

Press release: Waste site operation to protect workers and environment

The Environment Agency has joined forces with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in the North East to carry out combined visits to check waste sites aren't flouting important legislation.

This ongoing multi-agency approach aims to improve working practices on regulated sites.

The joint initiative, named Operation Hercules, focuses on sites that recycle, process or store waste, from scrap vehicles to general household waste. Operators use a variety of processes and equipment to store, sort and process waste which have the potential to expose workers to risks to health and safety.

The aim of these visits is two-fold; to make sure the sites are operating within the conditions of their Environmental Permit to protect the environment and community, while ensuring the health and safety of workers isn't put at risk.

Carla Metcalf, Waste Specialist for the Environment Agency, said:

We manage our permitted sites every single day to ensure they are operating within the law, to protect the environment and to minimise impact on the local community.

Health and safety is paramount when our officers are visiting sites and officers regularly contact HSE if they feel a site is unsafe.

These joint operations are a really good opportunity to share knowledge with other agencies and mean we look at the site from different perspectives, ensuring any issues impacting on the environment and community can be looked at together with site safety.

Inspector Victoria Wise from the Health and Safety Executive added:

In the last five years 39 workers and 11 members of the public have been killed because of work activity in the sector. The main causes of death are people being run over or struck by a moving vehicle. A high number of workers in this industry are also exposed to processes that cause irreversible ill health conditions.

During the last joint regional initiative HSE found all eight sites visited to be in significant contravention of health and safety law. HSE and the Environment Agency have therefore agreed to run

the initiative again throughout this region in November.

Joint operations such as this mean we can work alongside the Environment Agency to make sure those responsible for the sites are not exposing workers, members of the public and the environment to harm from the operations they undertake.

During the last series of joint visits at the back end of 2016, HSE and the Environment Agency attended eight sites across the region.

Statutory guidance: Designation of 'main rivers': guidance to the Environment Agency

This guidance sets out the basis on which the Environment Agency should decide whether or not a river or watercourse is treated as a 'main river'.

Main rivers are usually larger rivers and streams, designated as such, and shown on the [Main River Map](#). The Environment Agency carries out maintenance, improvement or construction work on main rivers to manage flood risk. Other rivers are called 'ordinary watercourses'. Lead local flood authorities, district councils and internal drainage boards carry out flood risk management work on ordinary watercourses.

Notice: Yorkshire Water Services Ltd and the Environment Agency: Notice of proposed adaptive management trial

The Environment Agency consult the public on certain applications for the abstraction and impoundment of water.

These notices explain:

- what the application is about
- which Environment Agency offices you can visit to see the application documents on the public register
- when you need to comment by

National Statistics: Pesticide usage survey: orchard crops in the United Kingdom, 2016

Report on pesticide usage during the 2015 to 2016 growing season on orchard crops, including:

- dessert apples (Cox and others)
- culinary apples (Bramley & others)
- cider apples & perry pears
- pears
- plums
- cherries
- other orchard crops including nuts

Press release: Landscape protection confirmed for Cornwall's rare species

Rare species like the marsh fritillary butterfly and willow tit bird have been given a conservation boost today, with Natural England officially recognising the Mid Cornwall Moors as one of the country's most important wildlife sites.

Following a four-month public consultation, Natural England has confirmed the designation of the Mid Cornwall Moors as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), giving the area legal protection for its important wildlife and habitats.

This brings certainty and purpose to conservation work in Mid Cornwall, where the rich mix of heathland, woodland, and wildflower meadows provides a vital sanctuary for wildlife.

Wesley Smyth, manager of Devon, Cornwall and Isles of Scilly team in Natural England, said:

This rich and diverse landscape of Mid Cornwall is home to an array of rare plants and insects, alongside one of the highest densities of willow tit breeding pairs in England.

That's why we've designated this area as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, recognising its vital contribution to our natural heritage and helping its precious wildlife thrive for generations to come.

Natural England is working with landowners and local organisations, such as the Cornwall Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation, to create the perfect conditions for the rare marsh fritillary butterfly. With further help from the Eden Project and Highways England, swathes of devil's-bit scabious – the main food plant for the marsh fritillary caterpillars – have been grown and planted alongside the A30 road corridor.

Philip Hambly, Chairman of Cornwall Butterfly Conservation (CBC), said:

CBC have been working with Natural England in order to help protect the rare Marsh Fritillary butterfly in Mid Cornwall, and this confirmation of SSSI protection will help future conservation efforts. If we want to protect our rare species such as this, we must manage their habitats carefully and make sure that we are doing so on a landscape scale.

As part of the area's newly-designated status, another project seeks to protect the habitat of the willow tit, which has virtually disappeared from large parts of the UK and whose national population has declined by an estimated 81% since the mid-1990s.

The Mid Cornwall Moors SSSI merges six former SSSIs that previously dotted the landscape around the A30 and east of Indian Queens. The new designation has extended those boundaries and protects around 50% more countryside, connecting important habitats and helping wildlife to withstand pressures from climate change.