

PM commits to protect 30% of UK land in boost for biodiversity

The Prime Minister is committing today (Monday 28 September) to protect 30% of the UK's land by 2030.

Existing National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other protected areas already comprise approximately 26% of land in England. An additional 4% – over 400,000 hectares, the size of the Lake District and South Downs national parks combined – will be protected to support the recovery of nature.

The government will work with the Devolved Administrations to agree an approach across the UK, and with landowners and civil society to explore how best to increase the size and value of our protected land.

The announcement comes as the Prime Minister is set to sign the Leaders Pledge for Nature at a virtual United Nations event later today, committing to put nature and biodiversity on a road to recovery by 2030.

Boris Johnson will warn that countries must act now to reverse devastating biodiversity loss and prevent more species from being lost forever, with a 68% decline in global wildlife populations since 1970 alone.

Addressing the virtual signing ceremony today, the Prime Minister will say:

We must turn these words into action and use them to build momentum, to agree ambitious goals and binding targets.

We must act now – right now. We cannot afford dither and delay because biodiversity loss is happening today and it is happening at a frightening rate. Left unchecked, the consequences will be catastrophic for us all.

Extinction is forever – so our action must be immediate.

The Leaders Pledge for Nature commits world leaders to take ten urgent actions, including on sustainable food production, ending the illegal wildlife trade and implementing nature-based solutions for climate change.

The UK has played a key role in negotiating the Pledge, alongside partners such as Costa Rica and the EU, and is now driving the campaign to bring other countries on board.

The government has already led, since 2019, the Global Ocean Alliance promoting a target to protect 30% of the ocean by 2030. The Alliance now has 30 countries signed up, with Guatemala joining this week.

It will now support the same commitment to protect land – the 30 by 30 campaign – and champion it with other countries as part of the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People.

The government has committed significant new investment to support environmental enhancement and protection in England through the Nature for Climate Fund and the new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme.