

Rt Hon Dr Thérèse Coffey, Secretary of State
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
2 Marsham St, London SW1P 4DF

Sent by email

23 June 2023

Protecting 30% of England's land and sea by 2030

Dear Secretary of State,

The Government's commitment to manage 30% of England's land and sea for nature by 2030 is very positive.

Strong and clear criteria for what should be included in 30x30 are essential. If the bar is set too low in order to count existing protected areas, regardless of their condition or effectiveness, then the purpose of 30x30 will be undermined.

Our view is that long-term protection, positive management for nature, and regular monitoring demonstrating good or recovering ecological condition are essential criteria for inclusion in 30x30.

Application of the criteria then points toward the additional regulatory and management activities needed to achieve the target. For example, protected landscapes should not be counted toward 30x30 in their current form because they lack clear plans and purposes for nature recovery, but more of these areas would contribute if Lord John Randall's amendment to the Levelling Up Bill were agreed when the Bill returns to parliament. Similarly, we do not think that SSSIs should be counted if they are in unfavourable condition with no sign of recovery, but an improved system of assessing and monitoring progress toward favourable condition would ensure these areas are contributing to delivery.

Strong criteria would also enable the development of a clear pipeline of potential sites for future inclusion in the target, once they meet the grade, for example through better management and a regular programme of monitoring of Local Wildlife Sites.

Such a robust approach would bring more of England's most important land and sea for nature into long-term effective management and ensure these areas are delivering their potential for biodiversity.

We would like to offer our support in developing the 30x30 criteria, drawing on the land experience and scientific monitoring experience of many of our members.

We hope very much that you will be able to accept our offer of support on the design and delivery of this essential agenda. We would be delighted to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely,

Jim Foster, Conservation Director, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
Kit Stoner, CEO, Bat Conservation Trust
Dr Daniela Russi, Senior Policy Manager, British Ecological Society
Dr Mark Jones, Head of Policy, Born Free Foundation

Gill Perkins, CEO, Bumblebee Conservation Trust
Russel Hobson, Director of Evidence and Policy, Butterfly Conservation
Dr Rose O'Neill, CEO, Campaign for National Parks
Jason Reeves, Head of Policy, Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management
Kathy Wormald, CEO, Froglife
David Bunt, CEO, Institute for Fisheries Management
Jill Nelson, CEO, People's Trust for Endangered Species
Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary, Open Spaces Society
Jenny Hawley, Policy Manager, Plantlife
Alastair Driver, Director, Rewilding Britain
Fiona Richards, Operations Director England, The Conservation Volunteers
Dr Carla Boreham, Director of Campaigns and Policy, Whale and Dolphin Conservation
Abi Bunker, Director of Conservation and External Affairs, The Woodland Trust
Matthew Gould, CEO, Zoological Society of London
Dr Richard Benwell, CEO, Wildlife and Countryside Link

Replies can be sent to: matt@wcl.org.uk