

## E-bulletin May 2015

Welcome to Link's May 2015 e-bulletin. See below for this month's top stories and updates from each of our working groups. If you would like to subscribe to our e-bulletin or submit news items, please contact [Maria](#).



### **100 voluntary organisations unite to #DefendNature**

On 30 April, the European Commission launched a 12 week consultation on the Habitats and Birds Directives as part of its 'REFIT' review of the Directives. On 12 May, 100 UK Joint Link NGOs, coordinated by Wildlife and Countryside Link, issued a joint [position statement](#) and [press release](#) outlining their position on the review. The position statement also summarised the extensive evidence set out in the questionnaire submitted by the Joint Links to the Commission on 30 April. The campaign launch attracted national news attention with coverage in newspapers, TV and radio. Link's Director, Dr Elaine King, outlined Link member's views in an interview with Farming Today, while the group's Chair, Kate Jennings, appeared on Radio 4's Today Programme discussing the review and the potential threats to nature, business and people.

As of 1 June, the [naturealert](#) online tool has received over 173,929 responses from EU citizens who are committed to defending the natural environment and the laws that protect it.

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### **International Whaling Commission, Scientific Committee annual meeting**

From 19 May to 3 June, members of Link's Whales Working Group are participating in the International Whaling Commission's annual meeting of its Scientific Committee in San Diego, California as members of the UK's Government delegation. A wide range of issues relating to whales, dolphins and porpoises are being discussed including Japan's new controversial proposal for continued scientific permit whaling in the Southern Ocean. Increasing environmental threats to cetaceans such as marine debris and climate change is also on the agenda.

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### **Water 2020 – changes to sewerage and water regulation approach**

On 18 May, the Blueprint for Water Group met with Ofwat to discuss their Water 2020 Programme and to help identify where a change in sewerage and water regulation is needed and how this change might be made. The two groups discussed the development and delivery of a 2019 Price Review using an efficient methodology which would reflect the lessons learnt from the 2014 Price Review. Ofwat will publish further information on sewerage and water regulations in the summer, which will then be followed by a stakeholder consultation on approaches to regulation.



### **Working Group meeting**

On Wednesday 27 May, the Agriculture Working Group met to discuss the group's emerging strategy for the next five years. The group also discussed the implications of the new Government for agricultural policy, Countryside Stewardship and farm inspections.



### **Supporting Link's groups**

The Animal Welfare Strategy Group (AWSG) continued to engage with Link's other groups this month, encouraging discussion and information sharing on welfare issues and promoting cross working. During April, representatives from the AWSG attended a meeting with Link's Invasive Non-Native Species Group (INNS) to offer support and advice on welfare issues within the group's working area.

The AWSG has also worked alongside Link's Legal Strategy Group to formulate a workshop for Link members featuring talks from senior legal and welfare experts on a wide variety of relevant subjects. The purpose of the event is to provide all of Link's groups with access to expertise in these areas.



Link seeks to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by working with Government to ensure Biodiversity 2020 is fully implemented. Specifically, we engage with Defra and Natural England on governance issues, communications and the Biodiversity 2020 delivery plan. Please contact [Elaine King](#) for more information.



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### **10 member state consultation**

The next phase in the REFIT process comprises a detailed 10 member state consultation which takes place at Defra on 1 June. Representatives from the Commission and the consultants carrying out the review will interview a selection of the 100 Joint Link NGOs who supported and contributed to the evidence response.



## **Invasive Non-Native Species**

### **INNS Working Group Meeting**

Link's Invasive Non Native Species Group (INNS) convened on 26 May. The group discussed its work plan for 2015-2016 and the how the group can engage with Link's Animal Welfare Strategy Group. The group also discussed the Infrastructure Bill review of schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the consultation due to be published this month. Other items discussed included: developing Link's official INNS principles; the EU Invasive Alien Species (IAS) Regulation; and the new International Maritime Organisation Polar Code.

The INNS Group will convene again on 23 July.



## **Legal Strategy**

### **Legal Strategy Group Meeting**

Link's Legal Strategy Group is currently working alongside the Animal Welfare Strategy Group to organise a workshop for Link members. The workshop will involve senior legal and welfare experts delivering presentations to Link members on a variety of overarching topics which are interesting and relevant to all Link's groups. The purpose of the event is to provide all of Link's groups with access to expertise in these areas.

The Group will meet again in early July.



## **Marine**

### **Marine Working Group meeting**

On Monday 15 June, the Marine Working Group will meet to discuss its future activities in the context of a new Government. The group will also be holding a quarterly meeting with Natural England on Wednesday 17 June and where they will discuss the designation, management and conservation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs).

### **Marine Conservation Zone consultation**

On 24 April, the Marine Working Group submitted its [response](#) to the [Defra consultation](#) on its second tranche of Marine Conservation Zones. The group welcomed the consultation as

another step in the process to deliver an effective and ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in UK seas. However, the group expressed disappointment at the continued lack of acknowledgement as to the important role these protected areas play in the sustainable management of our seas and the multiple benefits arising from them. The response was supported by 17 Link members.

### **Marine Strategy Framework Directive consultation**

On 24 April, the Joint Links (Northern Ireland Marine Task Force, Scottish Environment Link, Wales Environment Link and Wildlife and Countryside Link) submitted its [response](#) to the [Defra consultation](#) on the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) Proposals for a Programme of Measures. The group pointed out that, in order to achieve Good Environmental Status, and therefore meet its statutory obligations, the UK Government must fully implement existing measures outlined in the consultation and introduce a series of additional measures.



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