

[Press release: UK pledges protection for corals](#)

The UK has joined a global battle to safeguard the world's coral reefs from climate change and rising sea temperatures, Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey announced today.

International work to protect these vital marine habitats is gathering momentum as coral reefs come under increasing pressure from climate change and human activity – and today the UK officially joined the Coral Reef Life Declaration, committing to safeguard coral reefs and bolster scientific research into the threats they face.

The announcement comes just one week ahead of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, where member states will gather in London to agree further global measures to protect our oceans.

From Australia's iconic Great Barrier Reef, to 8,000 year-old cold-waters corals off the coast of the UK, the countries of the Commonwealth account for nearly half the world's coral reefs – and over 250 million people across the Commonwealth depend directly on coral reefs for food and income.

Speaking from the National Oceanography Centre in Southampton, where High Commissioners and members of the UK's science community gathered today to celebrate marine science across the Commonwealth, the Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

Few people know the waters around the UK contain riches to rival the tropics – with our waters home to a vast array of cold water coral reefs that protect important marine life.

Through tapping into the UK's world-leading marine science and working with our partners across the Commonwealth, we will help to safeguard this vital habitat and protect our oceans for future generations.

The [Coral Reef Life Declaration was launched by Prince Albert II of Monaco](#) at the Our Ocean conference in Malta in October last year to encourage countries to come together to protect coral reefs. So far 12 countries have signed the declaration, including Australia, Fiji and the Seychelles.

The UK's waters are home to cold-water corals over 8,000 years old, with the only known coral reef in English waters protected as a Marine Conservation Zone (MCZ).

The [Canyons MCZ](#), located off the Cornish coast, covers an area of more than 650 km² and was designated in 2013 to protect the cold-water corals found there. There are also extensive reefs off the west coast of Scotland where

there are seven Marine Protected Areas safeguarding this fragile habitat from damage.

The UK's Overseas Territories also hold a huge array of tropical and cold water coral reefs. Through our [Blue Belt](#) programme we are currently on track to protect over four million square kilometres of ocean across the Overseas Territories by 2020, working with local communities to protect the coral species within.

This year has also been made the International Year of the Reef by the International Coral Reef Initiative – the leading organisation dedicated to protecting these habitats.

[World news story: Visit of British scientists highlights increased scientific collaboration between UK and Peru](#)

More than 20 scientists from research institutions across the UK travelled to Peru to meet their Peruvian counterparts and identify opportunities for further collaboration.

The visit's programme, developed in the context of the Newton-Paulet Fund, will advance understanding of Peru's receding tropical glaciers and its impact on the country's water supply. The results of the programme are also expected to provide greater understanding about the risks of glacier melt as a natural disaster and how to create mitigation strategies against them.

The scientists participated in a joint workshop on "Peruvian Glacial Retreat and its Impact on Water Security and Resilience to Natural Hazards", organised by CONCYTEC (Peru) and the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC). At the workshop, they highlighted the importance of Peru's glaciers for the international scientific community.

"Having 20 scientists from British research institutions here, with great experience in the dynamics of glaciers from different mountain regions of the world, demonstrates the importance of Peruvian glaciers to the international scientific community and the awareness of the impact of climate change", said the President of CONCYTEC, Dr. Fabiola León-Velarde.

Colin Gray, Charge d'Affaires of the British Embassy said: "In order to tackle a variety of global challenges, such as climate change, we need scientific research to be an essential part of the solution, and we need to work on these solutions together. That is why it is great to see so many

Peruvian and British researchers collaborating, learning from each other, and working together to better understand the impact of receding glaciers. This group has important contributions to make.”

As part of the programme, the British scientists travelled to see the glaciers of Huaraz and the Palcacocha lake on 21 and 22 March, together with experts of the National Institute of Glacier Research and Mountain Ecosystems (INAIGEM).

Glaciers in the Peruvian Andes provide water to surrounding communities for agriculture, human consumption, hydroelectricity, and industry. However, their surface area has reduced some 20% in the last 30 years. Many glaciers in Peru are sources of fresh water for coastal areas characterised by their arid climate and low rainfall.

On the Newton-Paulet Fund:

These activities are part of the Newton-Paulet Fund, the UK’s most important investment in Peru in science and innovation. It allows Peruvian and British scientists to work together to find solutions to challenges in economic development and social welfare through collaboration in science and innovation, in Peru and across the world.

The joint fund of US\$26 million will be invested in areas such as health, specifically malnutrition and anaemia; water, including but not limited to the effects of tropical glaciers melting, and biodiversity.

On the support of the UK Space Agency:

In addition, the UK Space Agency recently announced that it will provide more than US\$3.7 million to support Peru in satellite research to reduce vulnerabilities from environmental disasters, using UK expertise and cutting-edge technology. The UK Space Agency’s International Partnership Programme will use remote sensing data to allow for more effective monitoring of the dams, and for quicker action to be taken to avoid the tailings dams failures.

Tailing dams are earth embankments used to store toxic mine waste and effluent which can be more than 100m high. Their rate of failure is high, due to poor design regulations and less rigorous construction methods than for normal water-retaining dams.

[Press release: Wickham man fined](#)

£3,000 for allowing the dumping of waste at Firgrove Lane

Joe Keet of Firgrove Lane, Wickham, Hants, has been fined £3,000 for knowingly permitting the deposit of controlled waste at Firgrove Lane, following a trial at Portsmouth Magistrates Court.

Jasper Smith and Phillip Jenkins, who brought some of the waste to the site, also pleaded guilty at Portsmouth Magistrates Court on 18 December 2017, where Mr Smith was fined £333 and Mr Jenkins £121, and they shared the £300 costs.

Joe Keet was fined £3,000 with a £170 victim surcharge and £1,904.75 costs after being found guilty by magistrates of knowingly allowing the deposit of controlled waste without the correct permit. This included construction and demolition waste, household clearance and commercial waste, waste wood, furniture, grab bags, black sacks of domestic waste, underlay and insulation.

Mike O'Neil, Environment Manager said:

Joe Keet's actions showed a blatant disregard for the environment. In cases like this, where the actions of individuals threaten to undermine legitimate businesses, we have no hesitation in prosecuting those involved. We, in fact, previously prosecuted Mr Keet in May 2016.

To ensure that the right waste gets to the right place, we encourage the public and businesses to check that their waste carrier is registered on Gov.UK and to ask to see a copy of the waste transfer note for the waste. If possible take a photo of the note on your phone.

Ends

Notes to Editor:

Mr Keets was prosecuted under Section 33(1)(a) and (6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended)

Mr Smith and Mr Jenkins were prosecuted under section 34(1) and 34(6) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990

All media enquiries: 0800 141 2743

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Or email us at southeastpressofficer@environment-agency.gov.uk

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World news story: UK Environment Ministers visits Uganda ahead of CHOGM

UK Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey this week visited Uganda to discuss the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting and see local work to reduce plastic use and fight the international illegal wildlife trade.

The Minister's visit on Thursday 5 and Friday 6 April comes a fortnight before the start of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held in London on 19-20 April 2018.

During the Minister's visit to Uganda she met Dr Mary Kitutu, the Ugandan State Minister for the Environment. The Ministers discussed the upcoming CHOGM as an opportunity for countries to work together to tackle environmental issues such as marine plastics under the CHOGM ambition of 'Delivering a Sustainable Future'.

At the Uganda Breweries Limited brewery in Luzira, owned by Diageo a leading British beverage firm, the Minister saw the brewery's work to reduce their impact on the environment through reducing waste and improving recycling.

The Minister also met Ugandan Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Sam Kutesa and visited the Nile Basin Initiative secretariat in Entebbe.

The Minister spent time at Murchison Falls National Park to understand more about how the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) are working to protect Uganda's diverse wildlife and ecosystems. The Minister met UWA rangers who have benefited from anti-poacher training provided by the UK Military. The Minister visited the park in the same week that the UK Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, announced that the UK would introduce a ban on ivory sales. The Minister highlighted the UK's ambition to deliver a step change in the global fight against the illegal wildlife trade as a transnational crime and threat to endangered species. The UK will host an Illegal Wildlife Trade conference on the 10-11 October 2018.

UK Minister for the Environment, Thérèse Coffey said:

The total ban on ivory sales puts the UK at the forefront of global efforts to address the drastic decline in the elephant population, demonstrating our belief that the abhorrent ivory trade should become a thing of the past.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue and many others with the Ugandan Government and I hope through this continued dialogue we can further continue the successful partnership of our two countries.

Notice: Queen scallop seasonal closure

The Marine Management Organisation (MMO) has introduced a seasonal closure between 1 April 2018 and 30 June 2018 on fishing for queen scallops in the Irish Sea (ICES are VIIa) and waters West of Scotland (ICES area VIa) for conservation reasons. This closure will be enacted each year until further notice.

The action is designed to protect the stocks from fishing during the spawning period and was supported by respondents to a [UK wide consultation](#) held between 11 October 2016 and 2 January 2017 by Marine Scotland.

If you have any further queries please contact the MMO on 0300 123 1032.