



PRESS RELEASE

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Celebrating the Marine and Coastal Access Act: a giant leap forward for UK sea life

This evening a coalition of the UK's most influential environmental groups is hosting an event to celebrate the success of a decade-long campaign to protect the UK's seas.

The special evening at The London Aquarium is organised by Wildlife and Countryside Link's Marine Task Force, in celebration of the passage into law (on 12 November 2009) of the Marine and Coastal Access Act. Members of the Marine Task Force campaigned for ten years for better protection for the UK's spectacular array of marine wildlife, and for effective management of our seas to benefit the environment and sea users.

Kate Humble, presenter of the BBC's Springwatch and Autumnwatch series and the Secretary of State for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon Hilary Benn MP, will both be speaking at the event.

Joan Edwards, Chair of the Marine Task Force said: *"The Act is an incredibly important milestone in the management of the UK's seas. It will establish a comprehensive marine planning and licensing system, improve the way our fisheries are managed and introduce new tools to protect marine habitats and wildlife."*

She continued: *"Ten years ago, we would never have believed that we'd secure such a comprehensive Act. It's been a long time coming, but it's been worth the wait. The next challenge is to make sure that the new measures are brought swiftly and effectively into force. This evening we will set out our Vision of what needs to be done."*

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Editor's notes

- The 11 environmental groups supporting the event are members of Wildlife and Countryside Link's Marine Task Force. They are: Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust, Council for British Archaeology, Greenpeace, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Marine Conservation Society, The Ramblers, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society, The Wildlife Trusts, WWF–UK, Zoological Society of London.
- Wildlife and Countryside Link's Vision for the future of our seas is for: "Healthy, well-managed seas, where wildlife is flourishing and ecosystems are protected, connected and thriving". Further information about the Vision is available at: http://www.wcl.org.uk/marine_vision.asp

