

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.