

Press release: Environment Agency announces support for farmers during dry weather

Following the driest June since 1925 and a dry July, farmers have reported water supply concerns which could affect the irrigation of crops and welfare of livestock. Ahead of the National Farmers Union's drought summit today (Wednesday 1 August), the Environment Agency issued guidance to farmers detailing options to flex abstraction licences in serious cases.

The arrangements will allow farmers to trade water allowances – as set out in their abstraction licence – on a short-term basis, without the need to change their licence. The EA will fast-track the process to enable farmers to act quickly and arrangements will be agreed locally where the EA is satisfied that there will not be any adverse effects on the environment or the rights of other lawful water users. The EA also monitors river flow and will maximise access to water when it is available, such as following heavy rain.

In severe cases where there is a real or imminent threat to crops and livestock, the EA may temporarily allow additional, emergency abstraction. Each case will be assessed to minimise impacts to the environment or the rights of other water users.

Paul Hickey, head of water resources, Environment Agency said:

We know that farmers are facing considerable pressures in responding to drought conditions and we want to support them by allowing them to flex their abstraction licences in the most serious cases to safeguard food production and animal welfare.

We must also balance farmers' needs with those of wildlife and other water users so we will only allow these arrangements where we are satisfied there won't be any adverse effects on the environment.

As the hot, dry weather is set to continue we urge everyone to use water wisely to protect the environment and help prevent the need for water restrictions.

The Environment Agency will continue to carry out compliance checks on abstraction licences to ensure that abstractors keep to their licences and any agreed flexible arrangements.

The temporary arrangements do not apply to water companies as they are able to use a variety of drought measures defined in law to manage droughts and public water supply. The Environment Agency works closely with water companies to ensure they are following drought plans and implementing actions

to conserve water in a timely way.

Notes to Editors

It is up to abstractors to ensure that they use water wisely, efficiently and have sufficient water for their needs.

Any flexible arrangements will be one-off, limited to this event. If any abstraction outside a licence is likely to need to re-occur, licence holders must apply to vary the licence at the earliest opportunity.

It is important that water abstraction licence holders check their licence details – licence holders can now view and [manage water abstraction licences online](#)

The Environment Agency can review hands off flow conditions more frequently to allow abstractors to take advantage of any peak flows when significant rainfall occurs.

Use of water company headroom by other abstractors where this is sustainable. Southern and Anglian Water have said that in principle this can be provided and we are awaiting details from the companies on their proposals.

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Press release: Go on a coastal adventure with The Snail and the Whale

This summer sees the launch of a unique partnership between the Marine Management Organisation (MMO), Natural England and Macmillan Children's Books, celebrating 15 years of The Snail and the Whale, Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler's classic tale of adventure and friendship.

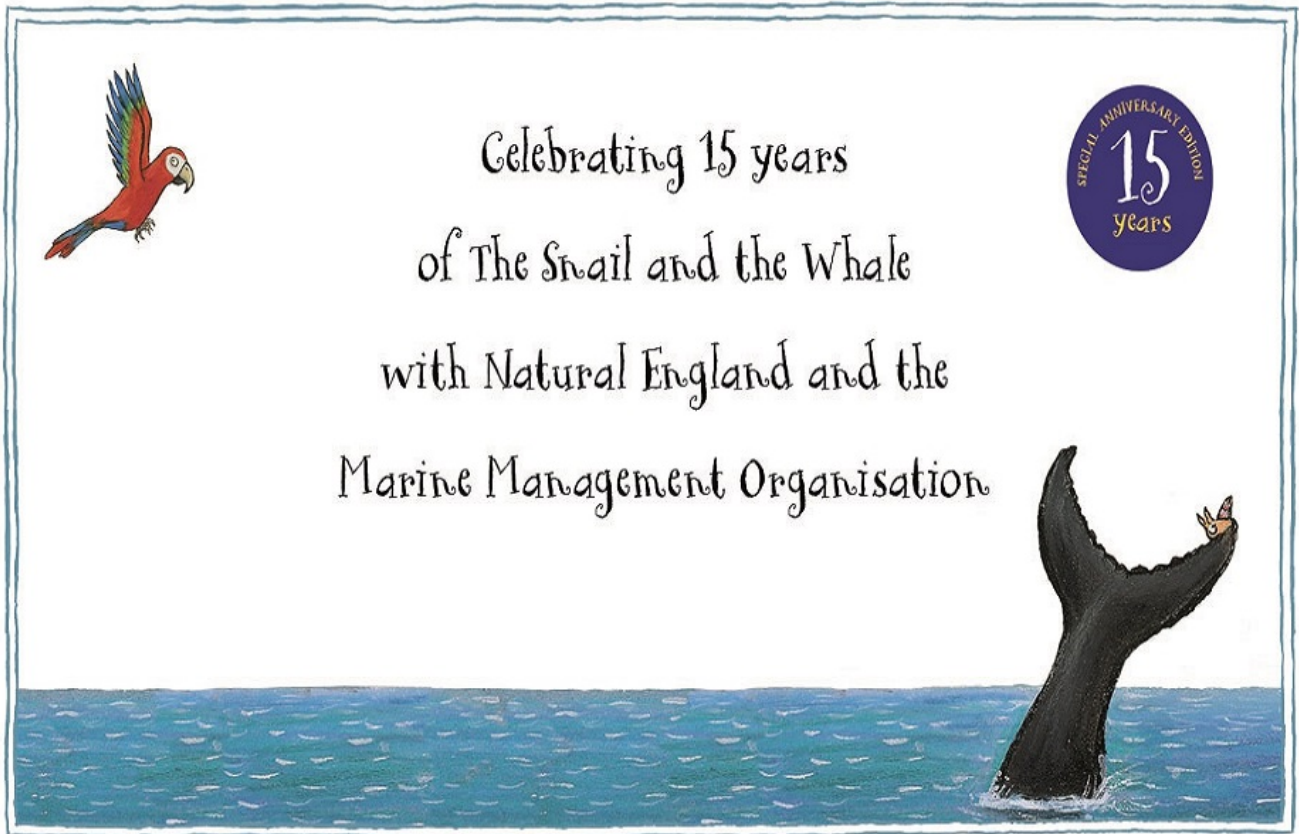
First published in 2003, The Snail and the Whale tells the story of a tiny snail who hitches a lift around the world on the tail of "a great big, grey-blue humpback whale". Together they go on an amazing journey, past icebergs and volcanoes, sharks and penguins. The little snail feels so small in the vastness of the world but when disaster strikes and the whale is beached in a bay, it's the tiny snail's big plan that saves the day.

Macmillan Children's Books, MMO and Natural England want to encourage families to go on their own big adventures this summer, exploring The England Coast Path. While visitors might not see icebergs, sharks and penguins, with the help of their 'The Snail and the Whale Coastal Adventure' booklet they will have all the tools and information they need to explore their coast – from matching animals to their coastal homes and learning fun marine animal facts to advice about keeping our coasts free from marine litter.

The booklet is available to download now from the [MMO website](#) and also at special events celebrating The Snail and the Whale and this fantastic partnership throughout 2018.

Julia Donaldson said:

I am delighted that fifteen years after Axel and I created The Snail and the Whale our story continues to encourage young readers to get out and engage with nature and the world around them. I hope that children exploring the England Coast Path can gaze "at the sky, the sea, the land, the waves and the caves and the golden sand" and be just as amazed as the snail.



The Snail and the Whale © Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler 2003 – Macmillan Children's Books

The MMO licenses, regulates and plans marine activities in the seas around England so that they're carried out in a sustainable way.

Gareth Hern, MMO Communications Advisor, said:

We are delighted to be involved with this partnership. The Snail and the Whale is a tale of exploration and we want to encourage people to explore our beautiful and diverse marine areas.

In the story, the snail feels small and insignificant but does something amazing in the end. Children and young people will have a huge part to play in protecting our marine areas so they can be enjoyed for generations to come.

Natural England is the government's independent adviser on the natural environment. Their work is focused on enhancing England's wildlife and landscapes and maximising the benefits they bring to the public.

Neil Constable, Natural England Programme Manager for England Coast Path said:

The England Coast Path is playing a valuable role in opening up access to our nation's remarkable coastline. Whether you are taking a short stroll or embarking on your own long distance adventure, it provides the perfect opportunity for everyone to explore the

coast's beauty and diversity.

Belinda Ioni Rasmussen, Macmillan Children's Books Publisher, said:

We are proud to be the publisher of Julia and Axel's classic story of friendship and teamwork, and thrilled to be partnering with Natural England and MMO, bringing this favourite family story to life for a whole new generation of intrepid young explorers.

It is wonderful that fifteen years after this picture book was first published the tiny snail and the grey-blue humpback whale continue to have new and exciting adventures.

Official Statistics: FSA bi-annual public attitudes tracker: results for May 2018

The survey covers four main areas:

- awareness of the FSA and its responsibilities
- trust in the FSA
- food-related concerns
- awareness of hygiene standards in eating establishments

A big call

A large-scale telephone survey of thousands of Scottish farmers has been announced.