

Official Statistics: European Forest Accounts: UK 2015 data

This release contains data on stocks and flows of wooded land and timber and economic data on UK forestry to be submitted to Eurostat for the production of EU statistics on forestry. It replaces the previous Integrated Environmental and Economic Accounting for Forestry.

Press release: David Lidington in Wales and Scotland for talks on business and Brexit

The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster David Lidington MP will visit Wales and Scotland this week, where he will meet with business leaders and politicians to discuss the economy and the UK's preparations for leaving the EU.

Mr Lidington will attend roundtable discussions with different sectors of business in Cardiff (Thursday, February 1st) and Edinburgh (Friday, February 2nd). The newly appointed Minister will also hold bilateral discussions on the EU Withdrawal Bill with both the Welsh First Minister and the Scottish Deputy First Minister on Thursday.

Speaking ahead of the visits to Cardiff and Edinburgh, David Lidington said:

I am very much looking forward to visiting Scotland and Wales. The UK Government is committed to building a Britain where our strong economy benefits all parts of the UK.

I know that businesses in Wales are excited by the opportunities that come from our plans to remove the tolls from the Severn Bridge. Our investment in broadband and UK City Deals are making a real difference in Wales and Scotland. I want to hear from businesses in Cardiff and Edinburgh about what else we can do to help drive economic growth.

I am also looking forward to continuing my discussions with Carwyn Jones and John Swinney on how we can make progress with the EU Withdrawal Bill in our face-to-face talks today. We need to work together to find an agreed way forward.

In Cardiff, David Lidington will co-host, with the Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns MP, a meeting of the regular Expert Panel group of representatives of the businesses, agriculture, fisheries and third sector in Wales that advises on the arrangements for leaving the EU.

The Secretary of State for Wales has established the group to work with him to deliver a smooth and orderly exit from the EU in Wales.

Speaking ahead of the meeting, Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:

The UK Government is resolute in its commitment to delivering an EU exit that works for every part of the country, and to taking every opportunity along the way to further strengthen our precious union.

We have ensured that the Welsh Government and every sector in Wales have been fully and constructively engaged with the Brexit process, so we can together deliver the best possible deal for the people of Wales.

Scottish Secretary David Mundell said:

I look forward to meeting the Scottish Government later today. The return of powers from the EU will lead to a significant increase in the decision-making powers of Holyrood. We have made good progress in our discussions with the Scottish Government on common frameworks and will continue those discussions today. We want to agree an amendment to the EU (Withdrawal) Bill which we can then bring forward in the Lords.

The Minister will also chair a roundtable of Scottish business representatives in Edinburgh on Friday morning.

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[Press release: Gambling sector told to raise its game after CMA action](#)

As part of a major overhaul of how the gambling industry operates online, three leading operators – Ladbrokes, William Hill, and PT Entertainment – have formally committed to change the way they offer bonus promotions to

ensure players can always access and release their own money.

These landmark changes must now be adopted across the sector. Firms not doing so will face regulatory action from the Gambling Commission. The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) and the Gambling Commission have been working in collaboration to improve conditions for players gambling online.

The changes come in response to an investigation by the CMA to make sure the sector was not breaking consumer protection law, and mean players can be sure they can withdraw their own money when they play as part of a bonus promotion.

The firms involved have also agreed to be more upfront and clear in the terms and conditions of their bonus promotions. In particular, the changes mean:

- Players won't be required to play multiple times before they can withdraw their own money
- Gambling firms must ensure that any restrictions on gameplay are made clear to players, and cannot rely on vague terms to confiscate players' money
- Gambling firms must not oblige players to take part in publicity

The promotions under particular scrutiny are designed to attract players onto casino-like gaming websites by offering bonus funds when players put in their own money. The CMA found that certain terms in these promotions were likely to be 'unfair', in breach of consumer protection law, and could mislead consumers. There was particular concern people could be made to play for longer than they had bargained for before being able to withdraw their own money.

These problems were found to be common across the £4.7 billion online gambling sector and in October 2016 the CMA launched an investigation, in collaboration with the Gambling Commission, to tackle the shared concern around transparency and fairness.

The Gambling Commission has made clear that firms across the whole sector must promptly adopt similar changes to address the concerns identified.

George Lusty, Project Director, said:

Gambling always carries a risk, but players should never face unfair restrictions that prevent them from getting at their money. Firms mustn't stack the odds against players, by putting unfair obstacles in their way, or making it difficult for them to stop gambling when they want to.

The CMA is here to make sure businesses' terms and practices are fair for their customers. We welcome the commitment from these leading firms to address the problems our investigation uncovered, by making important changes to their terms and conditions.

We now expect others to follow, and look forward to the Gambling

Commission's continued work to make sure all operators in this sector play fair with their customers' money.

Gambling Commission Executive Director, Sarah Gardner, said:

We back the action taken by the CMA today. Gambling firms must treat their customers fairly and not attach unreasonable terms and conditions to their promotions and offers.

We expect all Gambling Commission licensed businesses to immediately review the promotions and sign up deals they offer customers and take whatever steps they need to take, to the same timescales agreed by the three operators, to ensure they comply.

Operators should be very aware that we will continue to work closely with the CMA to ensure customers are getting a fair deal across the gambling industry.

Further enforcement activity by the CMA in the sector is ongoing. The CMA will continue to look at obstacles facing customers trying to withdraw their money after gambling online – whether as part of a promotion or not.

This includes considering terms that force players to withdraw prize money in small instalments over a long period of time, and terms which allow firms to confiscate funds if they haven't been played with for a few months.

Notes for editors

1. The key pieces of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation are the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs) and Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA). The CPRs prohibit certain unfair commercial practices – in particular misleading acts or omissions, but also behaviour that is contrary to the requirements of professional diligence. Amongst other things, the CRA prohibits unfair contract terms in consumer contracts and requires that terms be transparent.
2. The CMA [opened an investigation](#) into the gambling sector's compliance with consumer protection law in October 2016 after hearing about a range of concerns that suggested some operators were not treating their customers fairly. This investigation heard from over 1,000 customers with concerns about a large number of different gambling firms, required companies to answer questions about how they operate, closely examined the advertising and terms on a range of websites, and asked companies to give it demonstrations of the consumer journey and consumer play on their sites.

3. This investigation led to CMA announcing in June 2017 [that it had opened cases against](#) a number of operators and a new line of enquiry to look further into obstacles that people face when they try to withdraw their money after depositing funds and gaming or betting online (whether as part of a promotion or not).
4. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Facebook](#), [Flickr](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
5. As a result of these cases, three operators have [provided undertakings](#) to the CMA. They are Ladbrokes Betting & Gaming Limited, trading as Ladbrokes ("Ladbrokes"), WHG (International) Ltd, trading as William Hill ("William Hill"), and PT Entertainment Services Limited, trading as titanbet.co.uk and winner.co.uk ("PT Entertainment").
6. The provision of these formal commitments ('undertakings') by the three operators is not an admission of a breach of the law. Nor does the CMA's view amount to a binding ruling – ultimately only a court can rule that a particular term or practice infringes the law.
7. The CMA acknowledges the co-operation and positive engagement of these operators throughout the investigation, and welcomes their constructive approach.
8. The Gambling Commission regulates gambling in Great Britain in partnership with licensing authorities. It also regulates the National Lottery. Its regulations are aimed at ensuring gambling is crime-free, fair and open and children and other vulnerable people are protected. It advises central and local government on the impact of gambling and its regulation. It holds operators to account; it ensures operators meet licensing standards and takes action against those that don't. It ensures that National Lottery returns to good causes are maximised.
9. The Gambling Commission reports that in 2016 the online gambling sector was worth £4.7 billion (Gross Gambling Yield) and accounted for 34% of all gambling. It also reports that there are over 28 million active accounts for licensed facilities in Great Britain and that nearly 9 million people had gambled online in the 4 weeks up to 31 March 2017.
10. The CMA has produced a ['60-second summary'](#) to help all gambling operators review their practices and ensure their terms and conditions are in line with consumer protection law. It has also produced ['advice for gamblers'](#) and a [short video guide](#) for consumers.

11. If you are a member of the public with a query please email general.enquiries@cma.gsi.gov.uk or call 02037376000.
 12. Media enquiries to the CMA should be directed to press@cma.gsi.gov.uk or 020 3738 6798. Media enquiries to the Gambling Commission should be directed to Nikita Jan njan@gamblingcommission.gov.uk or 0121 230 6700.
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Press release: PM announces new UK-China action to end the illegal wildlife trade

Proposals to outlaw the sale of ivory have attracted more than 70,000 replies – one of the largest responses in the history of Defra.

Officials are still analysing the replies but said it was clear that the ‘overwhelming majority’ support a ban. The government will set out its detailed response shortly.

As part of a global government effort to crack down on the wildlife trade, Prime Minister Theresa May has announced a joint UK-China effort to strengthen international cooperation.

Ahead of the London 2018 Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference, the two countries will pledge to share our expertise in this area with countries in the southern African region.

Border Force officers will share their expertise in identifying smuggled ivory with counterparts worldwide to stop wildlife trafficking.

The UK military also trains an elite force of anti-poachers in African countries.

This week, an enforcement workshop facilitated by UK and Chinese experts is being held in Johannesburg to share best practice on tackling the international illegal wildlife trade.

In October 2017, the Environment Secretary launched a public consultation on proposals to ban sales of ivory in the UK.

The proposals would help protect elephants and help combat poaching by removing opportunities for criminals to trade illegally-poached ivory.

The environment and working together to tackle the wildlife trade are being discussed by the UK and China during a three-day visit by Mrs May.

Yesterday, the Prime Minister visited the Yangtze River in Wuhan, where she was briefed by local experts on Wuhan's efforts to reduce pollution in the river and in the city's lakes, including from micro plastic pollution.

The Prime Minister heard how improvements in water quality are helping to protect and restore the population of Yangtze River finless porpoises, including through a project led by the Zoological Society of London working in conjunction with local marine biologists.

Speaking in China, the Prime Minister said:

My visit to China is about our two countries working together on some of the most significant challenges of our time. And during my visit I have seen first-hand the way UK expertise is supporting Chinese efforts to protect wildlife and improve the quality of life of its citizens.

I am proud of the agreement that the UK and China have made to boost our co-operation in the fight against the illegal ivory trade.

We have committed to using all the levers at our disposal to lobby for other countries to implement domestic bans and stamp out this abhorrent practice.

The government will work both at home and overseas to tackle poaching and the illegal ivory trade.

In October 2018, the UK will host a fourth international conference on the illegal wildlife, bringing global leaders to London to tackle the strategic challenges of the trade.

This follows the groundbreaking London 2014 conference on the illegal wildlife trade, and subsequent conferences in Botswana and Vietnam.

Collection: Customer Notices: Low Level Waste Repository

Updated: Customer Notice 2018-012 added