

News story: Ministry of Defence expands counter-poaching training into two new parks in Malawi

The Ministry of Defence is ramping up its efforts to stop animals being cruelly hunted in Malawi. Crown copyright.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson announced today that deployments to Nkhotakota and Majete Wildlife Reserves will begin in May, following a successful pilot scheme in Liwonde National Park alongside the conservation non-profit African Parks, doubling the number of rangers mentored by British soldiers to 120.

A conservation crisis occurring around the globe is causing the loss of countless species, and one of the main factors behind this is the illegal wildlife trade, which drives the decline of many of Africa's animals, including elephants, rhinos and lions.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Poaching is a horrific and cruel trade that is putting the very existence of this planet's most majestic wildlife in jeopardy.

Our brave Armed Forces are the best in the world and are playing their part in putting an end to this sickening and illegal industry, to protect these magnificent mammals.

By providing training and mentoring to the park rangers, they will form a skilled network to ensure that the world's precious species are here for generations to come.

Under the guidance of British Army troops, African Parks rangers will learn tracking, infantry skills, bushcraft and information analysis to improve the interception of poachers.

The long-term goals of training park rangers in Malawi are for them to effectively police their parks and respond appropriately to the threat of poaching, which is worth approximately £7bn to £17bn year.

Training in the two new parks has been funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' Illegal Wildlife Trade Challenge Fund.

Liwonde Park Manager, Craig Reid, said:

The MOD deployment to Liwonde in 2017 was very beneficial to the

African Parks effort in securing the integrity of this park which was once overrun with poaching.

The soldiers helped mentor the Rangers as part of the long-term project aimed at ensuring a sustainable law enforcement effort. We are very appreciative of the ongoing support rendered to our team on the ground.

All three parks, Nkhotakota, Majete and Liwonde, are managed by African Parks in partnership with Malawi's Department of National Parks and Wildlife.

Brighton Kumchedwa, Director of National Parks and Wildlife, said:

We are really pleased that the British Army will be returning to Malawi to work in partnership with the Malawian authorities and African Parks on counter-poaching activities. This will build on the success of their previous deployment and ensure that life becomes increasingly difficult for those intent on wildlife crime in Malawi.

News story: Ornicure 150mg/g doxycycline powder for oral solution – Product defect recall alert

We wish to make wholesalers aware that Versele-Laga has issued a recall of Ornicure 150mg/g doxycycline powder for oral solution (Art No. 480573).

Stability tests have showed that certain bags of the 200g packaging of the product could be damaged minimally. The batches are being recalled from the market with immediate effect to the wholesaler level.

Batch numbers affected expiry date

16L16 741	12-2019
16L19 742	12-2019
16L15 739	12-2019

Versele-Laga are contacting wholesale dealers to arrange return of the affected batches. If you have any queries in relation to the recall, please contact Mr Andy Maheur, +32 9 381 31 86 or commsec@verla.be

News story: Environment Minister visits North America to turn tide on marine plastic

Minister Coffey and Canada's Environment and Climate Change Minister Catherine McKenna. Photo Credit: Canadian High Commission.

Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey has joined forces with Canada and the USA in the fight against marine plastic.

During a visit to Washington D.C. and Ottawa this week, the Minister met her international counterparts to discuss the UK's priorities for the marine environment ahead of the G7 Environment meetings to be held later this year.

Like the UK, Canada has already banned microbeads in rinse-off cosmetics, and the Minister met the country's Environment and Climate Change Minister, Catherine McKenna, and Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Fisheries, Oceans and the Canadian Coast Guard, to look at how the two countries can unite in further tackling the threats facing our oceans.

Through its presidency of the G7, which includes a focus on climate change, oceans and clean energy, Canada will be pushing member states to take action to deal with plastic pollution, ocean acidification, and develop the blue economy.

Following her visit, the Environment Minister Thérèse Coffey said:

There is no greater asset than our blue planet, and it is only by working together we can address the multitude of threats facing our marine life.

In the UK we have already banned microbeads and cracked down on plastic bags, and in 25 years' time we will have eliminated all avoidable plastic waste. I look forward to working with my international counterparts to do all we can to protect our oceans for future generations.

Minister McKenna and Minister Coffey also discussed the crucial role industry can play in turning the tide on plastic. And with businesses across the UK pledging to ban straws, cut plastic packaging and roll out water refills, the Minister met Mars and Coca Cola to see first-hand how big producers in the USA are tackling waste.

While in Washington D.C. the Minister also met Judy Garber, the Principal

Deputy Assistant Secretary at the American Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs, who was supportive of moving forward work on oceans – especially on improved data and marine mapping.

Minister Coffey also used a meeting with stakeholders from Pew Environmental Trust and the High Seas Alliance as an opportunity to discuss improving biodiversity in the marine environment.

Press release: Residents invited to Holmwood drilling site drop-in event

The Environment Agency invites residents living near the Holmwood oil and gas exploratory site in Dorking, Surrey to a 'drop-in' event as part of its consultation on a permit application.

Visitors will be able to discuss the application and the process being followed to determine it, and talk to Environment Agency representatives about how they regulate oil and gas activities.

The event takes place at Dorking Halls (Martineau Hall), Reigate Road, Dorking RH4 1SG on Thursday 1 March, from 2pm to 7:30pm.

The consultation is open from 15 February to 15 March 2018 and follows an application by Europa Oil & Gas Limited for a bespoke environmental permit, which is currently being considered by the Environment Agency.

The application is for a bespoke environmental permit to drill a new well. Europa Oil & Gas Limited has also applied for permits to store oil on-site, and for the accumulation and disposal of radioactive waste from industrial activity. In deciding whether or not to issue the permits, the Environment Agency will take into account all relevant considerations and legal requirements.

Further information on the applications, a copy of the draft decision document and details of how to comment [can be found here](#).

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

This is a great opportunity for local people to find out more about the proposed operations at Holmwood and how the Environment Agency would regulate such activities.

An environmental permit sets out stringent conditions that a site must adhere to. We will not issue an environmental permit for a site if we consider that activities taking place will cause significant pollution to the environment or harm to human health.

Although we are minded to approve the applications for the bespoke and standard rules permit we are still in the determination process and a final decision has not yet been made. We want to hear from the public and understand people's views on this application and to raise any concerns before we make any final decisions.

For further information, please email KSLE@environment-agency.gov.uk.

All media enquiries: call 0800 141 2743.

News story: Esmya: no new treatment courses prescribed until further notice

In December 2017, the European Medicines Agency started a review of Esmya (Ulipristal acetate) for uterine fibroids after it was reported that four cases of serious liver injury had occurred after its use. In three of the cases a liver transplant was needed.

As of February 2018, temporary safety measures have been introduced whilst the review is ongoing following a further case of serious liver injury requiring liver transplant.

The advice is that no new treatment courses should be prescribed until further notice. Those who are already taking Esmya or have recently stopped, it is advisable that they have blood tests to monitor their liver function at least once a month whilst taking the medicine. Treatment with Esmya will be stopped if these blood tests show signs of a possible problem.

If women experience symptoms associated with liver problems (nausea, vomiting, feeling ill, lack of appetite, weakness, upper abdominal pain, yellowing of the skin/eyes) then they must stop treatment and seek medical attention immediately.

Esmya is used to treat moderate to severe uterine fibroids in adult women who have not yet reached the menopause. It is normally taken for up to three months but the course can be repeated.

It's important to note that there are no concerns for individuals who have taken the emergency contraception ellaOne which also contains Ulipristal acetate. EllaOne is a single use medicine and as no cases of serious liver injury have been reported with its use to date there are currently no similar concerns with this medicine.