

Sweden joins UK ocean protection campaign

Sweden has become the latest nation to join the UK's Global Ocean Alliance to help drive urgent action to safeguard the ocean and protect its precious wildlife.

Increasing sea temperatures, deoxygenation, acidification, habitat loss, overfishing and pollution are all damaging the world's marine environments, threatening marine life and habitats. The UK-led international coalition aims to tackle these impacts and safeguard at least 30 per cent of the global ocean in Marine Protected Areas by 2030.

The newest member of the Alliance was officially welcomed by the International Environment Minister, Zac Goldsmith, during a keynote speech at [WWF's](#) 'Blue Road to Glasgow' ocean conference today (Wednesday 19 February). Speaking at the event ahead of [COP26](#) in Glasgow later this year, Minister Goldsmith set out the UK's ambition to make our ocean more resilient through this global alliance and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that can contribute to warming ocean temperatures.

In the 2020 Year of Climate Action, the UK is taking a world-leading approach to marine conservation. As well as being the first country to commit to net-zero emissions by 2050, the UK led the call for a [global 30 per cent ocean protection target at the 2018 United Nations General Assembly](#) – and countries from Belize to Belgium are backing the initiative, as part of a nature-based solutions to improve ocean resilience.

International Environment Minister, Zac Goldsmith, said:

I'm grateful to WWF for hosting this important discussion as we advance ocean action ahead of COP26. We are on track to have more than half of UK waters protected by 2020 – and as custodians of the fifth largest marine estate in the world, it's right that we continue to lead the way on this issue.

But we cannot act alone. That's why I am delighted to welcome Sweden as the latest country to join our 30by30 coalition, and I encourage every nation to join us. We will continue to call for more countries to protect at least 30% of the ocean by 2030 so that we can safeguard the ocean for generations to come.

Swedish Minister for Environment and Climate, Isabella Lövin, said:

I applaud the UK for taking the leadership in advancing this

ambitious global goal for marine conservation. Sweden together with Fiji, hosted the first UN ocean conference in 2017, and we firmly believe we need more international cooperation and substantially increased ambitions to help our ocean survive under the increasing pressures of overfishing, pollution and climate change.

We look forward to working together with the UK to see the 30by30 target reflected within the Convention for Biological Diversity and ensuring that the current negotiations to establish a new Treaty to protect biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction can deliver this outcome.

Katie White, Executive Director of Advocacy and Campaigns for WWF, said:

We cannot win the fight against climate change without restoring our ocean. Yet we're overfishing, polluting our waters and destroying vital marine habitats. We applaud the Government's commitment to global ocean leadership today, which is a good first step on the road to a truly world-leading UK plan for ocean recovery.

The UK is at the forefront of marine protection With 357 Marine Protected Areas. Last year the government designated 41 new Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs), spanning almost 12,000 square kilometres – an area almost eight times the size of Greater London – for a total of 91 MCZs. This means that 40% of English waters are designated as marine protection areas – setting an example for the rest of the world to follow.

At the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019, the UK Prime Minister [announced a Global Ocean Alliance of countries in initial support of the 30by30 target](#). Countries that have signed up so far include: Belgium, Belize, Costa Rica, Finland, Gabon, Kenya, Nigeria, Palau, Portugal, Seychelles, Sweden and Vanuatu.

This year, the UK Government will invite all countries to sign up to this ambition, with the aim that 30by30 marine protection target will be agreed as part of a new global biodiversity framework at the Convention on Biological Diversity Conference of Parties in October 2020. This would go far further than the current target set at 10%.

On the WWF ocean conference:

- The “Blue Road to Glasgow, COP26, and beyond” was a WWF conference held on Wednesday 19 February at the Living Planet Centre in Woking. Leading environment and marine NGOs explored ways to further advance climate action and ocean protection ahead of COP26 in Glasgow later this year.
- The event links to the [WWF's Global Futures Report](#), published last week, which shows the overwhelming economic impacts from loss of nature, and

highlights that ocean recovery action is needed to bring our waters back to life for people, climate and nature.

On the 30by30 initiative:

- A Defra Video on the 30by30 initiative, narrated by Sting, is available on [YouTube](#).