

# OTS celebrates tenth anniversary with online conference

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## Islands policy introduced to travel corridors

- England introduces new targeted approach to add or remove a country's islands to the travel corridors list
- the approach aims to closely manage health risks while maintaining international travel and supporting the economy
- seven Greek islands to be immediately removed from exemption list to protect public health in England – but travel corridor remains open to mainland and other Greek islands

The Transport Secretary has today (7 September 2020) announced the introduction of a more targeted approach to travel corridors by separating some islands from mainland countries. This means an area that presents a higher or lower public health risk to UK travellers can be assessed separately to the rest of the country.

The existing country-based approach to travel corridors has protected lives by reducing the risk of importing new coronavirus (COVID-19) cases into the UK.

The Joint Biosecurity Centre has now been commissioned to assess the most popular island destinations for British tourists.

The first changes under the new process were also made today, with 7 Greek islands to be removed from exemption list:

- Crete

- Lesvos
- Mykonos
- Santorini
- Serifos
- Tinos
- Zakynthos

People arriving in England from those islands from 4am Wednesday 9 September will need to [self-isolate for 2 weeks](#). Data from the Joint Biosecurity Centre and Public Health England has indicated a significant risk to UK public health from those islands, leading to ministers removing them from the current [list of travel corridors](#).

At the same time, the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) has updated its [travel advice for Greece](#) to advise against all but essential travel to Lesvos, Tinos, Serifos, Mykonos, Crete, Santorini and Zakynthos. The rest of Greece remains exempt from the FCDO's advice against all non-essential international travel.

The new, more targeted process will allow government to continue to respond quickly to threats of imported cases while minimising wider disruption to passengers and the travel industry.

Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said:

Our top priority has always been to keep domestic infection rates down, and today we're taking the next step in our approach. Through the use of enhanced data we will now be able to pinpoint risk in some of the most popular islands, providing increased flexibility to add or remove them – distinct from the mainland – as infection rates change.

This development will help boost the UK's travel industry while continuing to maintain maximum protection to public health, keeping the travelling public safe.

Announcements on which islands and countries will be added or removed will continue to be made as part of the current weekly process.

It is not considered safe to implement a fully regional system for international travel corridors – there is too much movement between high risk and lower risk regions within single countries and regional health information is not sufficiently reliable. However, when a region has natural boundaries – like an island – the risks reduce.

Any changes will only apply to land that has a clear boundary or border where there is robust, reliable and internationally comparable data available. The island must also have direct flights to the UK or at a minimum, transport must have taken place through exempt territories.

The government has made consistently clear it will take decisive action if

necessary to contain the virus, including removing destinations from the travel corridors list rapidly if the public health risk becomes too high.

Holidaymakers may find they need to self-isolate on return to the UK and are advised to consider the implications of self-isolation on them and their families before making any travel plans. It is very important that people with symptoms of or a positive COVID-19 test and their household members stay at home. Staying at home will help prevent the spread of the virus to family, friends, the wider community, and particularly those who are clinically extremely vulnerable.

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## PM call with President Macron: 7 September 2020

News story

Prime Minister Boris Johnson spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron.



The Prime Minister spoke to French President Emmanuel Macron earlier today.

They discussed the shared challenge of illegal small boat crossings from France to the UK. The Prime Minister set out that the UK's aim is to stop the smuggling operations and prevent boats arriving on our shores, and they agreed to work together in a spirit of cooperation to address the issue.

The Prime Minister and President Macron expressed their outrage at the attack on Alexey Navalny and reiterated that Russia must urgently explain how the opposition leader was poisoned with Novichok.

They also discussed UK-French cooperation on tackling coronavirus and on other international issues, including the crises in Libya and Lebanon and the Middle East peace process. The Prime Minister offered his condolences for French casualties in Mali this weekend.

On the negotiations to reach a trade deal with the European Union, the Prime Minister and President Macron agreed on the importance of making progress this month and reaching a conclusion on talks quickly.

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## **Bovine TB: authorisation for badger control in 2020**

Natural England has licensed and authorised 11 new badger control areas to begin operations in 2020. It has also authorised the licence holders to resume operations in 33 existing badger control areas in 2020. Licence holders met all the criteria specified in [Defra's guidance to Natural England](#), dated August 2020.

Natural England has reissued the Annex A for 3 licences due to a change to their control areas as licensed in 2019. These areas were 34-Cheshire, 37-Devon and 40-Herefordshire.

It has also reissued the Annex B for all existing licences from area 11 to area 43 (inclusive). This follows a review of the conditions relating to licensed actions on or around protected sites.

Table 1: Badger control areas authorised in 2020

<b>Area number and county</b>	<b>Minimum number</b>	<b>Maximum number</b>	<b>Authorisation date</b>	<b>Year of operations</b>
Area 11 – Cheshire	228	514	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 12 – Devon	None	416	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 13 – Devon	86	617	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 14 – Devon	None	328	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 15 – Devon	306	542	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 16 – Dorset	691	2321	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 17 – Somerset	356	993	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 18 – Somerset	108	360	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 19 – Wiltshire	50	1067	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 20 – Wiltshire	217	657	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 21 – Wiltshire	625	1266	28 August 2020	Year 4
Area 22 – Cornwall	216	1716	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 23 – Devon	1505	2824	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 24 – Devon	None	294	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 25 – Devon	402	897	28 August 2020	Year 3

<b>Area number and county</b>	<b>Minimum number</b>	<b>Maximum number</b>	<b>Authorisation date</b>	<b>Year of operations</b>
Area 26 – Devon	590	1104	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 27 – Devon	9	127	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 28 – Devon	34	299	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 29 – Gloucestershire	185	890	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 30 – Somerset	1063	2660	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 31 – Staffordshire	1397	3516	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 32 – Cumbria	N/A	N/A	28 August 2020	Year 3
Area 33 – Avon	226	650	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 34 – Cheshire	1127	1939	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 35 – Cornwall	1665	3128	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 36 – Staffordshire	724	1272	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 37 – Devon	None	366	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 38 – Devon	1570	2696	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 39 – Dorset	175	472	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 40 – Herefordshire	719	1629	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 41 – Staffordshire	149	727	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 42 – Wiltshire	2310	4141	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 43 – Wiltshire	1058	1846	28 August 2020	Year 2
Area 44 – Avon	1514	2053	28 August 2020	Year 1
Area 45 – Derbyshire	2054	2785	28 August 2020	Year 1
Area 46 – Gloucestershire	599	812	28 August 2020	Year 1
Area 47 – Herefordshire	1505	2040	28 August 2020	Year 1
Area 48 – Leicestershire	1059	1435	3 September 2020	Year 1
Area 49 – Oxfordshire	1640	2223	2 September 2020	Year 1
Area 50 – Shropshire	4187	5676	28 August 2020	Year 1
Area 51 – Somerset	1636	2218	28 August 2020	Year 1
Area 52 – Warwickshire	1640	2223	3 September 2020	Year 1
Area 53 – Wiltshire	677	918	28 August 2020	Year 1
Area 54 – Lincolnshire	N/A	N/A	4 September 2020	Year 1

Licence holders carry out operations under a 4-year licence. This allows badger control to take place in the licensed control area every year between 1 June and 31 January inclusive.

The licence holder will decide the start date for control operations within this period.

Natural England has confirmed to the licence holders the minimum and maximum numbers of badgers they can remove.

Protected sites listed in the Annex Bs are not necessarily part of any active operations. These can and will only occur on protected sites where the landowner or occupier has granted permission.

The licences only permit badger control to take place outside these closed seasons:

- controlled shooting – 1 February to 31 May
- cage-trapping and shooting – 1 December to 31 May

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## **2020 badger control licences published**

Natural England has today (Monday 7 September) published licences for areas that will undertake badger control operations in England this autumn, in accordance with statutory guidance given by the Secretary of State. This includes the reauthorisation of licences for 33 existing areas alongside licences for 11 additional areas.

Earlier this year, the government published its [response to the Godfray Review](#) which sets out the next phase of its 25-year bTB eradication strategy. The response outlines the government's intention to phase out intensive badger culling in the next few years, while ensuring that wildlife control remains a tool that can be deployed where the scientific evidence supports it. Bovine TB remains the greatest animal health threat that England faces today, with more than 30,000 cattle slaughtered each year due to infection.

This operational publication is a continuation of [the long-term strategy to tackle the animal disease Bovine TB](#) which was published in April 2014.

"Bovine TB is one of the most difficult and intractable animal health challenges that the UK faces today, causing considerable trauma for farmers and costing taxpayers over £100 million every year.

"No one wants to continue the cull of a protected species indefinitely. That is why we are accelerating other elements of our strategy, including vaccination and improved testing so that we can eradicate this insidious disease and start to phase out badger culling in England."

All applications received were carefully assessed to ensure that each cull company has suitable arrangements and plans in place to carry out an operation that is safe, effective and humane.

The government's response to the Godfray Review outlined the need for a combined approach which includes tighter cattle movement controls, regular testing, as well as badger and cattle vaccination to eradicate the disease in England by 2038.

In July, the government announced that [world-leading bovine tuberculosis \(bTB\) TB cattle vaccination trials are set to get underway](#) in England and Wales as a result of a major breakthrough by government scientists. These trials enable work to accelerate towards planned deployment of a cattle

vaccine by 2025. One fully developed and approved, a cattle vaccine will provide another major step forward in the government's strategy to phase out intensive culling.

The government recently [awarded £500,000 grant funding for projects](#) that develop new tools to diagnose tuberculosis (bTB) in cattle. The programme, run by Defra on behalf of England, Scotland and Wales, will fund innovative research projects using cutting-edge technologies such as machine learning aimed at detecting infection in cattle herds faster.