are taking back control of our waters. Scotland's fishing industry has a bright future outside of the EU.

While the UK will continue to abide by Common Fisheries Policy rules during the implementation period, from 2020 we will be negotiating access to waters and fishing opportunities as an independent coastal state.

The white paper sets out a number of methods to explore fairer allocation of fishing opportunities, such as zonal attachment – which is based on distribution of fish stocks, rather than historical data.

Sitting at the heart of the white paper is the UK Government's commitment to sustainable fisheries, including ending the wasteful discarding of fish and making clear vessels will only be allowed to fish in our waters if they adhere to our high sustainability standards.

The paper also commits to publishing an annual statement setting out the health of fish stocks and based on the latest scientific evidence. If stocks are struggling, the four UK fisheries administrations, including Scotland, will work together to put in place a comprehensive recovery plan to restore them to healthy levels.

The UK Government will continue to work with the Devolved Administrations to develop a new UK framework for fisheries management, which will maximise their power to manage their fisheries while maintaining the overall coherence of the UK's approach.

It will also ensure compliance with international obligations to manage our shared resources sustainably.

Access to waters and fishing opportunities will be negotiated on an annual basis. This is consistent with the approach to fisheries taken by other coastal states including Norway.

Interested parties are invited to share their views on proposals outlined in the white paper during a 10 week consultation.

News story: Ivory ban could protect hippos, walruses and narwhals

The government has announced it will consult on extending the scope of the Bill to protect hippos, walruses and narwhals from the vile trade in ivory.

The Ivory Bill currently before Parliament includes a power for Ministers to extend the proposed ban on selling items made from elephant ivory to other ivory-bearing species, which also include sperm whales and killer whales. Ministers have now confirmed that a consultation on extending the ban will be published as soon as possible.

Hippos and walruses are listed as 'vulnerable' on the Red List produced by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). Concerns have been raised in response to the Government's consultation about the decline of hippos in particular and the part played by poaching. IUCN population estimates suggest the maximum hippo population has declined by up to 12 per cent between 2008 and 2017.

Environment Secretary Michael Gove said:

Our ivory ban is one of the toughest in the world and will provide vital protection for the African and Asian elephant from the scourge of illegal poaching. But there are many more precious species, like the hippo and walrus, which could fall victim to the

callous trade in ivory. The Government will therefore consult on extending the ivory ban to other ivory-bearing animals. We are determined to end this insidious trade and make sure ivory from any animal is never seen as a commodity for financial gain or a status symbol.

The Government has also brought forward an amendment to the bill to ensure that, if necessary, ivory from all animals could be banned and not simply those covered by Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This would allow the ban to be extended to ivory from warthogs or mammoths, for example, if a case for their inclusion was made during consultation.

Defra Minister David Rutley said:

We have today announced that we intend to consult on extending the ban to include other ivory species and will seek to start the consultation process and gather evidence as soon as practicable after Royal Assent. This process will ensure that if we do extend the scope of the ban, this will be robust, defensible, enforceable and compliant with the European Convention on Human Rights. Let me be clear, this will, however, not delay the introduction of the ban on dealings in elephant ivory.

A further government amendment has also been tabled, imposing a size restriction on the items that can qualify for the pre-1918 portrait miniatures exemption. Following evidence provided at the Committee stage, the amendment states that the visible surface area of a portrait miniature must be less than 320 square centimetres.

Earlier this week, [the three Secretaries of State for Foreign Affairs, the Environment and International Development](#) hosted an event at the Foreign Office, bringing together NGOs, businesses, country representatives and others who are playing a key role in fighting the illegal wildlife trade.

The event recognised the work already being done to tackle the illegal wildlife trade and encourage increased ambition by all sectors in advance of the [October conference](#).

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Form: Minor and temporary adjustment (MTA) form: Countryside Stewardship

Use this form to request a minor and temporary change when you cannot meet the rules for the options in a CS agreement. (For previous similar schemes, this was known as requesting 'a derogation'.) You can use this form for issues such as adverse weather conditions – for example hot weather leading to:

- hay crops needing to be cut earlier than usual
- you needing to make changes to grazing, cropping and supplementary feeding requirements

Return the form to the [Natural England office that deals with your county](#).

You must get your MTA approved by Natural England before you make any changes to how you manage your agreement.

Press release: HS2 Ltd to undertake development works for electrification of the Midland Main Line

Following the government's announcement last summer that the preferred HS2 route would include a spur into Sheffield via Chesterfield, the Secretary of State has asked that electrification of this section of the Midland Main Line be included within the next hybrid Bill for HS2.

HS2 Ltd will begin its preparatory works with a series of land surveys to

further inform the work programme. A public consultation on the works required for electrification will be undertaken at a later date, prior to any hybrid Bill being brought to Parliament.

An HS2 spokesperson said:

The benefits that HS2 will deliver are significant and should not be underestimated. The new railway will play a crucial role in rebalancing Britain's economy; driving business growth, creating jobs and securing investment right across the country.

Ensuring the Midland Main Line is electrified between Clay Cross and Sheffield Midland Station will enable Chesterfield and the wider Sheffield City Region to benefit from direct services on the new high speed trains.

Press and media enquiries

For enquiries during office working hours, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
020 7944 6149

For enquiries outside of these hours and at the weekend
020 7944 0550

The press and media enquiries line is for accredited journalists only