

## E-bulletin September 2014

Welcome to Link's September 2014 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 [Morwenna](#).



### Top Stories

#### House of Lords EU Committee inquiry

Link has submitted a written response to an [inquiry](#) into European marine cooperation conducted by the House of Lords European Union Sub-Committee on Agriculture, Fisheries, Environment and Energy.

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#### Marine Charter Press Statement

Link released a [press statement](#) following the publication of the Government's response to the Environmental Audit Committee's report on Marine Protected Areas. Link's statement highlighted the [cross-party support](#) for the swift designation of a representative and well managed ecologically coherent network of Marine Protected Areas in UK seas.

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#### Link response to technical consultation on planning

Members of the working group responded to a lengthy technical consultation on planning set up to streamline the planning system. The consultation puts forward a range of proposals to further improve the planning system and build upon the improvements already made by refining the use of planning conditions and applications.

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#### Joint Link's Update

For a quarterly update from our three sister Links [click here](#).

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### Agriculture

#### Response to cross compliance consultation

In September, Link [responded](#) to Defra's request for views on the proposed cross compliance rules, and associated guidance, under the new CAP programme that will apply from January 2015. The new Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAECs) are:

- GAEC 4 – minimum soil cover
- GAEC 5 – minimum land management reflecting site specific conditions to limit erosion
- GAEC 6 – maintenance of soil organic matter including a ban on arable stubble burning

Link's aim is to ensure that the new GAECs are enforceable and provide a strong level of environmental protection.

### Farm visits

Link will be meeting with Defra on 22 October to discuss the deregulation work stream which is looking at reducing the burden of farm inspections. For more information on this meeting please contact [Kirsten](#).



### Indicators meeting

Link met with Defra on 23 September to discuss the biodiversity indicator on UK NGO spend. This was a very positive meeting and Defra will be sending Link a draft of the report before its publication in December for our information.

### Terrestrial Biodiversity Group

Link was represented at the TBG meeting on 10 September. Items on the agenda included the reports on the outcomes for *Biodiversity 2020* and woodlands and Forestry Commission member contributions on biodiversity activity.



The Link INNS Task and Finish Group came to a close at the end of June. The INNS work will continue but primarily outside Link. For more information about current INNS work please contact Kay Haw at the Woodland Trust: [KayHaw@woodlandtrust.org.uk](mailto:KayHaw@woodlandtrust.org.uk)



### Response to technical consultation

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### Criminal Justice and Courts Bill

Following the debate on Part 4 of the Bill in Committee in the Lords on 30th July, Link's amendment (which aimed to secure a carve out for environmental cases from the scope of the Bill) was withdrawn. On the basis of our briefing, Lord Jones subsequently wrote to Lord Faulks QC (Minister of State for Justice), whose reply confirmed that the Government is re-considering the proposal to expose interveners in judicial review to costs. However, the response also confirmed the Government remains committed to proposals to subject certain individuals and organisations funding JR (who are not party to the case) to costs and that it is currently undertaking a review of the current Aarhus costs rules to identify any "gold-plating". The working group has drafted a response for Lord Jones and will revise its briefing for the next stage of the Bill (Report Stage on 20th

October). It is hoped that group members (such as RSPB and CPRE) will continue to be able to help with PR.

### **Infrastructure Bill**

Clause 16 of the Infrastructure Bill has caused some concern amongst Link members because, as drafted, it could result in species control agreements, and orders to combat invasive non-native species, being applied to species that are extinct in the UK, because they are not currently resident. Furthermore, any native species becoming extinct in the future and species that may naturally colonise our shores under a changing climate would also be classified as non-native. The Bill also defines as non-native certain native species included in Schedule 9 of the 1981.

Following publication of a briefing involving a number of Link members, Baroness Parminter tabled amendments at Committee stage. These were withdrawn after the Minister advised that a consultation would be conducted on a Code of Practice governing how Clause 16 is to be applied. Link members and others are seeking a meeting with the Minister before Report Stage to discuss appropriate amendments to address their concerns. The Infrastructure Bill is yet to pass through the House of Commons so further opportunities will exist to address this issue.

For further information, contact [Sheila Wren](#) and [Richard Benwell](#).



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### **Meetings with Natural England and Defra**

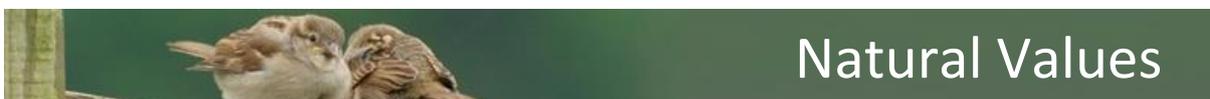
On 22 September Link attended a meeting with representatives from Natural England's Marine Team in Bristol to discuss a range of UK marine conservation issues. On the same day, Link also attended a meeting with Kathleen Cameron, Head of Defra's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) Network Team and John Clorely, Head of Defra's EU and International Marine Biodiversity Team, to discuss the designation and management of UK MPAs.

### **Marine Charter Press Statement**

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### **Environmental Damage Regulations consultation**

At the end of September, Link submitted a [response](#) to [Defra's consultation](#) on amending the Environmental Damage (Prevention and Remediation) Regulations 2009 to transpose Article 38 of the Offshore Safety Directive 2013.



### **The 25 Year Plan**

Link members met with Nick Barter, Head of the Natural Capital Committee Secretariat, on 16 December to discuss members' contributions to the Natural Capital Committee's long term plan (25 years) for maintaining and improving our natural capital. Julian Harlow (Economic Advisor) and Georgina Mace (Professor at University College London) also attended the meeting, representing Defra. Their main interest was to receive well-developed restoration projects and case studies to enable them to improve their portfolio and add further value to their research.



### **Blueprint for Water team meeting**

The Blueprint for Water met to discuss and agree on the new Blueprint for Water website and associated campaign. Kathy and Hannah from WWF also presented the advocacy plan for the River Basin Management Plans (RBMP). The launch of the campaign and website will take place on 10 October to coincide with the RBMP launch.

### **Briefing with Ofwat**

On 8 September members of the Blueprint met with Sonia Brown (Chief Regulation Officer) to be briefed on Ofwat's Draft Determinations. The group also outlined their views on the process. Ofwat highlighted how water companies are planning to reduce water bills without compromising their services to customers. They will continue their engagement with the Blueprint in order to receive further feedback and improve NGO engagement with water companies.



### **Teleconference with the IWC Commissioner**

Link's Whales Group attended a teleconference with Defra's Species Protection Team and the UK IWC Commissioner Nigel Gooding to discuss the resolutions that were put forward at the [International Whaling Commission](#) (IWC) meeting. The UK delegation to the IWC included two Link members, Mark Simmonds (HSI) and Claire Bass (WAP).



### **Wildlife Trade Working Group Meeting**

On 23 September the group held a working group meeting to discuss outcomes of the Standing Committee 65 meeting held 7-11 July in Switzerland. The group also discussed the upcoming general elections and communications of illegal wildlife trade.

### **National Anti-poaching Conference**

Link was represented at the first annual National Anti-poaching conference on 11 September, hosted by the National Gamekeepers Organisation. The event was chaired by Simon Prince, Chief Constable of Dyfed-Powys Police Force, and lead officer on Wildlife and Rural Crime for the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). The aim of the conference was to provide a platform for a range of stakeholders to share expertise and experience of dealing with poaching.



Wildlife and Countryside Link  
89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP  
W: [www.wcl.org.uk](http://www.wcl.org.uk)

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