

[Saving our Bumblebees](#)



Lecture on Tuesday 31st January at the Dalhousie Building Lecture Theatre 1, University of Dundee :

Bumblebees are amongst the most important of wild pollinators; many wildflowers would not set seed without them, and they are the main pollinators of crops such as tomatoes, blueberries and raspberries. Concerningly, many bumblebees are in decline, with 3 species now extinct in the UK and the first global extinction recently occurring in USA.

Dave Goulson, Professor Of Biology (Evolution, Behaviour and Environment) at the University of Sussex, will discuss the drivers of these declines, and the many things we can all do to halt and reverse them, at the Biochemical Society sponsored lecture.

Dave has published over 200 scientific articles on the ecology of bees and other insects, and is author of 'Bumblebees; their behaviour, ecology and conservation' (2010, Oxford University Press) and 'A Sting in the Tale' (2013, Jonathan Cape), a popular science book about bumblebees.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Entomological Society, and a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

In 2010 he was BBSRC "Social Innovator of the Year" and in 2013 he won the Marsh Award for Conservation Biology from the Zoological Society of London.

The lecture will be followed by a drinks reception from 5-6pm, giving the opportunity to meet with Dave in a more informal setting.

Tickets are free but should be booked in advance [here](#).

[China launches emergency measures over missing boat in Malaysia](#)



File photo shows the port in Kota Kinabalu (KK). [Photo/Xinhua]

The China National Tourism Administration (CNTA) on Sunday activated emergency measures after a boat carrying mainly Chinese tourists was reported to have gone missing in Malaysia.

An emergency team led by a deputy chief of the administration has been set up to deal with the incident, according to a CNTA statement.

The administration is checking the information of the tourists, and the staff in its Singapore office are preparing to search the area where the boat went missing, the statement said.

A boat carrying 31 people, among them more than 20 tourists from China, lost contact with marine authorities after it left a port in Kota Kinabalu (KK) in the eastern Malaysian state of Sabah to Pulau Mengalum, a popular tourist island 60 km west of KK, on Saturday, the Consulate General of China in KK said Sunday.

It is not clear yet what caused the disappearance of the boat, but an official from the Chinese consulate said there was unfavorable weather condition Saturday.

[Beijing parks receive 180,000 tourists on Spring Festival](#)

Beijing's 11 municipal parks and the Museum of Chinese Garden and Landscape Architecture received a total of 180,000 tourists on Saturday, the first day

of the Lunar New Year, or Spring Festival.

During the Spring Festival public holiday, a string of events and activities, such as winter sports and flower exhibitions, are being held across Beijing's parks. Many Beijingers have said that visiting parks is on their holiday "must do" list.

Taoranting Park reported 40,000 visitors, while the Temple of Heaven Park and the Summer Palace saw 30,000 tourists each, according to the Beijing parks office.

Spring Festival is the most important festival in China.

Heavy snow disrupts traffic in NE China

Heavy snow has disrupted traffic in northeast China's Liaoning Province, local authorities said Sunday.

The snowstorm started Saturday afternoon, the first day of the Lunar New Year or Spring Festival, and continued Sunday.

As of 9 a.m., 18 expressways in the province, including the section that links neighboring Jilin Province and part of the Beijing-Harbin Expressway, are either closed or restricted, according to the provincial department of transportation.

Most highway coach stations in Liaoning are also closed as a result of the snow.

The local meteorological station forecast snow to continue in most parts of Liaoning throughout Sunday.

There is no legal basis for making any extra payments to the EU

There are some on the continent who seem to think the UK will have to pay to leave the EU, based around negotiations over how much of the continuing liabilities of the EU the UK must pay. This is all nonsense.

There is no power in the EU Treaties to impose an additional one off levy on a state as it leaves the EU. Nor is there any power in the Treaty to demand any continuing budget contributions after departure. This is wise, as of course once a state leaves it leaves behind the judicial authority of the EU which would be the means of enforcing any such payment. Article 50 is clear. Once the state leaves it has no further rights and benefits, and no further duties or obligations.

It is of course true the Treaty does not prevent the EU accepting a payment volunteered by a departing state if it wished to pay one. However, the UK could not make such a payment legally under our own law and system for controlling public spending. Ministers can only authorise spending and sign cheques for approved expenditure under UK legislation and with Parliamentary authority for the budget provision that covers the payments. Ministers have proper authority to make the annual contribution payments to the EU, required by the Treaty as incorporated into UK law by the European Communities Act. They have absolutely no authority to make one off additional payments to the EU, and would have no authority to make contributions after we have left and have repealed the 1972 Act.

They will also find that if they wanted to make a payment as overseas aid to the EU it would not qualify under our Aid budget criteria, as the EU as a whole is too rich. The only way UK Ministers could authorise a leaving payment would be to put through an Act of Parliament specifically authorising such an ex gratia payment. I can't see many Conservative MPs wanting to vote for that.

Being in the EU is a bit like being a student in a College. All the time you belong to the College you have to pay fees. You have to obey all the rules of the institution. When you depart you have no further financial obligations, and you no longer have to obey their rules and accept their discipline. If you liked the College rules you can still apply them to yourself voluntarily. The College does not on your departure say we have borrowed money to improve the College while you were here so you will have a continuing bill for servicing the College debts. It does not say we failed to make proper provision for the future pensions of the people who taught you, so we will send you additional bills for their pensions. All your rights to reside and learn at the College cease, and all your duties to pay and obey cease. So it is with a country's membership of the EU.