



House of Commons  
Environmental Audit Committee

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# The UK's footprint on global biodiversity

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Second Report of Session 2021–22

HC 674







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**Second Report of Session 2021–22**

*Report, together with formal minutes relating  
to the report*

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**HC 674**

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## Environmental Audit Committee

The Environmental Audit Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to consider to what extent the policies and programmes of government departments and non-departmental public bodies contribute to environmental protection and sustainable development; to audit their performance against such targets as may be set for them by Her Majesty's Ministers; and to report thereon to the House.

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## Summary

In June 2021 we published our report *Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?* Addressing biodiversity loss in the UK is only half the problem. The actions, decisions and consumption patterns of the UK affect biodiversity globally. If everyone on Earth lived like the average Briton, we would need three planets to meet humanity's demands.

The UK is contributing to a global problem. The world is witnessing the fastest decline in biodiversity in human history. One million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction. China will host the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 where the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework will be set. An initial virtual meeting is scheduled to be held in October 2021 with further in-person negotiations in the following year. At the conference, global goals will be set aimed at bending the curve of biodiversity loss. Unfortunately, none of the previous Aichi biodiversity targets, set ten years ago at COP10 in Japan, have been achieved.

To reverse the trend of biodiversity loss requires urgent and transformative change. To achieve this, developed economies need to lower their total material consumption and waste, and governments and businesses need to take pre-emptive and precautionary actions to avoid, mitigate and remedy the deterioration of nature. The UK has a large role to play in this. The Government has commissioned significant research into the economics of biodiversity and how to reduce the UK's impact on commodity-driven deforestation. As host of COP26, the UK has an opportunity to push for the integration of these findings into climate and biodiversity agreements.

The Government has already demonstrated impressive global leadership on this front, leading the Global Ocean Alliance to protect 30% of the world's oceans, signing the Leaders' Pledge for Nature to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030 and through committing over £3 billion of its International Climate Finance funding to nature-based solutions to climate change. But the UK's consumption patterns remain unsustainable, government performance against its own sustainable procurement policies has been limited, and overseas development assistance that aims to integrate poverty and environment objectives remains rare. We also regret that the Government's international climate finance commitment, including its funding for nature-based solutions, is not new and additional funding, but rather a redirection of the existing and diminished aid budget.

The Government can and must do more if it is to turn its nature pledges into a reality. There are four key areas where Government efforts need to be stepped up: 1) reducing the impact of UK consumption, trade and supply chains on nature; 2) better protecting the UK's Overseas Territories; 3) mainstreaming biodiversity considerations into overseas development assistance; and 4) advocating for a stronger, more ambitious Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity COP15.

To achieve this, we propose a series of recommendations spanning commerce, international development and environment policy and the UK's COP15 negotiating position. We want to highlight the following key recommendations:

- a) The Government should start the process of setting an environmental footprint target, where the UK recognises and seeks to reduce its total material consumption.

- b) Sustainability impact assessments should be conducted on all future trade agreements, and the Government should consider how to deliver environmental net gain in trade deals. Private sector participation in the Wildlife Financial Taskforce should be widened.
- c) The Government must reinstate the Greening Government Commitments for mandatory reporting on sustainable procurement by the end of 2021. As part of the Government Buying Standard all forest-risk commodities should be certified as sustainably produced.
- d) The UK should move to deforestation-free supply chains by making it illegal for UK businesses and the finance sector to use commodities linked to deforestation. At the very least, the finance sector must be included within proposed laws to ban UK companies using commodities linked to illegal deforestation.
- e) Given the importance to global biodiversity that the UK Overseas Territories represent, gaps in the protection must be rectified. Ministers should set out the long-term funding plans for the Government's flagship Blue Belt Programme. Ministers should also set out how landscape scale environmental projects can be funded in Overseas Territories.
- f) Ambition is lacking in the first draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. Before and during COP15 the Government should advocate for the Framework's 2030 mission to be to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030. The species goal should commit to stopping human-induced extinctions and the UNFCCC COP26 and UNCBD COP15 should be better joined together by featuring mutually agreed text on nature-based solutions to climate change in both agreements.
- g) The Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework will be meaningless if it is not implemented. The Government should support a review mechanism like that adopted under the Paris Climate Agreement which encourages countries to ratchet their national targets over time to match global goals. The UK should also push for a dedicated multilateral fund for the UN Convention on Biodiversity.

The Government has committed to leaving a lighter footprint on the global environment. Quite simply, this needs to start happening immediately: or in ten years' time the international community might again find itself failing to meet any of its global biodiversity goals, but with no opportunity to reverse the damage done.

# 1 Introduction

1. In June 2021 we published a report *Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?* The report examined the state of biodiversity in the UK and made recommendations for action to improve domestic biodiversity levels.<sup>1</sup> Addressing biodiversity loss in the UK is only half the issue. The actions, decisions and consumption patterns of the UK affect biodiversity levels globally as well as domestically. This report examines the UK's relationship with international biodiversity loss and evaluates the potential contribution the UK can make to the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems globally.

## Box 1: Biodiversity

The UN Convention on Biological Diversity defines biodiversity as the variability among living organisms from all sources including, inter alia, terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems. In simpler terms, biodiversity refers to the variety of life on Earth.

Source: UN Convention on Biological Diversity, [Article 2. Use of Terms](#) (1992)

2. The world is experiencing a colossal decline in global biodiversity, a trend we detailed in our earlier report. One million animal and plant species are threatened with extinction.<sup>2</sup> Most terrestrial biomes are damaged,<sup>3</sup> and since 1970 there has been a 68 percent decrease in population sizes of mammals, birds, amphibians, reptiles, and fish.<sup>4</sup>

3. It is not too late to change course. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has concluded that through urgent 'transformative change', the trend of continued biodiversity loss can be reversed.<sup>5</sup> To achieve this on a global scale developed economies need to lower their total consumption and waste, and pre-emptive and precautionary actions on the part of governments and businesses alike are necessary to avoid, mitigate and remedy the deterioration of nature.<sup>6</sup>

4. This report examines the UK's international role in delivering the transformative change necessary to reverse biodiversity loss. In this report we examine four aspects of the UK's relationship with global biodiversity:

- a) The UK's consumption patterns, trade arrangements and supply chains;
- b) The state of biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories;
- c) The UK's contribution to international development and conservation; and
- d) The outcomes the UK should advocate at two major international conferences opening in October and November 2021—UNCBD COP15 and UNFCCC COP26.

1 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?](#), HC 136

2 IPBES, [Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), (2019)

3 WWF, [Living Planet Report 2020- Bending the curve of biodiversity loss](#). (2020) p 67

4 WWF, [Living Planet Report 2020- Bending the curve of biodiversity loss](#). (2020)

5 IPBES, [Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), (2019)

6 [Ibid](#)

## Background to the inquiry

5. We launched this inquiry in July 2020. Our objective was to examine the Government's progress in achieving international and domestic biodiversity targets in preparation for the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP15) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). During the inquiry, we also sought to examine the state of biodiversity in the UK, and how the UK could best protect and enhance biodiversity, by examining:

- a) domestic biodiversity policy and action;
- b) how biodiversity factors into the Government's economic decision-making;
- c) the effect UK activities have on biodiversity abroad; and
- d) the outcomes and protections the UK Government should be advocating at COP15.

6. We received 69 written responses and held six public evidence sessions, hearing from 30 witnesses including academics, environmental NGOs, intergovernmental organisations, independent public bodies, Government advisors, farmers and private sector actors from the finance, infrastructure, and food industries. To conclude the oral evidence to the inquiry, we heard from Rt Hon George Eustice MP, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Rt Hon the Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park, Minister for Pacific and the Environment at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office; Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP, Minister for Housing at the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; and Kemi Badenoch MP, then Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury.

7. Our work on this inquiry builds on the Environmental Audit Committee inquiries into *Sustainable Seas*<sup>7</sup> and *Invasive Species*<sup>8</sup> undertaken in previous Parliaments. Given the broad scope of the overall inquiry, we chose to make two reports to the House. In our first report, published in June 2021, we examined biodiversity in the UK and domestic biodiversity policy and action. In this report, we examine the relationship between the UK and global biodiversity loss and the outcomes the UK Government should advocate at COP15 and COP26. The two reports are intended to be read in conjunction.

7 Environmental Audit Committee, Fourteenth Report of Session 2017–19, [Sustainable Seas](#), HC 980

8 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2019, [Invasive Species](#), HC 88

## 2 Consumption, trade and supply chains: the UK's impact on global biodiversity levels

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### Consumption

8. Humanity's unsustainable use of the earth's resources is one of the greatest contributors to global biodiversity loss. International and intercontinental trade routes and supply chains allow the demands of consumers to be met with increasing ease, whilst distancing the consumer from the location where resources have been extracted and thus from the environmental consequences of over-consumption.

9. We examined how the UK can reduce the levels of global environmental degradation attributable to the consumption patterns of UK consumers.

### *Existing UK commitments to sustainable consumption*

10. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals include a goal on responsible consumption (Goal 2:12: Responsible Consumption and Production).<sup>9</sup> This includes objectives for:

- the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources;
- the halving of per capita global food waste at retail and consumer levels and the reduction of food losses along production and supply chains by 2030;
- encouragement to companies to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle;
- the promotion of sustainable public procurement practices; and
- the provision to people everywhere of “the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature”.<sup>10</sup>

11. The UK Government is responsible for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals domestically and for supporting their attainment internationally.<sup>11</sup> The Government told us that environmental sustainability should be at the very heart of global production and trade.<sup>12</sup> In its 25 Year Environment Plan (25 YEP), issued in January 2018, the Government stated its commitment to leaving a lighter footprint on the global environment by enhancing sustainability and, in particular, by reducing the UK's impact on the world's forests.<sup>13</sup> Later in 2018 the Government announced the intention to devise an indicator on the overseas environmental impacts of UK consumption of key commodities as part

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9 United Nations, [‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’](#), accessed 3 September 2021

10 United Nations, [‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’](#), accessed 3 September 2021

11 Department for International Development and Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, [UK and the Sustainable Development Goals](#), accessed 3 September 2021

12 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

13 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

of the 25 YEP indicator framework.<sup>14</sup> At the time of writing, the indicator remained in development.<sup>15</sup> Ministers believe that the indicator has the potential for use in multi-national environmental agreements, in the targeting of Overseas Development Assistance expenditure and in scenario-based modelling to identify the effectiveness of proposed policy solutions.<sup>16</sup>

### *The global impact of UK consumption*

12. In our earlier report we stated that consumption of natural resources is one of the biggest drivers of land conversion, biodiversity loss and carbon emissions at a global scale.<sup>17</sup> 50 per cent of food consumed within the UK comes from overseas.<sup>18</sup> The Global Footprint Network has observed that if everyone on Earth lived like the average Briton, resources equivalent to those on three planets would be required to meet humanity's natural resource demand without destroying nature.<sup>19</sup>

13. A recent study by RSPB and the WWF estimated that for each year from 2016 to 2018 an area equivalent to 88 per cent of the UK's total land area was required to produce the quantity of seven agricultural and forestry commodities (beef and leather, cocoa, palm oil, pulp and paper, rubber, soy and timber) consumed in the UK.<sup>20</sup> The same study found that more than 40 per cent of the UK's overseas land footprint was in countries with high or very high risk of deforestation, weak governance arrangements and poor labour standards. Of particular concern was the source of soy consumed in the UK. More than half (56 per cent) of the UK's soy imports between 2016 and 2018 were in the form of soymeal, a key ingredient of livestock feed. Meeting the UK's annual demand for soy requires around 1.7 million hectares of land—1 per cent of the global area of soy cultivation.<sup>21</sup> Sustainable certification could ameliorate risks to biodiversity levels, but in 2017 the WWF estimated that only 2 per cent of global soy production was certified.<sup>22</sup>

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14 Defra, [Measuring environmental change – draft indicators framework for the 25 Year Environment Plan](#) (December 2018) p 18

15 Defra, [Outcome Indicator Framework for the 25 Year Environment Plan: 2021 Update](#) (June 2021)

16 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

17 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

18 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

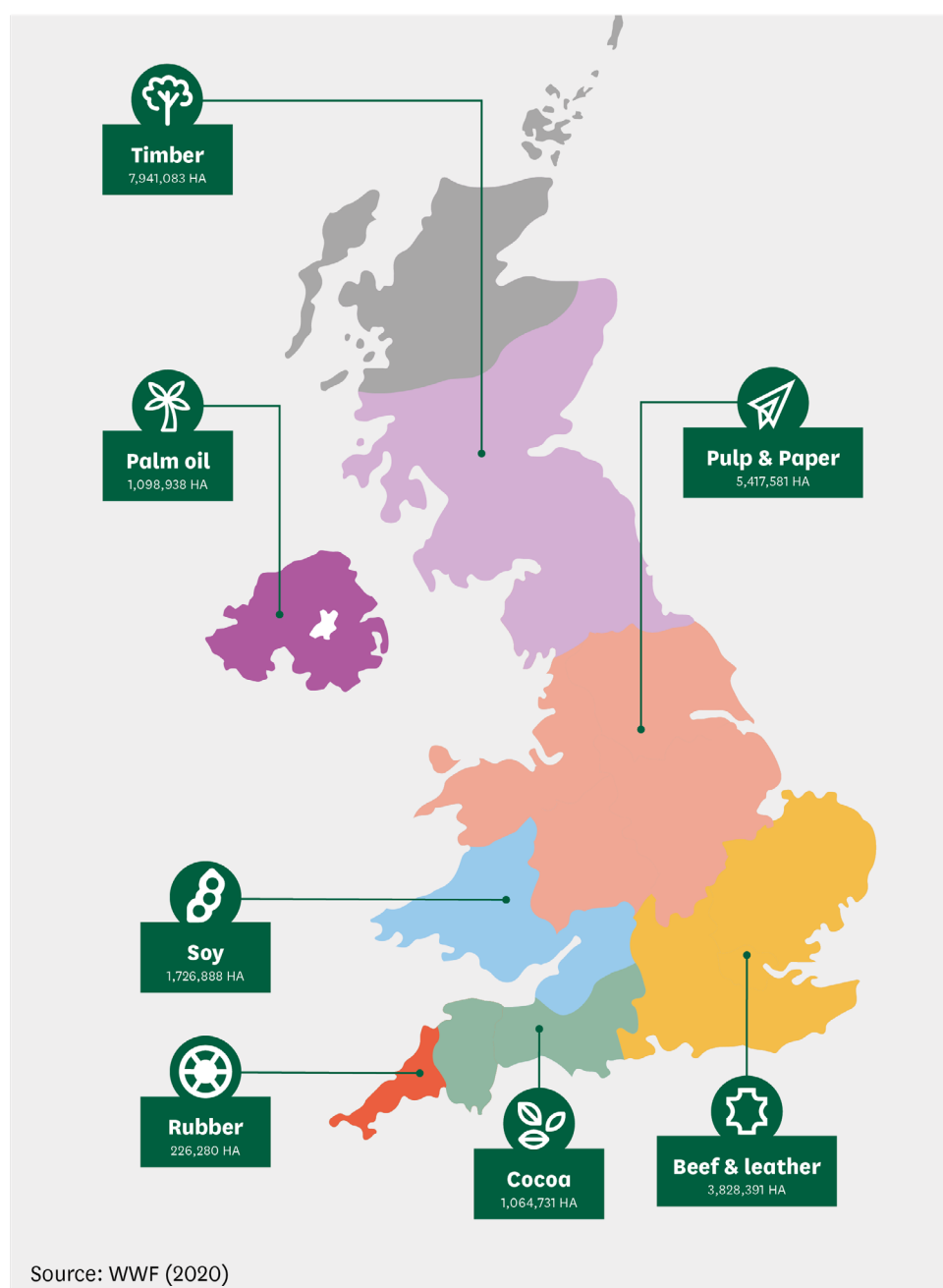
19 Population Matters ([BIO0032](#))

20 WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint](#), (July 2020)

21 [Ibid](#)

22 WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: Understanding the UK's overseas footprint for deforestation-risk commodities](#), (October 2017)

**Figure 1: The UK's land footprint overseas in hectares (HA) for seven commodities superimposed on the UK map for comparison**



Source: WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint](#), (July 2020) p 5

14. The diagram in Figure 2, produced by the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), indicates the projected rate of global biodiversity loss and the range of actions required to tackle it. The IPBES, the CBD Secretariat and WWF all advocate a reduction in overall levels of consumption as one component of the transformative change necessary to arrest the trend towards total biodiversity loss. This action was endorsed in many of the submissions we received, from the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) to University College London's Centre for Biodiversity and Environment

Research.<sup>23</sup> Professor Andy Purvis, Coordinating Lead Author of the IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, set out why trends in consumption needed to be addressed urgently:

...at the moment one of the huge problems is not population growth; it is consumption growth. Yes, the population has doubled, but each person is consuming more than 50% as much again as they would have done 50 years ago. It is not clear that they are any happier, but we have become kind of addicted to consumption of cheap things, economically—but they cost the earth. I think we need to embed the full costs. If we can better align actors with sustainability it also makes it much easier to have targets without worrying about how to enforce them legally, because enlightened self-interest leads you down a sustainable path.<sup>24</sup>

15. Professor Purvis's analysis is similar to the IPBES's global assessment, which highlighted a pressing need to "enable visions of a good quality of life that do not entail ever increasing material consumption."<sup>25</sup>

### *Measures to address UK consumption levels*

16. In our earlier report, we observed that the 25 YEP made reference to "leaving a lighter footprint" on the global environment, but did not identify any action to address the level of the UK's consumption.<sup>26</sup> The RSPB told us that

Defra carries out estimates of the UK's GHG consumption footprint ("carbon footprint"), but there is no equivalent to assess the UK's biodiversity impacts related to consumption.<sup>27</sup>

WWF, RSPB and Population Matters recommended that the Government set a global environmental footprint target to address this deficiency.<sup>28</sup> We supported this proposal in our earlier report, recommending that the Government should start the process of setting an environmental footprint target by launching a consultation in advance of COP15 on how to model the overseas environmental impact of UK consumption. In response to this recommendation the Government told us they have commissioned the JNCC to develop a global environmental footprint indicator to help build understanding of the UK's global footprint. The Government did not commit to setting an environmental footprint target in the future, using the indicator to track progress.<sup>29</sup>

23 JNCC ([BIO0012](#)); Professor David Hill (Chairman at The Environment Bank Ltd) ([BIO0007](#)); Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, University College London ([BIO0019](#)); WWF ([BIO0047](#)); RSPB ([BIO0023](#)); Population Matters ([BIO0032](#)); Nature-based Solutions Initiative, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford ([BIO0060](#))

24 [Q22](#)

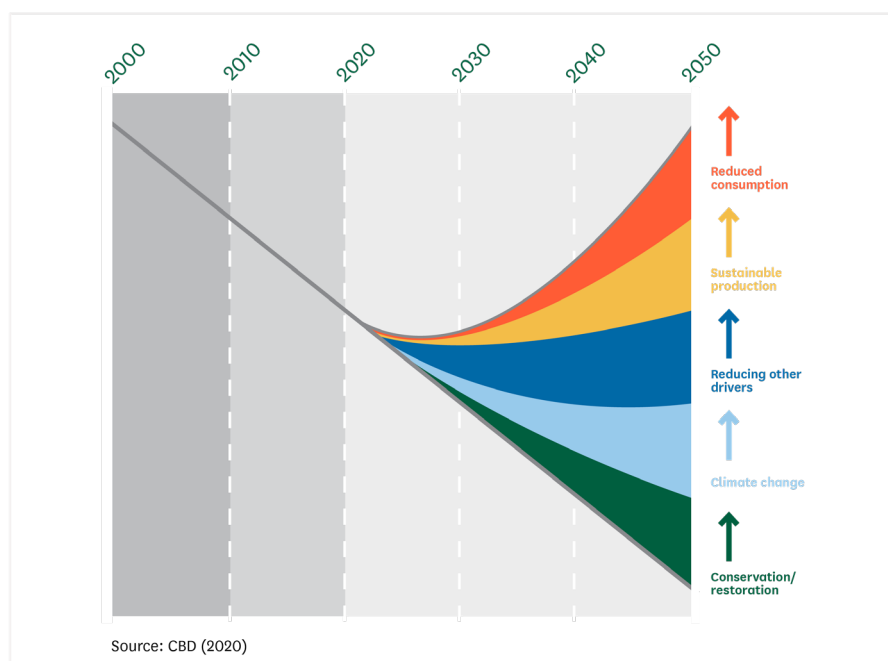
25 IPBES, [Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), (2019) p 17

26 WWF ([BIO0047](#)); Population Matters ([BIO0033](#))

27 RSPB ([BIO0023](#))

28 WWF ([BIO0047](#)); Population Matters ([BIO0033](#)); RSPB ([BIO0023](#))

29 Environmental Audit Committee, Third Special Report of Session 2021–22, Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2021–22, HC 727

**Figure 2: Actions to reduce loss and restore biodiversity**

Source: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 – Summary for Policy Makers, (2020). p 5

17. We were informed of other ways to address unsustainable consumption patterns. Tesco, the UK's largest retailer, told us that:

The UK's food strategy cannot be left to the market... The UK produces only half its food; we must ask tough questions about efficient land use. That means eating less meat and dairy, which uses 70% of agricultural land and emits 14.5% of greenhouse gases globally.<sup>30</sup>

Tesco said it could not achieve the required goals alone and concluded that the sector needed incentives for sustainable farming and a strategy to help livestock farmers diversify. Measures to help people adopt more nutritious diets—fruit and vegetable subsidies and a focus on nutrition and diet in education—ought to be introduced. This was supported by University College London's Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research ("the UCL Centre"), which recommended that the public should be educated about international sources of food and other everyday products in order to promote responsible consumption.<sup>31</sup> Tesco said that it:

recognise[d] the need to reduce meat and dairy consumption within the UK, and would support action taken by government, in consultation with industry and civil society, to establish clearer consumption targets for meat, dairy and plant-proteins.<sup>32</sup>

30 Tesco Stores Ltd ([BIO0031](#))

31 Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, University College London ([BIO0019](#))

32 Tesco Stores Ltd ([BIO0031](#))

18. To address unsustainable consumption, the UCL Centre also recommended focusing on consumer behavioural change by encouraging a shift to environmentally sustainable products and the ethical consumption of services. This behavioural change could be supported by Government investment in, and incentivising of, environmentally friendly production processes, such as subsidies to make ethically generated products cheaper or methods to make green products available to a wider range of people.<sup>33</sup>

### ***The potential of environmental tax measures and evaluating the environmental impact of spending decisions***

19. Tax is an important instrument in the pursuit of environmental goals. Governments can levy taxes on goods or services which harm the environment, thereby incentivising behaviour change. Tax reliefs can also encourage taxpayers to use environmentally friendly products or services.<sup>34</sup> In this way taxes can be used to change unsustainable consumption and production patterns.

20. In April 2021 the Public Accounts Committee reported on environmental tax measures.<sup>35</sup> The Committee concluded that HM Treasury and HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) had to date taken a very limited view of the potential role of tax in promoting the Government's environmental policies: neither department could explain clearly to the Committee how the tax system was used to achieve environmental goals. The Committee recommended that at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's next budget the Treasury should assess the environmental impact of every tax change considered; and publish the expected environmental impact for each tax measure in the budget, including the extent of behavioural change, alongside forecasts for tax receipts. The Government disagreed with the Public Accounts Committee's recommendations, stating it would not be "practical, cost effective or possible to consider detailed environmental impacts for every tax change".<sup>36</sup> The Government stated it already considered the environmental implications in relevant measures.

21. Evaluating the environmental impact of spending decisions is another way the Government can mainstream its environmental objectives across policy. In our earlier biodiversity report we recommended that the Government should conduct Net Zero stress tests on the 2021 Budget and all future fiscal events.<sup>37</sup> We also recommended that nature tests should be developed to ensure spending packages align with the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework. In response to our recommendations the Government said that:

The Green Book already mandates the consideration of climate and environmental impacts in spending.... To ensure spending packages are aligned with government priorities such as Net Zero, HM Treasury is currently reviewing the learning from previous fiscal events to assess how it can better support the government's environmental objectives. More detail on the government's approach to embedding net zero in all policy decisions will be set out in the Net Zero Strategy.

33 Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, University College London ([BIO0019](#))

34 NAO, [Environmental tax measures](#), HC 1203, (February 2021)

35 Public Accounts Committee, Fifty-Fifth Report of Session 2019–21, [Environmental tax measures](#), HC 937

36 HM Treasury, [Treasury Minutes Government responses to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Fifty-Second to the Fifty Sixth reports from Session 2019–21](#), CP 456 (June 2021)

37 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?](#), HC 136 p103

The Treasury's Net Zero Review Final Report will be an analytical report that uses existing data to explore the key issues and trade-offs as the UK decarbonises....[it will] highlight factors to be taken into account in designing policy that will allocate costs over this time horizon. The Net Zero Review will not seek to retrospectively assess or apply new tests to previous government policy as this is beyond the terms of reference for the review.<sup>38</sup>

22. With regards to our recommendation that work should be undertaken by the Bank of England to develop a nature stress test. The Government said that:

The [Bank of England's] FPC [Financial Policy Committee] will explore the potential relevance of other environmental risks to its primary objective. This work will consider whether environmental risks beyond those related directly to climate change can create financial risks that, left unaddressed, could pose a threat to UK financial stability. It will also take into account evidence from existing literature such as The Dasgupta Review.<sup>39</sup>

### *Our view*

23. **Consumption patterns in the UK are unsustainable. Addressing these patterns is key to the UK's contribution to the alleviation of global biodiversity loss. The first step is to recognise the need to reduce the UK's overall consumption. We welcome that the Government has commissioned the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to develop a global environmental footprint indicator, but we are disappointed that the Government has not then committed to setting a global footprint target using this indicator to track progress in order to reduce the UK's global environmental footprint.**

24. **In 2018 the Government announced it would devise an indicator on the overseas environmental impacts of UK consumption of key commodities. It appears that little to no progress has been made in developing this indicator. This is disappointing and shows a lack of prioritisation in addressing one of the biggest drivers of land conversion, biodiversity loss and carbon emissions at a global scale**

25. *We recommend that the Government urgently prioritise the development of the indicator on overseas environmental impacts of UK consumption of key commodities, since a better understanding of the environmental impacts of imported products is crucial to meeting the Government's objectives in this regard. The indicator ought to be prepared for release not later than the date of the next Outcome Indicator Framework update. We also recommend that the Government commit to setting an environmental footprint target using this indicator once developed.*

26. **Ministers should consider how best to encourage behavioural change towards more sustainable and ethical patterns of consumption. Subsidies, environmental tax measures and tax reliefs are some of the financial and fiscal tools available to government. The Public Accounts Committee has criticised the Government's grasp of the potential for tax measures to bring about environmental change and has recommended that**

38 Environmental Audit Committee, Third Special Report of Session 2021–22, Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2021–22, HC 727

39 Ibid

from the next budget, the Treasury should: assess the environmental impact of every tax change considered; and publish the expected environmental impact for each tax measure in the budget, including the extent of behavioural change, alongside forecasts for tax receipts. The Treasury have since rejected these recommendations as impractical and not cost-effective. We consider this to be a short-sighted approach; it will be more costly to the environment and the economy to not consider fully the environmental impacts of policy and tax changes. The approach calls into question the extent to which environment costings are properly considered in developing and setting tax policy.

27. The Committee looks forward to seeing an ambitious approach from Government to embedding Net Zero in all policy decisions in its forthcoming Net Zero Strategy.

28. *In the Net Zero Strategy, the Government should commit to evaluating all taxation changes against how well they deliver on the Government's environmental objectives. The Government's approach to how taxation changes will be developed and assessed to achieve this should also be set out in the Strategy.*

29. *The Net Zero Strategy should include an explicit commitment to Net Zero stress test all future fiscal events and a commitment to develop a nature stress test to be used for fiscal events. The Net Zero Strategy must be published before the start of COP26.*

## International trade

30. Another key concern raised in the evidence we received was the potential effect on international levels of biodiversity of future trade agreements made by the UK. Tesco, RSPB, WWF, the JNCC and the NFU, among others, called for new trade agreements to incorporate the highest environmental and social standards, thereby accelerating a transition to sustainable supply chains<sup>40</sup> and protecting the sustainable farming sector from the effects of cheap and low-quality food imports.<sup>41</sup>

31. The RSPB and WWF recommended that sustainability impact assessments be conducted for all trade agreements.<sup>42</sup> The JNCC recommended ensuring that all trade deals provided benefits to biodiversity,<sup>43</sup> a position supported by the People and Nature campaign and the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.<sup>44</sup> The Microbiology Society highlighted the integral role that stringent import guidelines would play in limiting the import of invasive species and pathogens, which are key causes of biodiversity loss.<sup>45</sup>

32. In 2018, the former Department for International Development (DfID) and the Foreign Office jointly launched the Wildlife Financial Taskforce.<sup>46</sup> The Taskforce sought to find ways to tackle criminal gangs facilitating international wildlife trade better. Organisations on the Taskforce have committed to not facilitate or tolerate financial flows stemming from the international wildlife trade. The think tank Bright Blue noted that at present the Taskforce consisted only of financial institutions which had volunteered to

40 Tesco Stores Ltd ([BIO0031](#)); RSPB ([BIO0023](#)); WWF ([BIO0047](#)); JNCC ([BIO0012](#)); National Farmers' Union ([BIO0036](#)); Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))

41 CLA ([BIO0052](#)); National Farmers' Union ([BIO0036](#))

42 RSPB ([BIO0023](#)); WWF ([BIO0047](#))

43 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

44 People and Nature ([BIO0021](#)); Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))

45 Microbiology Society ([BIO0011](#))

46 DFID and FCO, [UK aid to crack down on criminal gangs driving the illegal wildlife trade](#), 10 October 2018

participate.<sup>47</sup> By contrast, the Modern Slavery Act 2015 established a compulsory statutory duty on organisations with an annual turnover of £36 million or more to prevent slavery in their supply chains.<sup>48</sup> Bright Blue recommended the same approach be adopted for the Wildlife Financial Taskforce, so as to require all large financial organisations to monitor and prevent financial flows related to the illicit international wildlife trade.<sup>49</sup>

33. Asked whether the Government would support an environmental net gain condition on all trade deals, Lord Goldsmith, Minister for Pacific and the Environment, replied that:

it is the position of Government that trade is not just about the exchange of objects for immediate economic gain. We recognise that the process of negotiating free trade agreements offers all kinds of opportunities to project values, to move the market in particular directions. We want to create, and it is an express aim, a stronger market signal through our free trade agreements for sustainably produced commodities...We have put the environment as one of our top three priority areas as a new member of the World Trade Organisation.<sup>50</sup>

34. When asked whether the Government would support conducting sustainability impact assessments on all trade deals, he said:

I cannot unilaterally make commitments on behalf of Government, but certainly an understanding of how any free trade agreement will impact on the environment is essential, whether or not that is through the mechanism you have described. The process, I agree with you, absolutely must happen.<sup>51</sup>

He cautioned that this would be “uncharted territory”, stating he was not aware of free trade agreements having been designed in the past where the environment has been an express priority.<sup>52</sup>

### Our view

35. **For the Government to make good on its support for environmental sustainability to be at the heart of global production and trade, it needs to mainstream biodiversity considerations more consistently into its trade agreements and operations. Leaving the European Union has provided an opportunity to promote the highest environmental and social standards in trade. We welcome Ministers’ willingness to use future trade agreements as market signals for sustainably produced commodities and their support for considering the environmental impacts of agreements. We also welcome the Government’s leadership in establishing the Wildlife Financial Taskforce.**

36. *We recommend that sustainability impact assessments be conducted for all future trade agreements and that as part of the Government’s Nature Strategy the Government consider how to monitor and deliver environmental net gain in trade deals. In response to this report the Government should set out how it intends to widen participation in the Wildlife Financial Taskforce, whether through proposing a statutory obligation on businesses of a certain size, or through other means.*

47 Bright Blue ([BIO0006](#))

48 Modern Slavery Act 2015, [Section 54](#)

49 Bright Blue ([BIO0006](#))

50 [Q184](#)

51 [Q185](#)

52 [Q185](#)

## Sustainable supply chains

37. The World Economic Forum's Nature Risk Rising report has found that all businesses depend on nature either directly or through their supply chains, and that around \$44 trillion of economic value generation (half of global GDP) is dependent on nature.<sup>53</sup> Ecosystem loss brings "operational risks; supply chain continuity, predictability and resilience risks; liability risks; and regulatory, reputational, market and financial risks."<sup>54</sup> The move of many environmentally damaging production processes from the UK to other countries, including lower income countries, can mask the full impact of the UK's national consumption.<sup>55</sup> In addition, the UK depends on imports from abroad for many essential goods and services, including food, so loss of biodiversity abroad, and the benefits to agriculture it provides (for example, pest control and pollination) inevitably affects UK food security.<sup>56</sup> It is therefore essential that the UK monitors the impact of its supply chains on biodiversity abroad and takes steps to reduce the negative consequences of the UK's consumption patterns. This section explores how the UK can promote sustainability in supply chains.

38. The importance of increasing the sustainability of UK supply chains was summarised by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Rt Hon George Eustice MP:

[Concerning international biodiversity] the impact of British industry and British companies on overseas biodiversity, the sustainability of some of those forest risk products and making sure that there is some due diligence in the supply chain is probably the most powerful thing that we would be able to do.<sup>57</sup>

39. Monitoring the impact of UK activities abroad presents a challenge: datasets on biodiversity are much scarcer for some regions, particularly in the tropics where many raw materials ultimately consumed in the UK are sourced and where biodiversity levels are high but vulnerable to degradation.<sup>58</sup>

## Sustainable certification and government procurement

40. Credible sustainability certification is a key way to reduce the risk that an imported item has been associated with deforestation, poor social practices or illegality. The WWF and RSPB found that there was limited data available on the proportion of the UK's imports that were certified.<sup>59</sup> The exceptions were for palm oil and timber, largely as a result of the UK's commitments to report on certified palm oil imports and to tackle illegal logging. In October 2012 Ministers committed to work towards achieving 100% certified sustainable palm oil in imports by 2015: although the UK has only ever achieved 77% to date, the target has spurred positive action from companies.<sup>60</sup> The WWF recommended that the Government initiate similar time-bound targets and reporting commitments

53 World Economic Forum, [Nature Risk Rising: Why the Crisis Engulfing Nature Matters for Business and the Economy](#), (January 2020)

54 Nature-based Solutions Initiative, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford ([BIO0060](#))

55 Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, University College London ([BIO0019](#))

56 [Ibid](#)

57 Environmental Audit Committee, Oral evidence: One-off Session with Secretary of State for DEFRA, HC 319, [Q13](#)

58 Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, University College London ([BIO0019](#)); JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

59 WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint](#), (July 2020)

60 EFCA, [Annual Progress Report UK Roundtable on Sourcing Sustainable Palm Oil](#) (November 2019).

on other commodities, particularly soy, cocoa, timber, and pulp and paper.<sup>61</sup> They also recommend that the Government convene roundtables for high risk commodities such as cocoa, timber, and beef and leather, as they have done with palm oil and soya.

41. The Government can create market incentives for businesses to manage their supply chains sustainably by adopting sustainable public procurement policies across these high-risk commodities. Yet the performance of Government departments against existing sustainable procurement commitments has been limited. According to the Government Buying Standards (GBS), the procurement of sustainable palm oil has been mandatory since 2015.<sup>62</sup> However, little information on the uptake of this policy by government departments is available.<sup>63</sup> WWF and RSPB have alleged that this is due to a downturn in transparency commitments: for example, mandatory reporting on Greening Government Commitments ceased in 2016.<sup>64</sup> They recommended the GBS should require all acquired forest-risk commodities (in addition to palm oil and paper) to be certified as sustainably produced. They also recommended that the standards should be mandatory across all public bodies—for example in schools, the NHS and prisons—and that annual reporting on compliance against public procurement policies should be mandatory for such public bodies. They further proposed that reporting and monitoring frameworks for assessing compliance against public procurement policies should be strengthened: for example, annual public reporting on progress ought to be mandatory for all government departments and wider public bodies.<sup>65</sup>

42. The National Audit Office (NAO) has repeatedly raised concerns over the lack of data and monitoring on compliance with the Government Buying Standards. In 2012, Defra reported that it was difficult to assess the extent to which departments purchased products meeting Government Buying Standards, as not all departments collected the necessary information.<sup>66</sup> In 2013, the NAO found that monitoring of the extent to which departments' procurement had met Government Buying Standards had been limited.<sup>67</sup> In subsequent reports the NAO found that both the Department for Transport<sup>68</sup> and the Ministry of Defence<sup>69</sup> had stopped collecting data to monitor their compliance with Government Buying Standards, since monitoring was no longer mandatory, making it impossible to know whether departments had improved their sustainable procurement performance. Defra have stated that it is discussing with the Cabinet Office the need for a coordinated review of government buying standards, including alignment with net zero.<sup>70</sup> Defra is also considering restarting compliance reporting, and now recognises its utility in detailing the extent of sustainable public procurement across government.<sup>71</sup>

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61 WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint](#), (July 2020)

62 [Ibid](#)

63 NAO, [Sustainable procurement in government](#). (February 2013)

64 WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint](#), (July 2020); NAO, [Ministry of Defence: Environmental Sustainability Overview](#), HC 318 (May 2020) p 9

65 WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint](#), (July 2020)

66 NAO, [Sustainable procurement in government](#). (February 2013)

67 [Ibid](#)

68 NAO, [Department for Transport Sustainability update](#), (March 2019)

69 NAO, [Ministry of Defence: Environmental Sustainability Overview](#), HC 318 (May 2020)

70 NAO, [HM Government: Achieving net zero](#), HC 1035, (4 December 2020)

71 [Ibid](#)

### *Natural capital approach to pricing products*

43. Another approach to encouraging sustainability in supply chains is through the implementation of a natural capital approach to the pricing of products. This would involve measuring the impact products have on natural capital and embedding payments for credible ecosystem services into the cost of these products. The integration of a form of natural capital approach into private sector operations was supported by Tesco, Associated British Foods, JNCC, Professor Partha Dasgupta and Professor David Hill of the Environment Bank.<sup>72</sup> Primark, now a brand owned by Associated British Foods, is a member of the Cambridge Natural Capital Impact Group. The group have developed a metric to measure biodiversity impacts in global supply chains.<sup>73</sup> With this metric, the group believes businesses can determine where their operations pose the greatest risks to nature, thereby informing corporate response strategies.

44. The NFU expressed reservations over a natural capital approach to pricing agricultural products. They stated that:

within agri-food supply chains, farmers and growers for the most part are price takers due to their limited market power within high consolidated supply chains.<sup>74</sup>

The NFU observed that the agricultural sector was highly fragmented, with tens of thousands of farmers supplying agricultural commodities to a handful of processors, manufacturers, and retailers. This provided limited scope for farmers to pass on production costs further down the supply chain. In the context of farming to higher environmental standards, the NFU considered that farmers would be required to absorb the costs associated with safeguarding biodiversity. Since British farmers competed on a global scale with diverging production standards, the NFU argued that the cost inflation associated with agricultural production to higher environmental standards would significantly undermine the competitiveness of British agriculture if imports were not held to a similar standard. The NFU recommended that the Government should require imports to observe domestic production standards so as to promote fairness in the supply chain.<sup>75</sup>

45. The new Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS) introduced through the Agriculture Act 2020 will support farmers by providing public money for public goods—such as helping wildlife, planting woods to capture carbon and improving the soil. When we asked David Webster, Director of Sustainability and External Affairs at Associated British Foods UK Grocery, whether he was concerned that costs would shift to farmers or consumers whilst transitioning to the ELMS system, he said:

The honest answer is I do not entirely know at this stage. It depends what is within the detail of the final implementation requirements. In theory, if we get this right and we can improve soil quality and integrate some of the management elements, it should work to the benefit of British agriculture... it is the right direction for us to be heading. It sets a very positive precedent for moving forwards.<sup>76</sup>

72 Tesco Stores Ltd ([BIO0031](#)); Associated British Foods ([BIO0063](#)); JNCC ([BIO0012](#)); Professor David Hill (Chairman at The Environment Bank Ltd) ([BIO0007](#)); Dasgupta, P., [The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review](#). Abridged Version, (2021) (London: HM Treasury).

73 ABF, [Responsibility Update: 2020](#) (2020)

74 National Farmers' Union ([BIO0036](#))

75 National Farmers' Union ([BIO0036](#))

76 [Q140](#)

### *Use of forest risk commodities in commercial activity and UK supply chains*

46. In 2019, the Government set up the Global Resource Initiative (GRI) Taskforce to investigate how the UK could address commodity-driven deforestation and land conversion.<sup>77</sup> In 2020 the GRI set out its final recommendations, including the introduction of a mandatory due diligence obligation on businesses that place commodities and derived products that contribute to deforestation on the UK market. The Government responded to this by proposing amendments to the current Environment Bill to require greater levels of due diligence from businesses and to make it illegal for UK businesses to use key commodities if they have not been produced in line with local laws protecting forests and other natural ecosystems.<sup>78</sup>

47. 90 per cent of respondents to the Government's consultation on the new Environment Bill measures believed that the proposals should be extended.<sup>79</sup> Several businesses, trade associations and conservation organisations have urged the Government to go further and take measures aimed at halting all forms of deforestation. Unilever, Nestle, Mondelez and all of the UK's 'big seven' supermarkets wrote to the Secretary of State stating:

Restricting action to illegal deforestation would not achieve halting the loss of natural ecosystems, especially when governments have discretion to decide what is legal.<sup>80</sup>

They advocate measures prohibiting the use by any UK business of produce from any deforested land.

48. The Government proposals do not extend to the finance sector, despite a GRI recommendation to this effect. Financial flows from or via the UK which fund deforestation activities are therefore likely to continue unchecked.<sup>81</sup>

49. Asked why the Government had not extended the due diligence obligation to cover all forms of deforestation, Lord Goldsmith said:

If we were to get to grips with illegal deforestation, that would be taking an unprecedented gigantic bite out of one of the world's greatest problems. Almost 90% of deforestation in Brazil, for example, is illegal. Globally it is around 50%.... the purpose of what we are doing here is not just to begin to get our own house in order; it is about creating a global coalition....If we want China on board, which imports around 65% of all the world's commodities and therefore is a major part of the problem at the moment, and if we want them to become part of the solution, we have to peg our standards to legality.<sup>82</sup>

50. Organisations are already going beyond the Government's proposed legislation to establish deforestation free supply chains. ABF Agriculture has committed to eliminate

77 Global Resource Initiative, [Final recommendations report: Executive Summary](#), (March 2020)

78 Defra, [Consultation Outcome: Forests: reducing deforestation in UK supply chains](#) (August 2020)

79 Greener, [Environment bill brief: Use of forest risk commodities in commercial activity \(amendment 231, NC31, NS1\)](#), (November 2020)

80 Retail Goy Group, [Letter to Secretary of State on the role of due diligence requirements in addressing global deforestation](#), (5 October 2020)

81 "Environment Bill: UK businesses to be banned from sourcing through deforesters overseas", edie, 11 November 2020

82 [Qq188-189](#)

deforestation from all its palm and soya supply chains by 2025.<sup>83</sup> The WWF and RSPB reported an increase in the number of commitments from the private sector to be deforestation free, and in action towards further transparency and sustainability in supply chains. However, they noted that substantial risks remain embedded in the UK's supply chain and a large 'implementation gap' remains between pledges on deforestation and conversion-free supply chains and tangible progress on the ground.<sup>84</sup>

### *Our view*

51. We welcome and agree with the Secretary of State's analysis that addressing the sustainability of the UK's global supply chains will be one of the most powerful ways in which the UK can reduce its adverse impact on levels of international biodiversity. The degradation of ecosystems brings supply chain, market and financial risks. Monitoring the impact of UK activities abroad presents obvious challenges: nevertheless, efforts must be stepped up to make overseas biodiversity monitoring a reality.

52. Sustainable government procurement presents a pathway to increasing the sustainability of supply chains. Yet Government performance against existing sustainable procurement policies has been unimpressive. The removal of the mandatory reporting obligation by Government departments against the Greening Government Commitments has led to a dearth of data and has hampered the monitoring of compliance with the Government Buying Standards, to the extent that it appears at present impossible to know whether departments have improved their sustainable procurement performance. In the run up to COP15 and COP26, and at a time when the Government should be showing leadership on sustainability issues, its departments appear instead to be moving backwards. This increased opacity over departmental sustainability practices is unacceptable.

53. We welcome the news that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is considering restarting the routine reporting of levels of compliance with Government buying standards. We also note with approval the effect that Government commitments on the importation of sustainable palm oil has had on the supply chains of companies importing palm oil to the UK.

54. *To increase sustainability within UK global supply chains, we recommend that:*

- a) *in its response to this report, the Government should set out a clear and accessible definition of sustainability within the context of the Government Buying Standards;*
- b) *the Government reinstate the Greening Government Commitments for mandatory reporting on sustainable procurement as part of the Government Buying Standards by the end of 2021;*
- c) *the Government Buying Standards should require all acquired forest-risk commodities (in addition to palm oil and paper) to be certified as sustainably produced; and*

83 ABF, [Responsibility Update: 2020](#) (2020)

84 WWF & RSPB, [Riskier Business: the UK's overseas land footprint](#), (July 2020)

- d) *the Government Buying Standards should be mandatory for all large public bodies, like the NHS and prisons. Annual reporting on compliance against public procurement policies should be mandatory for these large public bodies.*

55. A natural capital approach to valuing agricultural products provides another way to increase the sustainability of supply chains.

56. *Within the National Food Strategy the Government should consider how a natural capital approach could be adopted without placing a disproportionate financial burden on farmers or consumers.*

57. 90% of respondents to the Government's consultation on new laws for forest-risk commodities believed proposals should be extended so that it is illegal for UK businesses to use any key commodities related to deforestation in their supply chains. We agree with stakeholders that global deforestation and the UK's contribution to it cannot be tackled without bold and ambitious action. This should include moving to deforestation-free supply chains. The finance sector should be included in due diligence obligations if the UK is to avoid funding deforestation through lending and investments.

58. *To increase the sustainable use of forest-risk commodities we recommend that the Government make it illegal for UK businesses and the finance sector to use commodities linked to deforestation and, at the very least, include the finance sector within the scope of the provisions on forest-risk commodities in the Environment Bill.*

### 3 Biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories

59. This chapter examines the state of biodiversity in the UK Overseas Territories (UKOTs) and explores how gaps in the conservation of species in these Territories can be closed.

60. Around 90 per cent of the biodiversity for which the UK Government has responsibility resides in the UK Overseas Territories.<sup>85</sup> The biodiverse environments in these territories, all but one of which are islands, range from sub-Antarctic islands in the South Atlantic to rainforests in the Caribbean and tropical islands in the remote Pacific. They contain unique species and wildlife concentrations found nowhere else in the world. The UKOTs in the South Atlantic and Antarctic are of global importance for their seabird colonies: they contain one third of the world's albatrosses and a quarter of its penguins.<sup>86</sup>

61. Environmental policy in the UKOTs is the responsibility of the administration of each territory. The JNCC supports UKOT administrations in their implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements and of UK Government policy.<sup>87</sup>

62. The UKOTs are home to 94 per cent of British endemic species,<sup>88</sup> 30 per cent of which are found on St Helena alone.<sup>89</sup> 42 species previously indigenous to the present UKOTs are now considered to have gone extinct: while most of these losses are reckoned to be historic (i.e. between the 16th and 19th centuries), three species were lost in the 20th century and a further three have been lost since 2000. 10 per cent of the species found in the UKOTs or in their territorial waters are currently considered at risk of extinction, including 40 per cent of sharks, rays and skates.<sup>90</sup>

63. Introduced invasive non-native species are one of the primary threats to biodiversity across the UKOTs. In Gough Island, part of the Tristan da Cunha archipelago in the South Atlantic, invasive mice species are said to be killing over 1 million seabird eggs and chicks a year, including the endangered Tristan Albatross.<sup>91</sup> Globally, Gough has been rated as the island with the third greatest need of eradication of invasive species.<sup>92</sup> One of the largest conservation interventions planned across the UKOTs (costing £9 million) is being developed to address the problem.<sup>93</sup>

64. The National Biodiversity Network stated it was difficult to determine how well the UK was addressing biodiversity loss in the UKOTs, as there were no comprehensive datasets on the majority of species.<sup>94</sup> It is estimated that less than a third of species have

85 Environmental Audit Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2013–14, [Sustainability in the UK Overseas Territories](#), HC 332

86 Churchyard T, et al. The biodiversity of the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories: a stock take of species occurrence and assessment of key knowledge gaps. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 25(9) (2016). p 1677–1694

87 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

88 Churchyard et al., [The UK's wildlife overseas: a stocktake of nature in our Overseas Territories](#). RSPB (2014)

89 Churchyard T, et al. The biodiversity of the United Kingdom's Overseas Territories: a stock take of species occurrence and assessment of key knowledge gaps. *Biodiversity and Conservation*, 25(9) (2016). p 1677–1694

90 Hayhow et al, [The State of Nature 2019](#).

91 Caravaggi A, et al. The impacts of introduced House Mice on the breeding success of nesting seabirds on Gough Island. (2019)

92 Holmes ND, et al. Globally important islands where eradicating invasive mammals will benefit highly threatened vertebrates. *PLoS one*, 14 (3) (2019)

93 Hayhow et al, [The State of Nature 2019](#). The State of Nature partnership, (2019) p 10.

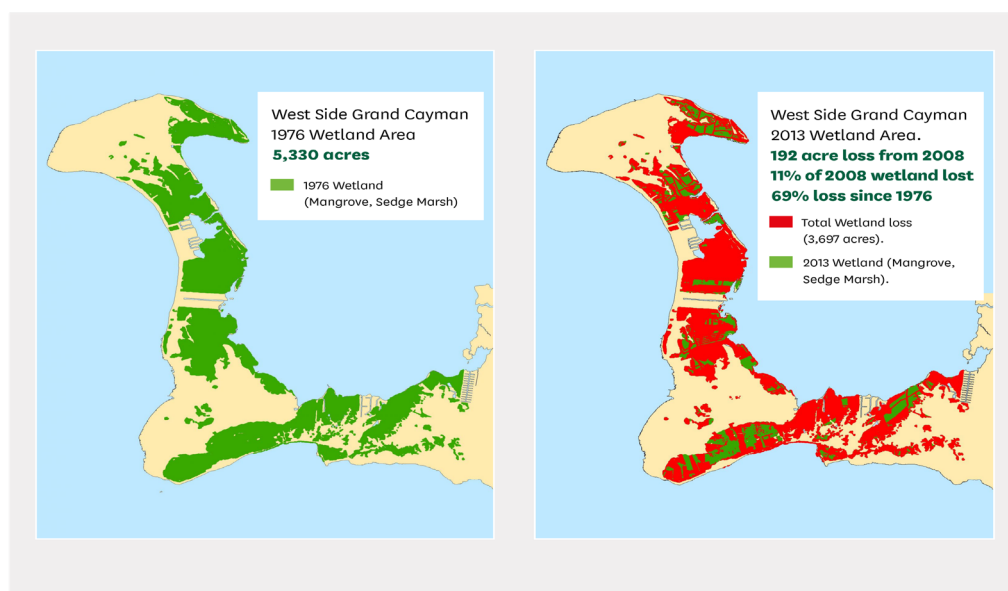
94 National Biodiversity Network Trust ([BIO0026](#))

been recorded. The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) also said there was a lack of data on soil properties, weather patterns at an island scale, climate change prediction data, and the environmental range within which endemic species could exist.<sup>95</sup> Additionally, CIEEM noted that a lack of knowledge of the importance of biodiversity, especially with respect to key decision-makers, a lack of personnel with the skills and experience to deliver environmental projects, and a lack of funding all presented further significant challenges to addressing biodiversity loss in the UKOTs.<sup>96</sup>

#### Box 2: UK Overseas Territory Case Study—the state of biodiversity in the Cayman Islands

We received written evidence from a Caymanian, Linda Clark, on her experience of the state of biodiversity in the Cayman Islands. She told us that virgin habitat and ecosystems were being lost at an alarming rate due to unplanned development and mismanagement. This was posing a threat to endangered species on the islands.

##### West Side Grand Cayman mangrove loss from 1976–2013



The map shows the loss of mangrove ecosystems from 1976–2013. Linda Clark stated that this loss was driven by the financial service industry growth increasing demand for housing and infrastructure. In 2015 the Cayman Islands Office of the Auditor General's (OAG) published a report on national land development and Government real property. The report found developments were approved "outside of the normal planning process...with no public disclosure until after the Government had committed to them." Linda told us these findings had not been addressed.

Overall, Linda observed that over-tourism, mismanagement and development was leading to seagrass removal, coral reef disease and dredging, beach erosion, ecosystem degradation and threats to endangered plant and animal species. She also noted that a failure to implement import restrictions on avoidable waste was leading to large dump sites close to mangrove wetlands. See images below of dump sites and burning.

95 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))

96 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))

**Dump site in the Cayman Islands****Waste burning in the Cayman Islands**

To address environmental degradation in the Cayman Islands, Linda recommended that the Government engage and educate decision-makers in the Cayman Islands on the importance of natural capital, biodiversity loss and ecosystems. She also recommended that the Government support training for decision-makers on how to embed natural capital factors into decision making and how to comply with local, national and international legislation.

Source: Linda Clark ([BIO0066](#))

65. Governmental expenditure on international biodiversity conservation, including in the UKOTs, has increased steadily since 2000/01.<sup>97</sup> Funding for terrestrial biodiversity conservation is available through the Darwin Plus Programme: this has been raised to £10 million per annum from 2021/2022 until the end of the present Parliament.<sup>98</sup> For marine conservation activities across the UKOTs, the Government established a £25m Blue Belt Programme in 2016 to protect 4 million km<sup>2</sup> of oceanic waters—almost 60% of the UK's total 6.8 million km<sup>2</sup> marine area.<sup>99</sup>

97 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

98 If the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011 is not repealed or amended, the present Parliament is set to run until March 2024.

99 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

66. Environmental matters are the responsibility of the administration of each individual territory. On behalf of the UK Government, the JNCC developed the 2011 UK OT Biodiversity Strategy: it monitors biodiversity in the UKOTs and assists in implementing projects.<sup>100</sup> To better conserve the environment and species within OTs, the JNCC has recommended the following actions:

- The provision of more comprehensive training and capacity building programmes across all sectors of society to maximise the transfer of knowledge and skills from UK institutions;<sup>101</sup>
- the building of strong local partnerships and the investment of time and money in using these partnerships to identify national and regional problems and potential solutions;
- the mobilisation of UK science 'at its best' to transfer skills into partner countries and organisations;
- the development of interventions at catchment, landscape and seascape scale to address issues in the right geographical, social and biodiversity context.<sup>102</sup>

### Box 3: Landscape scale conservation

Landscape-scale conservation (also known as ecosystem approach) is land management that involves working in collaboration and working at a large scale—often around a catchment, estuary or other recognisable landscape unit. This is a scale at which natural systems tend to work best and where there is often most opportunity to deliver environmental, social and economic benefits that are more difficult to achieve by managing small sites individually.

Source: Scottish Environment Protection Agency, "[What is Landscape-Scale Conservation?](#)", accessed 14 September 2021

## Terrestrial biodiversity conservation in UKOTs

67. We received several written evidence submissions which, like the JNCC, recommended the need for investment in landscape scale conservation projects in the UKOTs.<sup>103</sup> The RSPB said that funding was one of the key impediments to progress in this respect, as, owing to their constitutional status, the Territories were ineligible for most domestic and international environment funding.<sup>104</sup>

68. One of the only funding mechanisms available is the Darwin Plus programme, the Defra-sponsored initiative for UKOT environmental projects. As indicated above, the Government recently announced an increase in the annual funding stream for the Darwin Plus programme, to £10m per annum.<sup>105</sup> While welcoming this, the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) noted that UKOTs were concerned over the future of funding for environmental projects, given that the diverse range of

100 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

101 *Ibid.* The JNCC said current training was too often linked to short-term, highly focussed projects, and left a limited legacy.

102 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

103 JNCC ([BIO0012](#)); RSPB ([BIO0023](#)); Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#)); WWF ([BIO0047](#))

104 RSPB ([BIO0023](#))

105 HM Treasury (2020) [Budget 2020](#), section 2.17

EU funding programmes would no longer be available to them.<sup>106</sup> For example, the EU BEST project (a voluntary scheme for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European overseas) was able to tackle larger projects which involved infrastructure and on-the-ground action. The CIEEM also noted that it was difficult for commercial companies to lead Darwin Plus bids because of the cost structure involved: this was limiting the valuable role that commercial UK organisations could have in working in partnership with research and conservation parties and sharing their expertise on projects.<sup>107</sup> To address the need for funding for landscape scale projects in the UKOTs the RSPB recommended that funding under the Darwin Plus Programme be separated into three tiers:

- a) *Small-scale UKOT grassroots conservation projects up to £100,000 in size.* RSPB recommended that these projects only be available to in-Territory organisations, replacing the EU BEST project funding.
- b) *Medium-scale UKOT conservation projects up to £300,000 in size, as currently funded via Darwin Plus.*<sup>108</sup>
- c) *Large-scale restoration projects of between £1 million and £3 million in value.* This would provide funding for transformational projects, such as eradications of introduced species, wetland restoration for flood control, peatland restoration for climate mitigation etc.<sup>109</sup>

69. CIEEM said large research projects involving the UKOTs were also very difficult for UK universities to obtain funding for.<sup>110</sup> This is because to qualify for funding, most research must be delivered on UKOT islands. CIEEM recommend that research funds which include the UKOTs even as project partners would greatly enhance the chance of funding and therefore the scientific understanding of the biodiversity of the UKOT islands. CIEEM also recommend that a portal for UKOTs to post research questions should be set up, which could be accessed by those studying environmental subjects in the UK. This could help address significant knowledge gaps in UKOT biodiversity and address the specific research needs of UKOTs.

70. Minister Lord Goldsmith told us that given various EU nature funds are no longer available to the overseas territories, the Government is internally looking at how it can improve its offer for the overseas territories.<sup>111</sup>

## Marine biodiversity conservation in UKOTs

71. The UK and the UKOTs are together responsible for the fifth largest area of ocean in the world, which represents a significant responsibility and opportunity in every major ocean basin on the planet.<sup>112</sup> The UK Government's flagship Blue Belt Programme, initiated in 2016, has overseen a transformation in marine protection and is on track to

106 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))

107 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))

108 There is currently no upper limit on grants, but the average grant is worth £100,000 and Defra "would not expect to see projects exceed £500,000. Defra, [Darwin Plus Guidance Notes for Applicants Round 10 2021–2022](#), (2021) p 7

109 RSPB ([BIO0023](#))

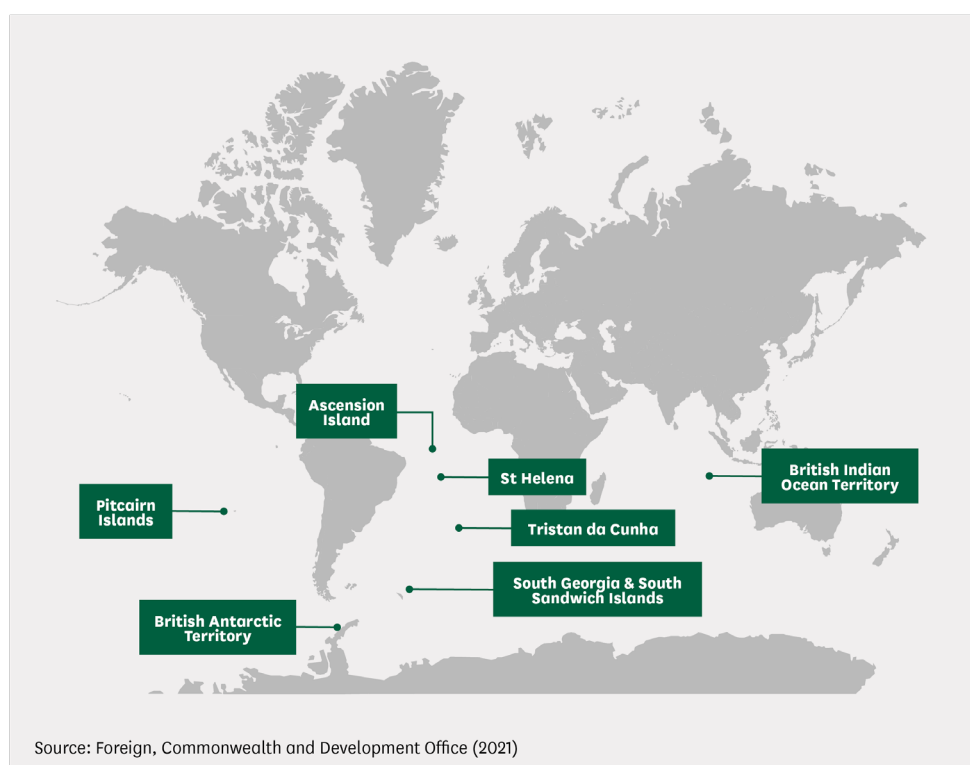
110 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))

111 [Q179](#)

112 RSPB ([BIO0023](#))

provide long-term protection of 4 million km<sup>2</sup> of oceanic water—almost 60 per cent of the UK's total 6.8 million km<sup>2</sup> marine area.<sup>113</sup> This has in turn enabled the UK to take an international leadership role in pushing for a new global '30 by 30' ocean target (to protect 30 per cent of the world's oceans by 2030) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Specifically, the UK created the Global Ocean Alliance in 2019 in support of achieving its goal of 30 per cent protection, and at the time of writing, under its leadership the membership has expanded to 56 members.<sup>114</sup>

**Figure 3: Geographic scope of the Blue Belt Programme with Overseas Territories included in the programme highlighted**



Source: Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (2021)

72. The main risk to the Blue Belt Programme is now ensuring the long-term protection of its large-scale marine reserves. The Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has committed to funding the programme for 2021/22, with £8 million funding confirmed, however there is no information about funding beyond 2022.<sup>115</sup> In written evidence several environment groups and think tanks recommended the Government maintains its commitment of £7 million per annum to fund the management and enforcement of the programme.<sup>116</sup> In the Blue Belt Annual Report, the Government set out the future objectives of the programme, which were to provide support for the management, enforcement and scientific monitoring of Marine Protected Areas, and to develop understanding of the effectiveness of the marine protection in place.<sup>117</sup> The programme will also focus on building capacity and skills in OTs and will provide support to other UKOTs wishing to join the programme. We have not been able to find a long-term

113 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

114 UK Government, "[Global Ocean Alliance: 30by30 initiative](#)", accessed 3 September 2021

115 FCDO, [The Blue Belt Programme](#), (June 2021)

116 Great British Oceans ([BIO0013](#)); Bright Blue ([BIO0006](#)); RSPB ([BIO0023](#))

117 UK Government, [Blue Belt Programme Annual Update for Financial Year 2020/21](#)

timetable or budget plan for the programme. It is also unclear what status the programme has following the publication of the March 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.

73. In our previous biodiversity report we recommended that the Government should make greater use of earth observation data as a cost-effective means of filling gaps in the data obtained from terrestrial monitoring.<sup>118</sup> The JNCC told us that a similar approach should be adopted for the monitoring of biodiversity in UKOTs.<sup>119</sup> The JNCC recommended that the Government mobilise UK science 'at its best' including the transfer of knowledge to OTs around the use of earth observation data. We note monitoring of the Blue Belt programme could be improved using earth observation data too.

### *Our view*

74. The UK Overseas Territories are home to 94 per cent of British endemic species and 90 per cent of the biodiversity for which the UK Government has responsibility. The territories are also of global importance given the large proportion of the world's albatross and penguin species found in these territories. Given this, environmental preservation and the improvement of these territories must be a priority for the UK Government. We welcome the impressive global leadership the UK has demonstrated through the establishment of the Blue Belt Programme, and the Global Ocean Alliance.

75. *To further improve the state of biodiversity in the Overseas Territories, we recommend that gaps in their protection be rectified. Namely, we recommend that:*

- a) *Ministers assure and set out the long-term funding plan for the Blue Belt Programme. In response to this report the Government should set out the programme's long-term timetable, budget, and status following the Government's 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.*
- b) *Ministers review the environmental funding gap implications for the Overseas Territories following the UK leaving the EU. In response to this report Ministers should set out how the UK could fund landscape scale environmental projects with the potential for transformative biodiversity restoration.*
- c) *In the Government's response to this report, Ministers should evaluate the feasibility of an environmental research portal for Overseas Territories.*
- d) *Ministers should consider opportunities to use increasing global aerial surveillance capabilities from high altitude or space to monitor the Blue Belt Programme.*

118 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?](#), HC 136

119 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))

## 4 International development and biodiversity

76. Many of the world's critical ecosystems are found in developing countries. Between 65 and 75 per cent of people in the world's poorest regions live in rural areas.<sup>120</sup> Studies have shown that when ecosystems deteriorate, the rural poor tend to suffer most.<sup>121</sup> This section examines how biodiversity considerations could be mainstreamed into the UK's international development partnerships.

### The interconnection of climate change, sustainable development and biodiversity

77. The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) has argued that ongoing rapid declines in biodiversity and ecosystem functions will also mean the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will not be achieved on current trajectories. Negative trends in ecosystems undermine progress towards 80 per cent of the SDG targets related to poverty, hunger, health, water, cities, climate, oceans and land.<sup>122</sup> The IPBES told us that that these declines would also undermine the Paris Agreement goals and the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity.<sup>123</sup>

### Cross-government co-ordination and accounting for natural capital in international development

78. Despite the intrinsic link between climate change, sustainable development and biodiversity, governments are failing to tackle these issues in an integrated manner.

79. In his research, Professor Dasgupta has noted the systematic neglect of ecology in development economics and amongst development agencies, despite that:

in the poor world natural capital is not only an amenity, it is also a primary factor of production. Often, it's a basic need.<sup>124</sup>

Professor Dasgupta noted that although international development agencies are now acknowledging the costs that people in developing countries will face due to climate change, concerns have been largely about the efficacy of an international "cap-and-trade" system and the assistance rich nations ought to give poor countries.<sup>125</sup> He believed institutions had ignored analysing the poverty traps that come from development assistance that ignore natural capital.

80. On the question of whether developing countries can or even should develop sustainably whilst responding to market demands and problems created by developed countries, Professor Dasgupta said:

120 Hassan et al. Ecosystems and Human Well-Being, Vol. 1: State and Trends (2005)

121 Hassan et al. Ecosystems and Human Well-Being, Vol. 1: State and Trends (2005).

122 IPBES, [Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), (2019)

123 [Q33](#)

124 Dasgupta, The Place of Nature in Economic Development (2009) p. 8

125 Ibid

there is enough inefficiency in poor countries to enable governments there to identify policies that both protect and promote natural capital and alleviate poverty. The idea that the poor world can enjoy sustainable development only when there are significant improvement in the international economic architecture is belied by evidence on village life in poor countries.

Development policies that ignore our reliance on ecological capital are seriously harmful—they don't pass the mildest test for intra or intergenerational equity.<sup>126</sup>

## The UK Government's performance on mainstreaming biodiversity concerns into international development assistance

81. The Government has stated that in international development it is delivering solutions that are good for “people, nature and the climate.”<sup>127</sup> In January 2021 the UK committed to spending at least £3 billion of International Climate Finance on nature-based solutions to climate change, over five years.<sup>128</sup> The entire £11.6 billion allocation on International Climate Finance will come from the existing aid budget, which itself was reduced from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of gross national income in 2021.<sup>129</sup> Observers of the past climate agreements<sup>130</sup> have claimed that, in accordance with UN brokered climate agreements such as the Copenhagen Accord in 2009 and the Paris Agreement in 2015, international climate finance commitments should be “new and additional”.

82. The UK's main contribution to tackling global biodiversity loss is through funding of the Global Environment Facility (£250 million between 2018 and 2022).<sup>131</sup> The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides grants and support to developing countries for projects to address global environmental problems, although the extent and capacity of this fund to tackle global biodiversity loss alongside all other environmental problems has been challenged.<sup>132</sup> DfID, now FCDO, also funds forestry programmes (£430 million) and programmes to strengthen national customs and trade regulations to reduce illegal timber trade.<sup>133</sup> In September 2019, the Prime Minister announced a £220 million International Biodiversity Fund to fund overseas territory projects, address illegal wildlife trade and support five biodiverse landscapes.<sup>134</sup>

83. This said, written evidence submissions expressed concern that development funding for conservation was still comparatively low. Conservative think tank Bright Blue told us that:

historically a pitiful amount of UK overseas development assistance [was] spent on global nature conservation. Government funding for global biodiversity conservation, including both bilateral (country-specific) and

126 Dasgupta, [Nature's role in sustaining economic development](#) (2009)

127 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

128 Prime Minister's Office, [Prime Minister commits £3bn UK climate finance to supporting nature](#), 11 January 2021

129 HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), (November 2020) Paragraph 6.48, p.70

130 Center for Global Development, [Is Climate Finance Towards \\$100 Billion “New and Additional”? \(March 2021\)](#); Roberts et al. [Rebooting a failed promise of climate finance](#). *Nat. Clim. Chang.* (2021); Romani, M., & Stern, N. [Delivering climate finance: Principles and practice for funding the Fund](#). London: Grantham Institute (2011)

131 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

132 [Q31](#)

133 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

134 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

multilateral sources, averaged £75 million per annum between 2010 and 2013—the last period for which formal government figures are available. This figure represents only 0.5% of the approximately £14 billion annual UK Overseas Development Assistance budget. Contrast this with Germany and the USA, which each provide on average around \$600–700 million per annum for global nature conservation.<sup>135</sup>

84. Stakeholders have welcomed the new package of overseas development assistance (ODA) for global conservation but have called for greater mainstreaming of biodiversity concerns into international development policy more generally. Bright Blue said that DfID has been almost exclusively focused on poverty eradication at the expense of other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).<sup>136</sup> This is supported by analysis from the International Institute for Environment and Development which found that while some funds, such as the Defra and DfID-managed Darwin Initiative and Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund, explicitly aimed to integrate poverty and environment objectives, the bulk of cross-governmental ODA goes to funds that are dedicated to stimulating non-targeted economic growth or to addressing security concerns.<sup>137</sup>

85. Mott MacDonald, one of the largest private contractor recipients of DFID funding<sup>138</sup>, told us the problem was donor organisations, like the former DFID, did not prioritise or provide funding allocation to address biodiversity:

due to priorities of our clients biodiversity and ecosystem concerns seldom take centre stage and often seem of peripheral concern.<sup>139</sup>

86. Mott MacDonald emphasised the disconnect between individual project terms of reference (ToR) and the integrated systems thinking approach that is required to address cross-cutting themes like biodiversity and climate change. They stated that:

Terms of Reference [for projects] are usually developed in silos, within the context of individual beneficiary ministries and catering to KPIs of donor organisations [like DFID] that are equally siloed, with very limited horizontal collaboration between different departments.<sup>140</sup>

87. To address these issues the JNCC has called for biodiversity to be fully considered in policies such as trade, official development assistance, development planning and investments.<sup>141</sup> The WWF and RSPB recommended DFID's Economic Development strategy be analysed for deforestation risk.<sup>142</sup> The RSPB and Bright Blue recommend that all future ODA spending be climate and nature positive.<sup>143</sup> Bright Blue add that the FCDO should adopt a 'do no harm' policy in relation to global nature, such that any aid project that damages or destroys nature should not receive UK ODA. Bright Blue recommend

135 Bright Blue (BIO0006)

136 Bright Blue (BIO0006)

137 RSPB (BIO0023); iied, CAFOD, RSPB, Christian Aid, WWF-UK, Oxfam GB, [Making UK ODA fit for purpose in a changing world](#) (November 2019); iied, [UK ODA and sustainable development](#), (November 2019)

138 Developmentaid, [DFID funding trends: a review of the agency's most contracted partners between January and September 2019](#) (2019)

139 Mott MacDonald (BIO0053)

140 Mott MacDonald (BIO0053)

141 JNCC (BIO0012)

142 WWF & RSPB, [Risky Business: Understanding the UK's overseas footprint for deforestation-risk commodities](#), (October 2017)

143 RSPB (BIO0023); Bright Blue (BIO0006)

that the Independent Commission for Aid Impact should determine whether any harm to global nature has been caused by any UK ODA supported projects.<sup>144</sup> Minister Goldsmith told us that the Government has recently committed to nature-proofing all ODA expenditure.<sup>145</sup> As far as we are aware, the nature of how this will be done has not yet been publicly disclosed.

### *Our view*

**88. Consideration of natural capital must be a priority in the assessment of overseas development assistance projects. Nature sustains all of us and becomes even more critical in a developing country context. We welcome the Government's announcement of a new International Biodiversity Fund and its commitment to nature-proof all overseas development assistance expenditure. We now need to see the detail of how the Government intends to achieve this and how the Government will mainstream consideration of biodiversity across development, trade, security and foreign policy. We regret that the Government's international climate finance commitments, including its commitment to £3 billion on nature-based solutions to climate change, is not new and additional funding, but rather a redirection of the existing and reduced aid budget.**

**89. *We recommend that in response to this report the Government detail how it intends to nature-proof overseas development assistance, and how compliance with this commitment will be monitored.***

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144 Bright Blue ([BIO0006](#))

145 [Q181](#)

## 5 The UNCBD COP15

90. A Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework has been proposed for agreement at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 to be held in Kunming, China. Due to the covid-19 pandemic the conference has been re-scheduled several times: an initial virtual meeting is now scheduled to be held in October 2021, with further in-person negotiations in 2022. In this final chapter we address the first full draft of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, issued in July 2021, examine how it can best be implemented and explore ways to link the objectives and outcomes of the UNCBD COP15 and the UNFCCC COP26.

### The Convention on Biological Diversity and COP15

#### Box 4: The Convention on Biological Diversity

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) is the international legal instrument for “the conservation of biological diversity, the sustainable use of its components and the fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources.”

Source: UN.org, [Convention on Biological Diversity, key international instrument for sustainable development](#) [Date accessed 30 August 2021]

91. The Convention on Biological Diversity was opened for Governments to sign at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio in 1992, known as the ‘Earth Summit’.<sup>146</sup> The Convention has been ratified by 196 countries. As a framework convention, the CBD is intended to establish guidelines and principles and provides a framework for nations to adopt more specific obligations relating to biodiversity.

92. The CBD’s governing body is the Conference of the Parties (COP). This ultimate authority of all governments (or Parties) that have ratified the treaty meets every two years to review progress, set priorities and commit to work plans. At COP10, held in Aichi, Japan in 2010, a set of 20 Biodiversity Targets were agreed by 196 countries under the CBD. This UN Treaty aimed to halt the loss of biodiversity globally by 2020. As detailed in our first biodiversity report, none of the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets were achieved in full<sup>147</sup> and the state of global biodiversity continues to decline at an alarming rate.<sup>148</sup>

93. During COP15, the Convention is expected to adopt a post-2020 global biodiversity framework as a stepping-stone towards a 2050 Vision of “Living in harmony with nature”.<sup>149</sup> The negotiations to develop the post-2020 global biodiversity framework are being undertaken prior to COP15 by working groups overseen by the Bureau of the CBD. The final working group took place virtually in August and September 2021.

146 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, [“Introduction, History and List of Parties”](#), accessed 23 August 2021

147 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, [Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 – Summary for Policy Makers](#), (2020)

148 IPBES, [Summary for policymakers of the global assessment report on biodiversity and ecosystem services of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services](#), (2019)

149 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, [Preparations for the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework](#), accessed 13 October 2020

94. Dr Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias, a former Executive Secretary of the UNCBD, told us that COP15 presented a unique opportunity to enhance efforts to protect biodiversity, but that its success would depend on the will of governments, society and the business community to face this challenge.<sup>150</sup>

## The first draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

95. In July 2021 the Secretariat of the CBD published the first official draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.<sup>151</sup> The draft framework has four long-term goals for 2050 related to the 2050 Vision for Biodiversity, with each 2050 goal having corresponding milestones to assess progress in 2030. The long-term goals relate to:

- a) Enhanced integrity of all ecosystems;
- b) Valuing, maintaining or enhancing Nature's contributions to people through conservation and sustainable use;
- c) Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits from the utilization of genetic resources; and
- d) Closing the gap between available financial and other means of implementation, and those necessary to achieve the 2050 Vision.

96. The draft framework identifies 21 action-oriented targets for 2030 which, if achieved, will contribute to 2030 Milestones. These targets bear resemblance to the Aichi biodiversity targets. They include a target for 30 per cent of land and sea to be protected; a target for pollution from all sources to be reduced to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity; and a target focused on nature-based solutions to climate change. The first official draft also includes sections on: implementation support mechanisms; enabling conditions; responsibility and transparency; and outreach, awareness, and uptake.

97. The proposed reporting structure mirrors that currently undertaken, where national governments devise national strategies and action plans to implement the framework, report action towards these to the CBD bureau, and the CBD bureau undertakes global reports on action towards targets.

## UK's negotiating position for COP15

98. The UK Government's stated objective is to agree a framework that ensures the transformative changes needed for halting and reversing global biodiversity loss.<sup>152</sup> The Government has said that it will push for ambitious and practical targets, strengthened by coherent implementation mechanisms. The Government also wants targets to be evidence-based, measurable and have adequate monitoring criteria.

99. The UK is leading the Global Ocean Alliance in support of a new global target of protecting at least 30% of the global ocean within Marine Protected Areas by 2030. This

150 [Q27](#)

151 Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Biological Diversity, [First draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (5 July 2021). A preceding '[zero draft](#)' was issued in January 2020 for consideration by the Open-Ended CBD Working Group set up to consider the framework, and an '[updated zero draft](#)' (or '[0.5 draft](#)') was issued in September 2020.

152 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

“30by30” target would represent a trebling of the current CBD 10% marine protection target for 2020. The UK has also signed the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature, committing to reversing biodiversity loss by 2030.<sup>153</sup>

100. As a host of COP26, the UK has highlighted that nature will be one thematic priority where the UK will actively push initiatives and outcomes. In addition, the UK COP26 Presidency is looking at linkages between the climate negotiations and biodiversity negotiations as a means to intensify the global response to the interconnected climate and biodiversity emergencies.<sup>154</sup>

## Assessment of current framework, goals and targets

101. The first official draft of the framework appears to be a good starting point, though it has been criticised for lacking ambition. Overall, stakeholders are pushing for clear SMART targets (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timely), where every target must deliver the action necessary to deliver the goals, in such a way that, in aggregate, delivery of all 21 targets would result in the delivery of all 4 goals.<sup>155</sup>

102. There are certain goals and targets of particular concern which we hope the UK Government will advocate during negotiations before and during COP15. For each of these goals, we have set out the current text in the boxes below and provided corresponding analysis gathered during the inquiry.

### The 2030 Mission

#### Box 5: The 2030 Mission

*Draft text: To take urgent action across society to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits from the use of genetics resources, to put biodiversity on a path to recovery by 2030 for the benefit of planet and people.*<sup>156</sup>

Source: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (5 July 2021)

103. Several environmental groups believe the 2030 Mission currently lacks ambition.<sup>157</sup> The IUCN sees the “path to recovery” as too passive and ambiguous, arguing for stronger

153 Prime Minister’s Office, “[PM commits to protect 30% of UK land in boost for biodiversity](#)”, 28 September 2020

154 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

155 Braulio FS Dias, [The Slow but Steady Progress in the Implementation of the Biodiversity Agendas](#) (2020); JNCC ([BIO0012](#)); [Q30](#)

156 In the 2030 Mission, “to take urgent action” reflects the need for action to be taken this decade to address the biodiversity crisis. “Across society” reflects the need for actions to be taken by all stakeholders, and for mainstreaming across sectors of society and the economy. “To put nature on a path to recovery” implies the need for positive action-oriented approach and the need for concerted and strategic action across a range of issues. It also implies the need for a stabilization in the rate of loss of biodiversity and enhanced protection and restoration. “For the benefit of people and planet” highlights elements of nature’s contributions to people, makes a strong link to the delivery of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals while also recognizing the intrinsic and existential importance of biodiversity. The 2030 deadline articulates that this mission is a milestone on the way to the 2050 Vision of “living in harmony with nature” and reinforces the need for urgent action this decade. Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, Convention on Biological Diversity, [First draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (5 July 2021)

157 RSPB ([BIO0023](#)); IUCN, [IUCN views on the Zero draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (2020); Birdlife, [BirdLife International’s initial reactions to Draft 1 of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (July 2021)

language to halt net biodiversity loss by 2030.<sup>158</sup> Birdlife have added that the objective needs to be to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.<sup>159</sup> The Business for Nature group, which includes Unilever, have also supported this objective.<sup>160</sup> The WWF is advocating “zero net loss of nature from 2020, net positive by 2030, full recovery by 2050.”<sup>161</sup> Both WWF and Birdlife International have highlighted that the draft does not match up to the ambition of recent commitments such as the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature, committing to reverse biodiversity loss by 2030, and the G7 2030 Nature Compact, committing to halt and reverse biodiversity loss in this decade.<sup>162</sup> The UK is signatory to both these initiatives.

104. Kate Norgrove, Executive Director for Campaigns and Advocacy, WWF, stressed to us why a strong biodiversity mission was so important to the success of COP15:

There is no global goal that the world is driving towards on nature....The UK should ensure that this post-2020 framework includes a mission statement, a goal for nature, so that we can do for nature what climate targets do for emissions. We need that because we need to have a clearly stated global direction to drive investment into the right places. We need to signal to markets, to the public and to national policymakers the level of ambition that we have all together.<sup>163</sup>

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158 IUCN, [IUCN views on the Zero draft Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#)

159 Birdlife, [BirdLife International’s initial reactions to Draft 1 of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (July 2021)

160 Unilever ([BIO0064](#))

161 WWF ([BIO0047](#))

162 Birdlife, [BirdLife International’s initial reactions to Draft 1 of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (July 2021)

163 [Q30](#)

## The species goal (Goal A)

### Box 6: Goal A: Draft text

*Draft text: The integrity of all ecosystems is enhanced, with an increase of at least 15 per cent in the area, connectivity and integrity of natural ecosystems, supporting healthy and resilient populations of all species, the rate of extinctions has been reduced at least tenfold, and the risk of species extinctions across all taxonomic and functional groups, is halved, and genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded, with at least 90 per cent of genetic diversity within all species maintained.*

#### Milestone A.1

- *Net gain in the area, connectivity and integrity of natural systems of at least 5 per cent.*

#### Milestone A.2

- *The increase in the extinction rate is halted or reversed, and the extinction risk is reduced by at least 10 per cent, with a decrease in the proportion of species that are threatened, and the abundance and distribution of populations of species is enhanced or at least maintained.*

#### Milestone A.3

- *Genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded, with an increase in the proportion of species that have at least 90 per cent of their genetic diversity maintained.*

Source: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (5 July 2021)

105. The species goal is much weaker than the corresponding Aichi Target 12, which previously committed to stopping extinctions. The current target looks to reduce the rate of extinctions by “at least tenfold”. The IUCN has argued that no human-induced extinctions are acceptable and that the rate of extinction should therefore be zero.<sup>164</sup> Birdlife International noted that the first draft had removed the SMART element of the goal present in the updated zero (or 0.5) draft issued in September 2020 and removed any assessment of species abundance in the headline indicators proposed.<sup>165</sup>

## Nature-based solutions to climate change target (Target 8)

### Box 7: Nature-based solutions target: Draft text

*Draft text: Target 8. Minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity, contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches, contributing at least 10 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year to global mitigation efforts, and ensure that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.*

Source: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (5 July 2021)

106. In the 0.5 draft, the term nature-based solutions (NbS) was explicitly used. This has been replaced in the first official draft by “ecosystem-based approaches”. It is unclear why

<sup>164</sup> IUCN, [IUCN's Key Messages First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (2021)

<sup>165</sup> Birdlife, [BirdLife International's initial reactions to Draft 1 of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (July 2021)

the term was replaced, and the IUCN has recommended that reference to NbS should be reinserted.<sup>166</sup> Birdlife International said any reference to NbS must come alongside a set of agreed principles as to what good nature-based solutions look like.<sup>167</sup>

107. In our earlier report, we explored how important NbS could be to addressing climate change and preserving biodiversity. We concluded that NbS could not be used as an alternative to decarbonising the economy. Acknowledging this, the IUCN has proposed an alternative formulation of the target:

Minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity through urgent reduction of GHG emissions, biodiversity-focused adaptation and resilience measures, through Nature-based Solutions and ecosystem-based approaches for mitigation and adaptation, ensuring all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.<sup>168</sup>

We heard in evidence that a biodiversity framework that recognises the role of nature-based solutions, combined with COP26 decisions which do the same, could provide an opportunity to work across the CBD and UNFCCC and join the climate and biodiversity agendas together.<sup>169</sup> Birdlife International noted that the removal of the term 'nature-based solutions' made connections with the UNFCCC agenda less explicit.<sup>170</sup> Professor Robert Watson, former Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Biodiversity Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), expressed disappointment that the draft did not explicitly acknowledge that the issues of biodiversity, climate change and land degradation must be addressed together and the goals, targets and actions of the three conventions should be jointly developed and harmonised.<sup>171</sup>

## Missing targets

108. The WWF has noted that there currently lacks a clear target to reduce countries' ecological footprint of production and consumption.<sup>172</sup> The most relevant target is target 16 set out in Box 7 below.

### Box 8: Target 16: Draft text

*Draft text: Target 16. Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make responsible choices and have access to relevant information and alternatives, taking into account cultural preferences, to reduce by at least half the waste and, where relevant the overconsumption, of food and other materials.*

Source: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity (5 July 2021)

109. Dr Braulio F. S. Dias told us that biodiversity loss was continuing to accelerate because the underlying causes of biodiversity loss had not been tackled, including unsustainable

166 IUCN, [IUCN's Key Messages First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (2021)

167 Birdlife International, [REFLECTIONS ON THE ZERO DRAFT POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK](#) (February 2020)

168 IUCN, [IUCN's Key Messages First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (2021)

169 Q34; Q167

170 Birdlife, [BirdLife International's initial reactions to Draft 1 of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#) (July 2021)

171 "UN publishes first draft of Paris Agreement-style global treaty for tackling biodiversity loss", BusinessGreen, 13 July 2021

172 WWF ([BIO0047](#))

consumption and production patterns.<sup>173</sup> Dr Dias recommended that countries sign a decisive pact for sustainable consumption in governmental, business and individual purchases.<sup>174</sup> Kate Norgrove, of WWF, said the global footprint of the agricultural sector, in particular needed to be addressed.<sup>175</sup> In our earlier report, we recommended that the Government start the process of setting an environmental footprint target by launching a consultation ahead of COP15 on how to model the overseas environmental impact of UK consumption.<sup>176</sup> Kate Norgrove told us that:

If we have a good commitment from the UK on tackling our global footprint, in particular looking at deforestation embedded in our supply chains...we can use that as a basis for an international agreement in 2021 to make this the norm.<sup>177</sup>

## Implementing the framework

### *Implementation mechanisms*

110. The CBD's implementation mechanisms include:

- a) Countries establishing national biodiversity targets as part of national strategies and action plans to contribute towards global targets;
- b) Countries reporting national targets and adjusting them to match the action required to meet global targets;
- c) Evaluation of national and collective action against targets by UN bodies.

111. Dr Dias and Kate Norgrove told us that in their view the CBD lacked a regular review mechanism like that adopted under the Paris Agreement which encourages Parties to 'ratchet' the level of ambition of their National Targets to reduce the collective mismatch with the agreed global targets.<sup>178</sup> The WWF recommended that the UK should address this by pushing for an implementation mechanism which would require all governments to translate the framework and its targets in relevant national planning processes, to review progress made in implementation of the framework every four years, and ramp up the delivery of plans and action at the national level through a "ratcheting" process.<sup>179</sup> The IUCN, the RSPB and the Business for Nature coalition all support a similar monitor, report and review mechanism.<sup>180</sup> The IUCN and the WWF have added that the implementation mechanism should commence immediately after the adoption of the framework.<sup>181</sup> The IUCN recommended that, following COP15, the Parties should immediately update their existing National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs) in accordance with the approved new goals and targets.<sup>182</sup>

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173 [Q27](#)

174 Braulio F. S. Dias, [The Slow but Steady Progress in the Implementation of the Biodiversity Agendas](#) (2020)

175 [Q34](#)

176 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?](#), HC 136

177 [Q34](#)

178 [Q34](#)

179 WWF ([BIO0047](#))

180 IUCN, [IUCN's Key Messages First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (2021); RSPB ([BIO0023](#)); Unilever ([BIO0064](#)) para 24, citing the Business for Nature platform

181 WWF, [Draft UN biodiversity agreement falls short, says WWF](#), 12 July 2021; IUCN, [IUCN's Key Messages First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (2021)

182 IUCN, [IUCN's Key Messages First Draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework](#), (2021)

112. The Government has said that at COP15 it will support and push for ambitious and practical targets, strengthened by coherent implementation mechanisms that are commensurate with the scale of the challenge. Minister Goldsmith told us he was supportive of a ratcheting mechanism:

One of the things we want to do...is to create a nature version of the [Nationally Determined Contributions within the Paris Agreement] and have them signed up so countries can be held to account. Yes, some countries will miss their targets, but at least they can be held to account. At the moment it is like pinning jelly to a ceiling knowing what each country has to do. Although we have failed to meet many of our targets here in the UK, we have taken the process of measuring progress, or lack of it, more seriously...We need to see that replicated around the world.<sup>183</sup>

### ***The need for greater mainstreaming of biodiversity considerations across government departments***

113. Dr Dias told us that most countries still lacked effective cross-sectoral dialogue and coordination mechanisms to address biodiversity loss. He said it was the departments that were not explicitly focused on nature, where biodiversity was lost: “in transportation, urbanisation, agriculture, energy and so on.”<sup>184</sup>

114. The NAO has recently found that a lack of cross-departmental engagement on nature has impeded the Government meeting its long-term environmental goals.<sup>185</sup> When asked how Ministers were looking to work together to address biodiversity loss, Minister Goldsmith told us that Defra had been working very closely with the Treasury. He said that the Treasury has historically been a block on any kind of progress in relation to nature, biodiversity and climate, but that does not appear to be the case this time.<sup>186</sup> He added that there was “total alignment” between Defra and the FCDO on international biodiversity work and that

the cross-departmental stuff is happening much more now than it was even a year and a half ago, since we decided, rightly, that nature has to be at the heart of our approach to tackling climate change.<sup>187</sup>

115. The House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee has said that the Environment Bill’s policy statement on the environmental principles could be a powerful tool for mainstreaming environmental concerns, including biodiversity, across Government.<sup>188</sup> However, they noted that the reach of the draft policy statement was limited as it gave key departments, such as HM Treasury and the Ministry of Defence, exemptions from the requirement to give due regard to the environmental principles.<sup>189</sup>

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183 [Q192](#)

184 [Q27](#)

185 National Audit Office, Achieving government’s long-term environmental goals, Session 2019–2021, [HC 958](#) (11 November 2020)

186 [Q193](#)

187 [Q194](#)

188 House of Lords, COP15 - the UN Biodiversity Conference, [Letter from the Environment and Climate Change Committee to the Secretary of State](#), Session 2021–2022, 22 July 2021

189 [Ibid](#)

116. We came to the same conclusion in our initial report and recommended that general taxation and spending should not be exempt from the Environmental Principles.<sup>190</sup> In response to our recommendation the Government observed that:

the exemption on the 'allocation of resources' refers to central spending decisions only, individual policies that require spending will still need to consider the policy statement... Taxation is excluded from the remit of the principles to provide for maximum flexibility in respect of the nation's finances. As part of considering tax changes, where appropriate HM Treasury already uses environmental data including that from other government departments and third parties, to assess environmental impacts. At Spring Budget 2021, the government published an assessment of the environmental impact of relevant tax measures.<sup>191</sup>

### *The need for financial resources*

117. The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established 30 years ago to tackle the planet's most pressing environmental problems.<sup>192</sup> The GEF is the largest multilateral trust fund focused on enabling developing countries to invest in nature. It supports the implementation of major international environmental agreements including on biodiversity, climate change, chemicals, and desertification.<sup>193</sup> Since 1996 the GEF has provided financial support to countries that have signed the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).<sup>194</sup> However, the biodiversity funding gap is still large. The Paulson Institute has estimated that the financing gap to reverse the decline of biodiversity by 2030 is approximately US\$711bn per year.<sup>195</sup>

118. The UK's main contribution to tackling global biodiversity loss is through funding of the GEF (£250 million between 2018 and 2022).<sup>196</sup> Dr Dias stressed to us that GEF funding was not enough to address the challenge of global biodiversity loss:

The Global Environment Facility funds many conventions, but for the last 10 years the funding level of the GEF has reached a ceiling. It has not been increased, so the problem is increasing but the funding is not increasing. Unless we can face and find solutions for this, there is no way we will be more ambitious at COP15.<sup>197</sup>

When asked whether the UK should substantially raise their contribution to the GEF and other UN funding mechanisms Dr Dias said:

Certainly. Climate change benefits from the GEF, but it has established several dedicated financial mechanisms. The CBD has never had the strong support of key nations to get there, so that is an important issue.<sup>198</sup>

190 Environmental Audit Committee, First Report of Session 2021–22, [Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?](#), HC 136, para 316

191 Environmental Audit Committee, Third Special Report of Session 2021–22, Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust: Government Response to the Committee's First Report of Session 2021–22, HC 727

192 Gef, "[About us](#)", accessed 3 September 2021

193 Gef, "[About us](#)", accessed 3 September 2021

194 Gef, [GEF and the Convention on Biological Diversity](#), accessed 3 September 2021

195 Deutz, A., Heal, G. M., Niu, R., Swanson, E., Townshend, T., Zhu, L., Delmar, A., Meghji, A., Sethi, S. A., and Tobin-de la Puente, J. [Financing Nature: Closing the global biodiversity financing gap](#). (2020) The Paulson Institute, The Nature Conservancy, and the Cornell Atkinson Center for Sustainability.

196 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

197 [Q31](#)

198 [Q31](#)

119. This led Dr Dias to recommend that the UK support the establishment of a dedicated global fund for biodiversity. All signatories to the Convention of Biological Diversity have already agreed to a dedicated financial mechanism, as set out in Article 21 of the Convention, and yet the Convention still lacks a dedicated fund.<sup>199</sup> The House of Lords Environment and Climate Change Committee has recommended that the Government reach out to international partners to promote an increase in commitments to funding for biodiversity action.<sup>200</sup>

120. In September 2019, the Prime Minister announced a £220 million International Biodiversity Fund to fund overseas territory projects, address illegal wildlife trade and support five biodiverse landscapes.<sup>201</sup> The UK has also committed to spending at least £3 billion of International Climate Finance on nature-based solutions to climate change, over five years.<sup>202</sup> The £3 billion will come from the existing aid budget, which itself was reduced from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of gross national income in 2021.<sup>203</sup>

## Pairing UNCBD COP15 and UNFCCC COP26

121. The People's Republic of China is scheduled to host the first phase of COP15 shortly before the UK hosts the COP26 climate summit due to take place in Glasgow in November 2021.<sup>204</sup> Environment and climate organisations have pointed out that working together to achieve positive outcomes from both summits would be mutually beneficial, and have suggested several ways this could happen.<sup>205</sup>

122. The Government has acknowledged that 2021 will present a significant opportunity to address the twin crises of biodiversity loss and climate change in an integrated way. Defra told us that

As the host of UNFCCC COP26, we will reinforce and amplify awareness and action on the linkages between these two global issues, including in the lead up to Convention on Biological Diversity COP15. Nature-based solutions play a critical role in tackling both climate change and biodiversity loss, which is why 'nature' will be a key focus of COP26 in Glasgow. In taking this approach we will demonstrate the multiple benefits of nature-based solutions for climate and biodiversity, as well as the development benefits for people.<sup>206</sup>

123. Minister Goldsmith and Cheryl Case, Deputy Director for International Environmental Negotiations at Defra, told us that President Xi and the Prime Minister

199 United Nations, [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (1992)

200 House of Lords, COP15 - the UN Biodiversity Conference, [Letter from the Environment and Climate Change Committee to the Secretary of State](#), Session 2021–2022, 22 July 2021

201 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

202 Prime Minister's Office, ["Prime Minister commits £3bn UK climate finance to supporting nature"](#), 11 January 2021

203 HM Treasury, [Spending Review 2020](#), (November 2020) Paragraph 6.48, p.70

204 On 8 September 2021 the Ministry of Ecology and Environment of the People's Republic of China announced that the CBD COP15 would be held in two phases. The first phase, to take place between 11th and 15th October 2021, is to include the opening ceremony, leaders' speeches, general agenda, the issuance of the "Kunming Declaration" and other documents. Overseas personnel are to participate in the meeting online. The second phase is to be held in Kunming in the first half of 2022 "to facilitate broad and in-depth consultations to promote a broad consensus, and an ambitious and pragmatic post-2020 global biodiversity framework."

205 WWF ([BIO0047](#)); RSPB ([BIO0023](#)); People and Nature ([BIO0021](#)); National Trust ([BIO0035](#))

206 Defra ([BIO0054](#))

had committed to a close working relationship in the interests of sustainability, and that on the secretariat level the UK had been “continually in touch with China” on their joint working as respective presidents of the UNFCCC COP and UNCBD COP.<sup>207</sup>

124. Conservation and climate groups have suggested various ways to link the two COPs together in evidence to this inquiry. These include:

- **Agreed principles over nature-based solutions.**<sup>208</sup> The National Trust suggest this could be agreed through either the CBD or UNFCCC process to maximise the benefits to climate and biodiversity, consider the trade-offs between biodiversity and climate goals and avoid unintentional damage.<sup>209</sup>
- **A Covenant for People and Nature:** a signed agreement by governments at both COPs to demonstrate ‘political commitment to putting people and nature at the heart of their economic recovery’ following the pandemic. WWF and the People and Nature Campaign propose similar such covenants.<sup>210</sup>
- **Creating a new Special Envoy for Climate Change and Biodiversity:** this proposal is supported by Bright Blue, a conservative think tank.<sup>211</sup> The Government has a ‘special representative’ for Climate Change, but there is no special representation on biodiversity or representation linking the two issues. The envoy would perform a similar role to that of Sir David King when he was Special Representative for Climate Change from September 2013 until March 2017, supporting diplomatic efforts to achieve the Paris Agreement.

125. Dr Dias told us that the concept of nature-based solutions was not fully developed, and so there was an uneasiness by many governments to support fully the use of the concept. He recommended that preparatory negotiations on nature-based solutions be set-up quickly to facilitate a decision at COP15 fully defining the meaning of nature-based solutions with regard to the CBD mandate.<sup>212</sup> Unilever, as part of the Natural Climate Solutions Alliance, has called for swift resolution at COP26 on Article 6 of the Paris Agreement, so as to help unlock carbon finance for natural climate solutions. Article 6 covers rules on how countries can reduce emissions using international carbon markets.<sup>213</sup> The Natural Climate Solution Alliance wants to encourage compliance markets to scale up affordable natural solutions for climate change mitigation.<sup>214</sup>

126. We also heard that the UK could support China by sharing its experience in international environmental negotiations and leadership. Dr Dias told us that whilst China had been making great progress internally on addressing biodiversity loss, it lacked experience in leading environmental negotiations.<sup>215</sup> This was an area where UK had much more experience and so could provide valuable support. Kate Norgrove agreed that diplomatic outreach and exchange would be crucial to the success of COP15.<sup>216</sup> She also

207 [Q197](#)

208 Birdlife International, [REFLECTIONS ON THE ZERO DRAFT POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK](#) (2020); National Trust ([BIO0035](#))

209 National Trust ([BIO0035](#))

210 WWF ([BIO0047](#)); People and Nature ([BIO0021](#))

211 Bright Blue ([BIO0006](#))

212 [Q39](#)

213 Unilever ([BIO0064](#))

214 Unilever ([BIO0064](#))

215 [Q39](#)

216 [Q41](#)

recommended that there be an event to bring the two processes together and that a “big diplomatic win” would be to see China sign the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature.<sup>217</sup>

### *Our view*

127. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 summit presents an opportunity to create a transformative Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that will ‘bend the curve’ of biodiversity loss. The UK has a crucial role to play in promoting a transformative, ambitious agenda that pairs with its ambitions for the UNFCCC COP26 summit and provides a clear way forward from both events. Parties to the CBD failed to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set in 2010. The same mistake must not be repeated.

128. We reiterate our welcome for the UK Government’s leadership in establishing the Global Ocean Alliance and signing the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature. We also welcome the establishment of nature as a key theme for COP26.

129. The publication of the first draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework provides a promising starting point, but elements of the draft lack ambition.

- The 2030 mission should be clearer and stronger, and should align with the Leaders’ Pledge for Nature and G7 2030 Nature Compact to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.
- The species goal (Goal A) is too weak. It should aim to stop human-induced extinctions and the goal should be made into a SMART target.
- Target 8 on ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaption should include reference to nature-based solutions to climate change, so that more explicit links can be made between the UNCBD and UNFCCC processes.
- The framework must address the need to reduce unsustainable consumption and production patterns from developed countries.

We have already recommended that the Government start the process of setting an environmental footprint target by launching a consultation ahead of COP15 on how to model the overseas environmental impact of UK consumption.

130. The Post-2020 Framework’s goals and targets will be meaningless if not properly implemented. The CBD ought to adopt a regular review mechanism, such as that adopted under the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC, which encourages Parties to ‘ratchet’ the level of ambition of their National Targets so that, over time, their collective commitments are matched with global targets. We agree with environmental stakeholders that the implementation mechanism should start immediately after the adoption of the framework, instead of being agreed separately after COP15. We are encouraged that Ministers are seeking to establish a nature version of the Paris Agreement at COP15.

131. Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations across government departments will be crucial to meeting the Post-2020 Biodiversity Targets. The UK's past performance on cross-departmental co-ordination on nature has been disappointing. We have nevertheless been encouraged to observe the willingness of Ministers to work across Government to address biodiversity loss and climate change. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of cross-departmental working on the environment in the run up to COP15 and COP26 and beyond.

132. The policy statement on environmental principles, to be prepared under the Environment Bill, ought to be a powerful tool for mainstreaming environmental concerns, including biodiversity, across Government. So the Government's response to the recommendation of our previous report—arguing that general taxation and spending should be exempt from the statement of environmental principles—was disappointing. We are concerned that the Government's approach to this issue shows a lack of commitment to the genuine mainstreaming of environmental considerations across all Government departments.

133. The global biodiversity funding gap is huge. It cannot be tackled with contributions from the Global Environment Facility alone. A dedicated financial mechanism for biodiversity action, as has already been set out and agreed by Parties under the CBD, is essential. We welcome the UK's commitment to spend £3 billion of its International Climate Finance allocation to support nature-based solutions to climate change.

134. As host of COP26, the UK has an instrumental role to play in pairing the UNCBD COP16 and UNFCCC COP26. We are encouraged by Ministers' assurances that there is a close working relationship with their Chinese counterparts regarding efforts to join the two COPs together. Agreeing a working definition and principles for nature-based solutions can provide a tangible way to link the two conferences and their outcomes. The UK can also support China by sharing its experience in conducting international environmental negotiations.

135. *In promoting a transformative Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, we recommend that the UK Government advocate:*

- *A strengthening of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework's 2030 mission to align with the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and G7 2030 Nature Compact to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.*
- *A more ambitious, SMARTer species goal (Goal A) which commits to stopping human-induced extinctions.*
- *Inclusion of reference to nature-based solutions in Target 8, so that the UNFCCC and UNCBD processes can be better linked.*
- *Stronger wording on the need to reduce unsustainable consumption and production patterns amongst developed countries.*
- *An ambitious Paris-style review mechanism for biodiversity, which encourages Parties to 'ratchet' the level of ambition of their National Targets at regular review intervals.*
- *A dedicated financial mechanism for the UNCBD.*

*136. To help pair the UNCBD and UNFCCC COPs, we recommend the UK explore opportunities to support China on leading international environmental negotiations. We also recommend that China and the UK collaborate on how to integrate nature-based solutions across both COPs; and we recommend that the UK encourage China to sign the Leaders' Pledge for Nature as a demonstration of its environmental leadership ahead of COP15.*

## Conclusions and recommendations

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### Consumption, trade and supply chains: the UK's impact on global biodiversity levels

1. Consumption patterns in the UK are unsustainable. Addressing these patterns is key to the UK's contribution to the alleviation of global biodiversity loss. The first step is to recognise the need to reduce the UK's overall consumption. We welcome that the Government has commissioned the Joint Nature Conservation Committee to develop a global environmental footprint indicator, but we are disappointed that the Government has not then committed to setting a global footprint target using this indicator to track progress in order to reduce the UK's global environmental footprint. (Paragraph 23)
2. In 2018 the Government announced it would devise an indicator on the overseas environmental impacts of UK consumption of key commodities. It appears that little to no progress has been made in developing this indicator. This is disappointing and shows a lack of prioritisation in addressing one of the biggest drivers of land conversion, biodiversity loss and carbon emissions at a global scale. (Paragraph 24)
3. *We recommend that the Government urgently prioritise the development of the indicator on overseas environmental impacts of UK consumption of key commodities, since a better understanding of the environmental impacts of imported products is crucial to meeting the Government's objectives in this regard. The indicator ought to be prepared for release not later than the date of the next Outcome Indicator Framework update. We also recommend that the Government commit to setting an environmental footprint target using this indicator once developed.* (Paragraph 25)
4. Ministers should consider how best to encourage behavioural change towards more sustainable and ethical patterns of consumption. Subsidies, environmental tax measures and tax reliefs are some of the financial and fiscal tools available to government. The Public Accounts Committee has criticised the Government's grasp of the potential for tax measures to bring about environmental change and has recommended that from the next budget, the Treasury should: assess the environmental impact of every tax change considered; and publish the expected environmental impact for each tax measure in the budget, including the extent of behavioural change, alongside forecasts for tax receipts. The Treasury have since rejected these recommendations as impractical and not cost-effective. We consider this to be a short-sighted approach; it will be more costly to the environment and the economy to not consider fully the environmental impacts of policy and tax changes. The approach calls into question the extent to which environment costings are properly considered in developing and setting tax policy. (Paragraph 26)
5. The Committee looks forward to seeing an ambitious approach from Government to embedding Net Zero in all policy decisions in its forthcoming Net Zero Strategy. (Paragraph 27)
6. *In the Net Zero Strategy, the Government should commit to evaluating all taxation changes against how well they deliver on the Government's environmental objectives.*

*The Government's approach to how taxation changes will be developed and assessed to achieve this should also be set out in the Strategy. (Paragraph 28)*

7. *The Net Zero Strategy should include an explicit commitment to Net Zero stress test all future fiscal events and a commitment to develop a nature stress test to be used for fiscal events. The Net Zero Strategy must be published before the start of COP26. (Paragraph 29)*
8. For the Government to make good on its support for environmental sustainability to be at the heart of global production and trade, it needs to mainstream biodiversity considerations more consistently into its trade agreements and operations. Leaving the European Union has provided an opportunity to promote the highest environmental and social standards in trade. We welcome Ministers' willingness to use future trade agreements as market signals for sustainably produced commodities and their support for considering the environmental impacts of agreements. We also welcome the Government's leadership in establishing the Wildlife Financial Taskforce. (Paragraph 35)
9. *We recommend that sustainability impact assessments be conducted for all future trade agreements and that as part of the Government's Nature Strategy the Government consider how to monitor and deliver environmental net gain in trade deals. In response to this report the Government should set out how it intends to widen participation in the Wildlife Financial Taskforce, whether through proposing a statutory obligation on businesses of a certain size, or through other means. (Paragraph 36)*
10. We welcome and agree with the Secretary of State's analysis that addressing the sustainability of the UK's global supply chains will be one of the most powerful ways in which the UK can reduce its adverse impact on levels of international biodiversity. The degradation of ecosystems brings supply chain, market and financial risks. Monitoring the impact of UK activities abroad presents obvious challenges: nevertheless, efforts must be stepped up to make overseas biodiversity monitoring a reality. (Paragraph 51)
11. Sustainable government procurement presents a pathway to increasing the sustainability of supply chains. Yet Government performance against existing sustainable procurement policies has been unimpressive. The removal of the mandatory reporting obligation by Government departments against the Greening Government Commitments has led to a dearth of data and has hampered the monitoring of compliance with the Government Buying Standards, to the extent that it appears at present impossible to know whether departments have improved their sustainable procurement performance. In the run up to COP15 and COP26, and at a time when the Government should be showing leadership on sustainability issues, its departments appear instead to be moving backwards. This increased opacity over departmental sustainability practices is unacceptable. (Paragraph 52)
12. We welcome the news that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs is considering restarting the routine reporting of levels of compliance with Government buying standards. We also note with approval the effect that Government commitments on the importation of sustainable palm oil has had on the supply chains of companies importing palm oil to the UK. (Paragraph 53)

13. *To increase sustainability within UK global supply chains, we recommend that:*
  - a) *in its response to this report, the Government should set out a clear and accessible definition of sustainability within the context of the Government Buying Standards;*
  - b) *the Government reinstate the Greening Government Commitments for mandatory reporting on sustainable procurement as part of the Government Buying Standards by the end of 2021;*
  - c) *the Government Buying Standards should require all acquired forest-risk commodities (in addition to palm oil and paper) to be certified as sustainably produced; and*
  - d) *the Government Buying Standards should be mandatory for all large public bodies, like the NHS and prisons. Annual reporting on compliance against public procurement policies should be mandatory for these large public bodies. (Paragraph 54)*
14. A natural capital approach to valuing agricultural products provides another way to increase the sustainability of supply chains. (Paragraph 55)
15. *Within the National Food Strategy the Government should consider how a natural capital approach could be adopted without placing a disproportionate financial burden on farmers or consumers. (Paragraph 56)*
16. 90% of respondents to the Government's consultation on new laws for forest-risk commodities believed proposals should be extended so that it is illegal for UK businesses to use any key commodities related to deforestation in their supply chains. We agree with stakeholders that global deforestation and the UK's contribution to it cannot be tackled without bold and ambitious action. This should include moving to deforestation-free supply chains. The finance sector should be included in due diligence obligations if the UK is to avoid funding deforestation through lending and investments. (Paragraph 57)
17. *To increase the sustainable use of forest-risk commodities we recommend that the Government make it illegal for UK businesses and the finance sector to use commodities linked to deforestation and, at the very least, include the finance sector within the scope of the provisions on forest-risk commodities in the Environment Bill. (Paragraph 58)*

### Biodiversity in the UK overseas territories

18. The UK Overseas Territories are home to 94 per cent of British endemic species and 90 per cent of the biodiversity for which the UK Government has responsibility. The territories are also of global importance given the large proportion of the world's albatross and penguin species found in these territories. Given this, environmental preservation and the improvement of these territories must be a priority for the UK Government. We welcome the impressive global leadership the UK has demonstrated through the establishment of the Blue Belt Programme, and the Global Ocean Alliance. (Paragraph 74)

19. *To further improve the state of biodiversity in the Overseas Territories, we recommend that gaps in their protection be rectified. Namely, we recommend that:*
- a) *Ministers assure and set out the long-term funding plan for the Blue Belt Programme. In response to this report the Government should set out the programme's long-term timetable, budget, and status following the Government's 2021 Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy.*
  - b) *Ministers review the environmental funding gap implications for the Overseas Territories following the UK leaving the EU. In response to this report Ministers should set out how the UK could fund landscape scale environmental projects with the potential for transformative biodiversity restoration.*
  - c) *In the Government's response to this report, Ministers should evaluate the feasibility of an environmental research portal for Overseas Territories.*
  - d) *Ministers should consider opportunities to use increasing global aerial surveillance capabilities from high altitude or space to monitor the Blue Belt Programme. (Paragraph 75)*

### International development and biodiversity

20. Consideration of natural capital must be a priority in the assessment of overseas development assistance projects. Nature sustains all of us and becomes even more critical in a developing country context. We welcome the Government's announcement of a new International Biodiversity Fund and its commitment to nature-proof all overseas development assistance expenditure. We now need to see the detail of how the Government intends to achieve this and how the Government will mainstream consideration of biodiversity across development, trade, security and foreign policy. We regret that the Government's international climate finance commitments, including its commitment to £3 billion on nature-based solutions to climate change, is not new and additional funding, but rather a redirection of the existing and reduced aid budget. (Paragraph 88)
21. *We recommend that in response to this report the Government detail how it intends to nature-proof overseas development assistance, and how compliance with this commitment will be monitored. (Paragraph 89)*

### The UNCBD COP15

22. The UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) COP15 summit presents an opportunity to create a transformative Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework that will 'bend the curve' of biodiversity loss. The UK has a crucial role to play in promoting a transformative, ambitious agenda that pairs with its ambitions for the UNFCCC COP26 summit and provides a clear way forward from both events. Parties to the CBD failed to achieve the Aichi Biodiversity Targets set in 2010. The same mistake must not be repeated. (Paragraph 127)

23. We reiterate our welcome for the UK Government's leadership in establishing the Global Ocean Alliance and signing the Leaders' Pledge for Nature. We also welcome the establishment of nature as a key theme for COP26. (Paragraph 128)
24. The publication of the first draft of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework provides a promising starting point, but elements of the draft lack ambition.
  - The 2030 mission should be clearer and stronger, and should align with the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and G7 2030 Nature Compact to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.
  - The species goal (Goal A) is too weak. It should aim to stop human-induced extinctions and the goal should be made into a SMART target.
  - Target 8 on ecosystem-based approaches to climate change mitigation and adaption should include reference to nature-based solutions to climate change, so that more explicit links can be made between the UNCBD and UNFCCC processes.
  - The framework must address the need to reduce unsustainable consumption and production patterns from developed countries.

We have already recommended that the Government start the process of setting an environmental footprint target by launching a consultation ahead of COP15 on how to model the overseas environmental impact of UK consumption. (Paragraph 129)

25. The Post-2020 Framework's goals and targets will be meaningless if not properly implemented. The CBD ought to adopt a regular review mechanism, such as that adopted under the Paris Agreement of the UNFCCC, which encourages Parties to 'ratchet' the level of ambition of their National Targets so that, over time, their collective commitments are matched with global targets. We agree with environmental stakeholders that the implementation mechanism should start immediately after the adoption of the framework, instead of being agreed separately after COP15. We are encouraged that Ministers are seeking to establish a nature version of the Paris Agreement at COP15. (Paragraph 130)
26. Mainstreaming biodiversity considerations across government departments will be crucial to meeting the Post-2020 Biodiversity Targets. The UK's past performance on cross-departmental co-ordination on nature has been disappointing. We have nevertheless been encouraged to observe the willingness of Ministers to work across Government to address biodiversity loss and climate change. We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of cross-departmental working on the environment in the run up to COP15 and COP26 and beyond. (Paragraph 131)
27. The policy statement on environmental principles, to be prepared under the Environment Bill, ought to be a powerful tool for mainstreaming environmental concerns, including biodiversity, across Government. So the Government's response to the recommendation of our previous report—arguing that general taxation and spending should be exempt from the statement of environmental principles—was disappointing. We are concerned that the Government's approach to this issue shows a lack of commitment to the genuine mainstreaming of environmental considerations across all Government departments. (Paragraph 132)

28. The global biodiversity funding gap is huge. It cannot be tackled with contributions from the Global Environment Facility alone. A dedicated financial mechanism for biodiversity action, as has already been set out and agreed by Parties under the CBD, is essential. We welcome the UK's commitment to spend £3 billion of its International Climate Finance allocation to support nature-based solutions to climate change. (Paragraph 133)
29. As host of COP26, the UK has an instrumental role to play in pairing the UNCBD COP16 and UNFCCC COP26. We are encouraged by Ministers' assurances that there is a close working relationship with their Chinese counterparts regarding efforts to join the two COPs together. Agreeing a working definition and principles for nature-based solutions can provide a tangible way to link the two conferences and their outcomes. The UK can also support China by sharing its experience in conducting international environmental negotiations. (Paragraph 134)
30. *In promoting a transformative Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, we recommend that the UK Government advocate:*
  - *A strengthening of the Post-2020 Biodiversity Framework's 2030 mission to align with the Leaders' Pledge for Nature and G7 2030 Nature Compact to halt and reverse biodiversity loss by 2030.*
  - *A more ambitious, SMARTer species goal (Goal A) which commits to stopping human-induced extinctions.*
  - *Inclusion of reference to nature-based solutions in Target 8, so that the UNFCCC and UNCBD processes can be better linked.*
  - *Stronger wording on the need to reduce unsustainable consumption and production patterns amongst developed countries.*
  - *An ambitious Paris-style review mechanism for biodiversity, which encourages Parties to 'ratchet' the level of ambition of their National Targets at regular review intervals.*
  - *A dedicated financial mechanism for the UNCBD.* (Paragraph 135)
31. *To help pair the UNCBD and UNFCCC COPs, we recommend the UK explore opportunities to support China on leading international environmental negotiations. We also recommend that China and the UK collaborate on how to integrate nature-based solutions across both COPs; and we recommend that the UK encourage China to sign the Leaders' Pledge for Nature as a demonstration of its environmental leadership ahead of COP15.* (Paragraph 136)

# Formal minutes

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**Wednesday 22 September 2021**

## **Members present**

Philip Dunne, in the Chair

Duncan Baker

Barry Gardiner

Mr Robert Goodwill

Helen Hayes

Caroline Lucas

Cherilyn Mackrory

Dr Matthew Offord

## **The UK's footprint on global biodiversity**

The Committee deliberated.

Draft Report (*The UK's footprint on global biodiversity*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Paragraphs 1 to 136 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Second Report of the Committee to the House.

*Ordered*, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

*Ordered*, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

## **Adjournment**

Adjourned till Wednesday 13 October at 2.00 p.m.

## Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Thursday 22 October 2020

**Tony Juniper**, Chair, Natural England; **Andy Purvis**, Lead Author of the IPBES Global Assessment of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, IPBES, Research Leader in Life Sciences, Natural History Museum; **Anne Larigauderie**, Executive Secretary, IPBES; **Doug Allan**, Filmmaker, Planet Earth and Blue Planet series

[Q1–25](#)

**Braulio Ferreira de Souza Dias**, Former Executive Secretary, UN Convention on Biological Diversity, Chairman, Global Council of Birdlife International, Vice Chairman, Board of Trustees of Biodiversity International; **Kate Norgrove**, Executive Director for Campaigns and Advocacy, WWF; **Elisa Morgera**, Professor of Global Environmental Law, Strathclyde University Law School

[Q26–46](#)

### Thursday 12 November 2020

**Professor Kathy Willis**, Member, Natural Capital Committee; **Julian Glover**, Chair, Landscape Review and former Associate Editor, London Evening Standard; **Craig Bennett**, Chief Executive, Wildlife Trusts; **Dr Ruth Little**, Lecturer, University of Sheffield

[Q47–79](#)

**Mayor Philip Glanville**, Member, Local Government Association's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board; **Kari Sprostranova**, Health, Safety, Environment and Sustainability Director, Balfour Beatty; **Caroline Knox**, Member, National Farmers' Union Environment Forum; **Ben McCarthy**, Head of Nature Conservation and Restoration Ecology, National Trust

[Q80–117](#)

### Wednesday 9 December 2020

**Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta**, Frank Ramsey Professor Emeritus, University of Cambridge, Lead, HMT Economics of Biodiversity Review

[Q118–138](#)

**Professor David Hill**, Chairman, Environment Bank; **Mihai Coroi**, Ecology Technical Principal, Mott MacDonald; **David Webster**, Director of Sustainability & External Affairs, Associated British Foods UK Grocery

[Q139–159](#)

**Nathalie Seddon**, Professor of Biodiversity, University of Oxford, Founder, Nature-based Solutions Initiative, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford; **Martin Harper**, Director of Global Conservation, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)

[Q160–168](#)

### Wednesday 13 January 2021

**Rt Hon George Eustice MP**, Secretary of State, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; **The Right Hon. the Lord Goldsmith of Richmond Park**, Minister for Pacific and the Environment, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; **Rt Hon Christopher Pincher MP**, Minister for Housing, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Cheryl Case**, Deputy Director for International Environmental Negotiations, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; **Simon Gallagher**, Director of Planning, Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government; **Richard Pullen**, Head of National Biodiversity Policy, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs

[Q169–216](#)

### Wednesday 24 February 2021

**Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta**, Lead, HMT Economics of Biodiversity Review, Professor Emeritus, University of Cambridge

[Q217–237](#)

### Thursday 4 March 2021

**Kemi Badenoch MP**, Exchequer Secretary, HM Treasury, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Equalities), Government Equalities Office; **Steve Field**, Director for Climate, Environment and Energy, HM Treasury

[Q238–285](#)

## Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

BIO numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 The Wildlife Trusts; and Wildlife and Countryside Link ([BIO0067](#))
- 2 Associated British Foods ([BIO0063](#))
- 3 Association of Local Environmental Records Centres ([BIO0041](#))
- 4 Balfour Beatty ([BIO0061](#))
- 5 Bright Blue ([BIO0006](#))
- 6 British Ecological Society ([BIO0050](#))
- 7 British Trust For Ornithology (BTO) ([BIO0030](#))
- 8 Bruford, Professor Michael (Professor of Biodiversity, Cardiff University); and Professor Rob Ogden (Head of Conservation Genetics, University of Edinburgh) ([BIO0008](#))
- 9 Buglife - The Invertebrate Conservation Trust ([BIO0024](#))
- 10 CLA ([BIO0052](#))
- 11 Centre for Biodiversity and Environment Research, University College London ([BIO0019](#))
- 12 Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management ([BIO0039](#))
- 13 Clark, Linda (None, None) ([BIO0066](#))
- 14 Collins, Mrs Carol ([BIO0043](#))
- 15 Crampton, Nicholas ([BIO0002](#))
- 16 Defra ([BIO0054](#))
- 17 Fauna & Flora International ([BIO0040](#))
- 18 Forestry Commission ([BIO0055](#))
- 19 Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust ([BIO0038](#))
- 20 Great British Oceans ([BIO0013](#))
- 21 Hathersage Rewilding Group, Hope Valley Climate Action ([BIO0044](#))
- 22 Hill, Professor David (Chairman, The Environment Bank Ltd) ([BIO0007](#))
- 23 Holroyd, Mr Steve (Retired) ([BIO0045](#))
- 24 Horton, Mr Jamie (Parliamentary Affairs Officer, Biomass UK) ([BIO0056](#))
- 25 Institute and Faculty of Actuaries ([BIO0068](#))
- 26 Islington Swifts Group ([BIO0046](#))
- 27 JNCC ([BIO0012](#))
- 28 Law Society of Scotland ([BIO0022](#))
- 29 Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF) ([BIO0020](#))
- 30 Little, Dr Ruth (Lecturer in Human Geography, University of Sheffield); Dr David Christian Rose (Elizabeth Creak Associate Professor of Agricultural Innovation and

Extension, University of Reading); Dr Judith Tsouvalis (Research Associate, University of Sheffield); and Prof Charlotte Burns (Professor of Politics, University of Sheffield) ([BIO0028](#))

- 31 Local Government Association ([BIO0010](#))
- 32 Microbiology Society ([BIO0011](#))
- 33 Mineral Products Association ([BIO0004](#))
- 34 Mott MacDonald ([BIO0053](#))
- 35 National Biodiversity Network Trust ([BIO0026](#))
- 36 National Farmers' Union ([BIO0036](#))
- 37 National Trust ([BIO0035](#))
- 38 Natural Capital Committee ([BIO0059](#))
- 39 Natural England ([BIO0058](#))
- 40 Natural England ([BIO0057](#))
- 41 Natural England ([BIO0027](#))
- 42 Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC); Biofuelwatch; Southern Environmental Law Center; Fern; and Dogwood Alliance ([BIO0016](#))
- 43 Nature-based Solutions Initiative, Department of Zoology, University of Oxford ([BIO0060](#))
- 44 Office for National Statistics ([BIO0069](#))
- 45 On the EDGE Conservation ([BIO0029](#))
- 46 One Ocean Hub; One Ocean Hub; and One Ocean Hub ([BIO0062](#))
- 47 People and Nature ([BIO0021](#))
- 48 Population Matters ([BIO0032](#))
- 49 Population Matters ([BIO0033](#))
- 50 RSPB ([BIO0023](#))
- 51 Romsey and District Society Natural Environment Committee ([BIO0003](#))
- 52 Salisbury and Wilton Swifts ([BIO0049](#))
- 53 Summers, Mr. William ([BIO0001](#))
- 54 Tesco Stores Ltd ([BIO0031](#))
- 55 Thames Water ([BIO0048](#))
- 56 The Pew Charitable Trusts ([BIO0037](#))
- 57 The Wildlife Trusts ([BIO0065](#))
- 58 The Wildlife Trusts ([BIO0015](#))
- 59 UCL Institute for Innovation and Public Purpose ([BIO0018](#))
- 60 Unilever ([BIO0064](#))
- 61 WWF ([BIO0047](#))
- 62 Wildlife and Countryside Link ([BIO0014](#))
- 63 Wimbledon Swifts Group ([BIO0051](#))
- 64 Woodland Trust ([BIO0034](#))

65 Yorkshire Integrated Catchment Solutions Programme (iCASP) ([BIO0017](#))

66 Yorkshire Water ([BIO0025](#))

# List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

## Session 2021–22

| Number      | Title                                                                                                                                                                               | Reference |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1st         | Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?                                                                                                                                              | HC 136    |
| 1st Special | Energy efficiency of existing homes: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report of Session 2019–21                                                                        | HC 135    |
| 2nd Special | Growing back better: putting nature and net zero at the heart of the economic recovery: Government and Bank of England Responses to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2019–21 | HC 327    |
| 3rd Special | Biodiversity in the UK: bloom or bust?: Government Response to the Committee's First Report                                                                                         | HC 727    |

## Session 2019–21

| Number      | Title                                                                                            | Reference |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1st         | Electronic Waste and the Circular Economy                                                        | HC 220    |
| 2nd         | Pre-appointment hearing for the Chair-Designate of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) | HC 1042   |
| 3rd         | Growing back better: putting nature and net zero at the heart of the economic recovery           | HC 347    |
| 4th         | Energy Efficiency of Existing Homes                                                              | HC 346    |
| 1st Special | Invasive species: Government response to the Committee's First report of Session 2019            | HC 332    |
| 2nd Special | Our Planet, Our Health: Government Response to the Twenty-First Report of Session 2017–19        | HC 467    |
| 3rd Special | Electronic Waste and the Circular Economy: Government Response to the Committee's First Report   | HC 1268   |