

[News story: UK to host global conference to crack down on wildlife crime](#)

Ministers have today (30 October 2017) officially launched the London 2018 Illegal Wildlife Trade Conference, with less than a year to go before the global conference begins.

Foreign Office, Defra and DFID ministers brought together NGOs, academics and key countries affected by the illegal wildlife trade (IWT) to call on them to work with the UK to help stamp out this crime. It is now the fourth most lucrative transnational crime in the world after drugs, weapons and human trafficking.

Building a strong, global consensus on tackling IWT is a priority for the government as this crime, which is destroying entire populations of endangered species and causing misery for local communities, can only truly be addressed through international collaboration.

From previous conferences in [London in 2014](#) through to [Kasane in 2015](#) and Hanoi in 2016, the UK has shown the leadership and ability to secure the political commitment needed to bring an end to IWT.

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

The illegal trade in wildlife is a serious organised crime and an utter abomination which has no place in the twenty-first century.

The criminals who run this trade do more than damage wildlife – they use the same networks of corrupt officials and agencies to commit further crimes, such as drug smuggling and people trafficking, along with financial crimes by laundering their illicit money.

Only by building global consensus and working together will we be able to stop wildlife crime in its tracks, and I am determined that the UK will continue to drive forward this agenda. I am proud to say that London will once again host the next global IWT conference next year.

Watch the Foreign Secretary discuss the corruption and criminality at the heart of the illegal wildlife trade

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Earlier this month the government announced [new plans to ban ivory sales in](#)

[the UK](#).

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

The international community shares a common aim to end merciless poaching and criminal trading – but now is the time to step up decisive action.

Building on the success of past summits to protect critically endangered species, the London conference marks a collective intent to work together, share learnings and forge new partnerships to disrupt the criminality that is destroying flora and fauna on an unprecedented scale.

The UK government has committed £26 million between 2012 and 2020 to fund practical action around the world to help fight the illegal wildlife trade. This includes, to date, 47 projects funded through the Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund.

The UK will host the fourth consecutive conference on IWT on 10 to 11 October 2018.

[Press release: £27 million flood scheme opens in Blackpool](#)

A £27 million scheme to reduce flood risk to 4,800 properties in Blackpool was officially opened today (30 October) by Blackpool Council Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Councillor Fred Jackson and the Chair of the Environment Agency Emma Howard Boyd.

The new defence at Anchorsholme safeguards Blackpool's iconic seafront tramway, which is enjoyed by the thousands of visitors each year who flock to the quintessential British seaside resort. It also helps protect vital infrastructure and a major pumping station.

A kilometre of concrete sea wall has been replaced, maintaining access to the beach, and a new promenade attracts residents and visitors with views over the Irish Sea. The promenade also links the seafront to the nearby Anchorsholme Park, which is being redeveloped. The new defences will help protect Blackpool's tourism and recreational income for the next 100 years.

The scheme forms part of the Fylde Peninsula Coastal Programme, a partnership between the Environment Agency and Wyre, Blackpool and Fylde councils to reduce flood risk to people and develop historic and natural environments. Anchorsholme together with the Rossall project, which is due to be completed

next year, form one of the largest coastal defence projects in the country.

Emma Howard Boyd, Chair of the Environment Agency, said:

Blackpool's iconic beachfront is visited by thousands of families each year. This new coastal defence, delivered in partnership with local councils, will better protect the town's popular tourist attractions as well as nearly 5,000 homes and businesses.

It's great news and demonstrates how our work benefits people and the environment.

Blackpool Council Cabinet Member for Environmental Services, Councillor Fred Jackson, said:

I am delighted that this vital sea defence scheme has been officially opened. We now have a sea wall that will provide much stronger flood protection for years to come.

We also have a wonderful new promenade for all to enjoy which makes access from the seafront to the park and town so much easier.

The project has been both an incredible challenge and an incredible achievement for all the organisations involved.

I am also extremely grateful to the neighbours and the local community for being so patient during the construction work. However, I trust that they are delighted with the final result and the additional regeneration work that is being undertaken.

Floods Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Anchorsholme's new sea wall was made possible thanks not only to £20 million of government funding, but also the huge support of local government and other partners.

The result is brilliant news for the community – regenerating the area and providing better protection for almost 5,000 homes and Blackpool's iconic tram network ahead of winter.

The Blackpool Council scheme has been funded by the Environment Agency through government grant aid and delivered by contractors Balfour Beatty.

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[Policy paper: The Moors at Arne: reducing flood risk and creating habitat](#)

Updated: Link added to exhibition panels used at public drop in October.

This document explains how the Environment Agency, RSPB and Natural England is investigating ways to ensure flood protection is resilient while meeting a legal obligation to provide compensatory habitat to mitigate for losses to conservation sites.

[Press release: Upcoming exercise at Worcester City Centre flood scheme](#)

Updated: Date of exercise changed.

On Monday 6 November, the Environment Agency will be carrying out an exercise

at the Hylton Road flood defence scheme in Worcester city centre.

The exercise will allow the Environment Agency field operations team to test the barrier deployment process, while also carrying out essential maintenance to parts of the demountable flood barriers which are in the highway.

This will mean that there will be some disruption caused during the exercise as Hylton Road will be closed to traffic between 6:30pm and 8:30pm. The path by the river will remain open to pedestrians.

Barry Killner from the Environment Agency said:

Exercises like this are essential for us to test our procedures and ensure an effective operational response, so that we are fully prepared for when flooding does occur. We are also using the closure of Hylton Road as an opportunity to carry out essential maintenance on our flood barriers across the highway, reducing future impacts to the businesses and residents.

Cabinet Member with Responsibility for the Environment, Councillor Tony Miller said:

Testing the processes and carrying out essential maintenance of our flood barriers, can only be a positive thing for the county. It contributes to the county being able to continue to function as normal as possible, during bad weather, lessening the impacts on the local residents and institutions such as schools and businesses.