

News story: Defra Chief Scientist receives Knighthood

Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor Professor Ian Boyd has today received a Knighthood as part of the Queen's Birthday Honours List (Saturday 8 June 2019). It recognises his crucial role ensuring science and evidence are at the heart of the Government's work to protect our natural environment and his extensive work in marine and polar science and the management of the ocean.

As Defra's Chief Scientific Advisor, Sir Ian has advised Ministers and the department on important issues ranging from air quality, bio-security, and disease and water quality since being appointed in 2012.

He has BSc and DSc degrees for the University of Aberdeen, a PhD from Cambridge University and has received prizes for his research including the Scientific Medal of the Zoological Society of London, the Bruce Medal for Polar Science from the Royal Society of Edinburgh and The Polar Medal awarded by Her Majesty The Queen. He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh.

In response to this honour, Professor Sir Ian Boyd said:

I am delighted to have been honoured in this way and would like to extend my gratitude to the Queen for this recognition, as well as my teams at Defra and St Andrews who both do such important work.

Throughout my life I have always tried to do those things I found interesting and that might make a difference and I am very proud of what we have been able to achieve.

During his seven years at Defra, Sir Ian has led on a wide range of important work – chairing the Project Board for the latest projections of the UK's climate, delivering key reports on Waste and Resource productivity, and the Future of the Seas, which have underpinned UK policy change.

He was also instrumental in returning a safe environment in Salisbury through his chairmanship of the Decontamination Science Advisory Group as a key response to the chemical attack in 2018. He has also led on the UK's strategy for eradicating bovine tuberculosis.

Defra Permanent Secretary Tamara Finkelstein said:

I would like to extend my warmest congratulations to Ian on this well-deserved honour, and thank him for his inspiring work for the department over the past seven years.

Ian has been instrumental in a wide range of pioneering work during this time, from tackling TB to cleaning up our seas, and it is great to see his efforts being recognised in this way.

Professor Sir Ian Boyd was formerly Director of the Scottish Oceans Institute at the University of St Andrews and the Sea Mammal Research Unit, a partner institute of the Natural Environment Research Council from 2001-2012. He is now Professor in Biology at the University of St Andrews.

Much of his career was spent in marine and polar science when he worked for the British Antarctic Survey from 1987- 2001 where his interests were focussed on the behavioural and physiological ecology of Antarctic seals and the ecology and management of the Southern Ocean.

He was Chief Scientist for a US Navy study examining the behavioural responses of whales to military sonar and he was a co-developer of environmental risk management procedures used by the Royal Navy. He served on two enquiries in to the future of Scottish Fisheries and the implications of Common Fisheries Policy reform for the Scottish Fishing industry and was a member of an international task force which recommended a global 50 per cent reduction in the level of fishing for some of the planet's most abundant fish species.