

# Landmark Environment Bill strengthened to halt biodiversity loss by 2030

The Government has strengthened its commitment to protect the environment for future generations and build back greener with new amendments to the landmark Environment Bill that will see the UK build on its reputation as a global leader in conservation.

Following work with parliamentarians and wider stakeholders, new amendments tabled yesterday (26/08) include strengthening the duty to set a legally-binding target to halt species decline by 2030.

This will solidify the Government's commitment to leave a richer, more biodiverse environment for future generations with a clear need for action: between 1932 and 1984, we lost 97% of our species-rich grassland, five species of butterfly have disappeared from England in the last 150 years, and indicators showing the state of birds dependent on farmland stand at less than half their value compared to 1970.

This new amendment reflects the Prime Minister's pledges on the international stage during the UK's leadership of this year's G7 summit – with the G7 committing to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030 as well as signing up to the global '30x30' initiative to conserve or protect at least 30 per cent of the world's land and at least 30 per cent of the world's ocean by 2030 – and will enable us to meet our ambition to make this world-leading target the net zero equivalent for nature.

New measures will also tackle storm overflows through a new requirement for water companies to monitor the water quality impacts of their sewage discharges and publish this information. This monitoring will drive action by water companies to reduce sewage discharges that do the most harm, to better protect the environment and public health. Water companies will also be required to publish near real-time information on when their storm overflows operate.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

The Environment Bill is at the vanguard of our work to implement the most ambitious environmental programme of any country on earth.

We have been clear about the need, and our intention, to halt the decline of our natural environment, and so we are strengthening our world-leading target to put this beyond doubt. It will be a challenging task, but halting this decline is a crucial part of our commitment to be the first generation to leave our environment in a better state.

Our new package of measures on storm overflows will help crack down on the pollution in our rivers, waterways and coastlines, to better

tackle the harm that they cause.

The Environment Bill will bring forward action to address environmental challenges including biodiversity loss, climate change, waste and pollution of the air, water and land.

The amendments will:

- Strengthen the legal language of our new world-leading target to ‘halt the decline in species abundance by 2030’, reconfirming our existing commitment to nature.
- Place duties on water companies to monitor the water quality impact of their sewage discharges and to publish this data, as well as a duty to provide near real-time information on when storm overflows operate
- Introduce a duty to require the Government to publish a report considering the costs and benefits of eliminating overflows entirely which will inform Government decision-making in this area.
- Separately, the Government will undertake a review of legislation which would require Sustainable Drainage Systems to be constructed to ministerial standards on new developments, which would reduce the pressure on the sewage system. This type of “blue-green” infrastructure can deliver a number of benefits – it can prevent water entering foul sewers; reduce surface flooding; improve biodiversity, and improve associated carbon emissions.
- Bring in a further safeguard for the independence of the new Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) by requiring greater parliamentary scrutiny of any guidance issued to the OEP.
- Introduce Statutory guidance for local planning authorities to explain how they should take into account new Local Nature Recovery Strategies, to embed strategies for the environment and nature’s recovery into their planning systems.
- Create a duty and power to allow the Secretary of State to review, and increase if appropriate, the minimum duration for which new biodiversity gain sites must be secured. This will allow this important aspect of the policy to be reviewed after Government has evaluated the early years of mandatory biodiversity net gain practice, to understand how developers can make a positive impact on nature from their work
- Bring in additional technical amendments to support swifter and more effective implementation of Extended Producer Responsibility measures which will allow for future schemes to appoint scheme administrators through regulations – saving time and money. Extended Producer Responsibility schemes mean companies will be expected to cover the full cost of recycling and disposing of their packaging, and through the fees they pay they will be incentivised to use packaging that can be recycled and meet higher recycling targets.
- Accept all the recommendations of the House of Lords Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee (DPRRC), which will ensure appropriate scrutiny of those provisions by parliament
- The full amendments are [published here](#)
- Read more about the [Environment Bill here.](#)

- Today's announcement will support the delivery of the 25 Year Environment Plan and is part of the Government's commitment to tackle the twin threat of biodiversity loss and climate change.

---

## [I-VMS for England's under-12m fishing vessels takes a step forward](#)

Suppliers have been invited to submit their products and technologies for assessment so fishers will have a range of I-VMS devices to choose from before it becomes a legal requirement for them to carry a functioning monitoring unit onboard.

To support fishers in selecting a device that is suitable for their vessel, the MMO's 'type approval' process is intended to bring as many suppliers into the marketplace as possible so that there's a broad choice of products at a range of prices for fishers to choose from.

In the under-12m fishing fleet, specifications for vessels – for example, in terms of powering and housing the devices – are diverse so vessel owners are best placed, with the right support from suppliers, to decide which device and service package suits them.

Fishers will be able to start researching devices once assessments are complete and a list of approved products is published in November 2021.

Once the approved list is published and the installation timetable is confirmed, fishers will be asked to organise installation of a device on their vessel in phases, based on vessel size, to make it easier for fishers, suppliers and engineers to plan and organise installing the devices.

The MMO will work with fishers to develop and publish detailed guidance that sets out the actions they need to take from November, alongside the approved list of devices and information from each supplier on the after-sales services they offer.

The expected timetable for the roll-out of I-VMS devices next year is:

<b>Vessel size</b>	<b>Expected dates</b>
10 to 11.99m	17 Jan – 14 Feb 2022
8 to 9.99m	15 Feb to 13 April 2022
6 to 7.99m	14 April to 18 July 2022
Below 6m	19 July to 14 November 2022

The MMO has already engaged with fishers on their main requirements for I-VMS devices and has communicated these expectations to the companies seeking approval for their products.

Engagement this summer and a survey of fishers demonstrated that they want a choice of devices and prices; reliable equipment with support if it develops a fault; clear explanations of how each device might be suitable for their particular vessel; and dependable processes for installation.

The MMO is committed to providing a grant contribution towards the initial cost of devices and is assessing how they will be supported to carry on fishing if their device fails and requires repair or replacement.

---

## [Sponsorship roadmap to make it easier to attract global talent](#)

News story

Reforms will allow businesses to access skilled talent from abroad quicker and easier.



The government has set out a series of ambitious reforms that build on the launch of the points-based immigration system at the end of last year, allowing businesses to access skilled talent from abroad quicker and easier.

Significant improvements have already been made to the employer sponsorship system, including a reduction on processing times and making the sponsor licence application fully paperless.

Reforms outlined in the [sponsorship roadmap](#) will continue to ease burdensome administrative processes, which organisations sponsoring workers must go through.

Through a range of technological and system improvements, the visa sponsor system will:

- further reduce processing times to enable UK businesses and educational institutions to become sponsors and attract global talent faster

- re-use information the government already has on a sponsor, where possible, to make it easier for sponsors to use the system
- improve accessibility of the system through creation of an online dashboard for sponsors; making it easier for them to understand the status of their sponsorship licence and the actions they need to take

The sponsorship roadmap comes as statistics released today show the UK continues to attract talent around the world through our points-based immigration system.

Statistics show that the UK has so far in 2021 received 205,919 work visa applications, up 40% on this time last year. A further 291,243 visa applications on study routes have also been received, up 14% on last year.

Minister for Future Borders and Immigration Kevin Foster said:

Our points-based system is delivering our pledge to attract the best and brightest to the UK while ensuring businesses focus on our domestic workforce.

By making these significant changes to the sponsorship process, the UK will become global leaders in bringing talent to start work and study here faster than any other G20 country.

The changes build on commitments to attract the best and brightest from across the globe, a key component of the government's wider 'Build Back Better' agenda.

The government will work collaboratively with new and prospective sponsors to make the modernised system a success, as well as work with other partners to identify abuse through greater use of technology.

It is the latest in a series of reforms to attract the best and brightest to the UK and revolutionise the way people come into the UK, via a fully digital immigration system.

Published 27 August 2021

---

**[Guidance: UK SMI V 4: investigation of](#)**

## **hepatitis B infection**

Information on UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations for investigation of hepatitis B infection.

---

## **Guidance: Businesses approved to export to the EU**

Use the lists to check your business in Great Britain (England, Scotland and Wales) or one of the Crown Dependencies (Jersey, Guernsey and Isle of Man) is approved to export to the EU, and find out what your TRACES number is.