



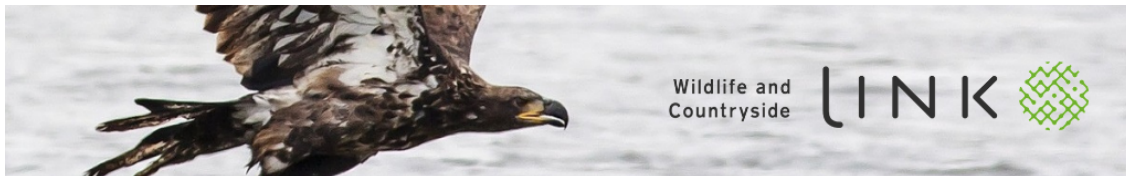
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## Eagle Eye on the Environment - September 2021 Edition

1 message

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### Eagle Eye on the Environment

*Welcome to Wildlife and Countryside Link's monthly overview of the environmental policy landscape – the place for all the latest news on nature policy.*

September 2021 Edition

#### Matt's Horizon Scan



With just over a month to go before COP26, the Prime Minister recently [spoke](#) at the UN and asked global leaders “to grow up, to recognize the scale of the challenge we face, to do what posterity demands we must”. Back home, the Chancellor has the opportunity to show his own recognition of the challenge with October's Comprehensive Spending Review. With funding for nature restoration hit hard by Covid, and ambitious nature recovery targets now in place for 2030, there is a large gap to make up. Link's CSR submission makes the case for a significant uplift in public funding for nature, along with new measures to encourage private finance. This is the Chancellor's chance to follow warm words on nature with meaningful investment in recovering it – to do what posterity demands.

**Matt Browne**, Link Advocacy Lead

#### Environmental Policy News

##### Environment Bill: 14 Government defeats in the Lords

Over several late-night sittings in September, members of the House of Lords voted through 14 separate

amendments to the Environment Bill in the face of Government opposition. Although all the amendments are welcome, six are particularly so. The six key amendments would:

- make interim targets binding
- remove exceptions to the duty to give due regard to environmental principles
- secure OEP independence
- empower courts to grant meaningful remedies following an environmental review
- extend the charging power to cover all single use items
- safeguard the habitats regulations

Link and Greener UK briefings on these key amendments can found [here](#). House of Commons considerations of the Lord's amendments will take place on 20 October.

In the weeks ahead there will be much discussion with Government on which Lords amendments can be accepted. Link will continue to make the case for the enhancements to the bill, and for a high ambition approach to its implementation. The amendments secured at Lord report stage, if carried through into the bill, would make royal assent a hugely important moment for nature – especially when combined with the Government's own welcome [amendment](#) creating a State of Nature target. After over 18 months of passage through Parliament, the Environment Bill is nearly there.

### **New roadmap launched to restore our freshwaters**

On 14 September, Link's Blueprint Group launched a new [report](#) setting out the actions needed to bring our freshwaters back to health. Whilst the problem of river pollution is rising up the political and media agenda, comprehensive solutions have been in short supply. The new report, entitled 'Blueprint Vision' puts forward three key proposals to clean up our rivers; large scale habitat restoration, a fully resourced monitoring & enforcement regime to tackle pollution and a change in public behaviour to reduce water consumption.

The report was launched at an online event chaired by Rivers Trust CEO Mark Lloyd, with a panel comprising Environmental Audit Committee Chair Philip Dunne MP, Shadow Natural Environment Minister Olivia Blake MP, chalk stream advocate Lord Chidgey, water quality campaigner Professor Rebecca Malby and Blueprint Group Chair Ali Morse. A recording of the event can be accessed [here](#).

The Blueprint Report formed part of a series of papers on England's rivers published in September, including '[Troubled Waters](#)' from the RSPB and others and '[State of our Rivers](#)' from the Rivers Trust.

As Blueprint Chair Ali Morse told the [Independent](#): *"It's time for a new vision for English waters, with adequate investment, robust pollution prevention and sustainable water use"*.

### **How close are we to protecting 30% of land and sea for nature?**

The Government has claimed considerable progress towards its commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030, suggesting that 26% of land is already protected for nature.

A new [report](#) from Link has explored these claims in detail and found they cannot be substantiated. The 26% land figure comes primarily from National Parks and AONBs, where a lack of sufficiently strong management priorities and actions for nature's recovery mean that in reality, nature within these designated landscapes is often in poorer condition than nature outside them. As a result, Link suggests that only 3% of land can currently be said to be genuinely protected for nature, with a maximum of 4% protection applying to the marine environment.

The Link report sets out a plan for upping these figures swiftly and effectively, through ambitious expansion of strictly protected sites, combined with strengthened landscape designations on land and better management of the Marine Protected Area network at sea. The report was launched at an online event on 9 September with Joan Edwards, Director of Policy and Public Affairs at The Wildlife Trusts, Becca Speight, CEO of the RSPB and Tony Juniper, Chairman of Natural England. A recording of the event can be found below.

## Bulletin Board

### Link blogs you may have missed:

#### [Nature and the economy: how can we prosper within planetary limits?](#)

Caroline Lucas MP and Richard Benwell write on the need for economic change to address the climate and ecological emergency.

#### [Are vital farming reforms in peril?](#)

Alice Groom, Senior Policy Officer for RSPB and Barnaby Coupe, Land Use Policy Manager for The Wildlife Trusts reflect on the NAO's latest report on ELM.

#### [What is inclusion?](#)

National Inclusion Week takes place from Monday 27th September - Sunday 3rd October. Catriona Corfield, Head of Diversity & Inclusion at Woodland Trust, explains why inclusion is vital to our ability to tackle the nature and climate crisis.

### Blueprint's Water Resources Webinars

Link's Blueprint for Water Group are delivering a series of webinars to support environmental stakeholders to get to grips with regional planning. The series will give insight into the policy framework and shared challenges of regional planning, and provide a forum for reps to discuss issues faced locally. The full webinar schedule, plus registration details, can be found [here](#).

### Soil health action plan to be launched

During Lords Report stage of the Environment Bill, Lord Goldsmith committed to publishing a Soil Health Action Plan (SHAPE) for England, setting out plans to restore the health of our soils. More information can be found [here](#).

### Sector job vacancies:

A list of job opportunities across the Link network can be found [here](#), including roles with Humane Society International, the Bat Conservation Trust and the Badger Trust.

## Link Roundtable: Achieving 30x30 on Land and at Sea



Link roundtable held on 09.09.21, setting out recommendations to ensure the delivery of the commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030.



Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) is the largest environment and wildlife coalition in England, bringing together 62 organisations to use their strong joint voice for the protection of nature. You can learn more about Link's policy work [here](#).

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