

125,000 seabirds to benefit from expansion of protected site

The UK government has today boosted the country's 'Blue Belt', England's network of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs), by announcing the expansion of the Solway Firth protected site.

Over 125,000 seabirds will benefit from the expansion of this site, with red-throated diver and ringed plover joining the extensive list of species already protected. This will also encourage population growths for important species such as wintering divers and gulls.

The protected area in Solway Firth sits in both English and Scottish waters and today will be expanded in total by 92,070 hectares, becoming an impressive 135,750 hectares in size. The devolved administration in Scotland also announced a similar expansion in its waters today, as well as several other MPAs.

The expansion of the Solway Firth site follows work undertaken by Nature Scot and Natural England to provide scientific advice and conduct public consultation on the introduction of further protections.

It will provide clarity on where boundaries of important foraging areas for protected seabird species are and offers the opportunity to adopt additional management measures if required, which may include byelaws to manage commercial fishing or the zoning of recreational activities such as water sports.

The UK government is committed to protecting and enhancing our marine environment; recently adding to our MPA network for England, [expanding an internationally significant protected site on the Isles of Scilly](#) and [launching a call for evidence](#) on proposals for managing five of England's Marine Protected Areas including the Canyons, a deep-sea habitat which harbours cold water corals, and Dogger Bank, the largest shallow sandbank in British waters.

Environment Secretary George Eustice also recently announced his intention to pilot Highly Protected Marine Areas where all extractive and destructive activities would be removed, following publication of the independent [Benyon Review into HPMAs](#).

Environment Minister Rebecca Pow said:

The UK seabird population is of global importance with the UK holding more than a quarter of Europe's breeding seabirds. This addition to England's vital MPA network is a significant step forward in our ongoing commitment to protect and improve the resilience of our marine environment and its precious wildlife.

Together with the development of our Seabird Conservation Strategy, we will help the coastal environment to recover and thrive for future generations to enjoy.

Marian Spain, Natural England Chief Executive, said:

The new protections at Solway Firth, based on advice from the UK's world-leading scientists will create more space for nature to recover and signify a significant step forward in enhancing protections for a range of globally important sea and shorebirds.

We will continue to work with Defra as they develop their Seabird Conservation Strategy to understand the challenges that seabird populations currently face and consider what further measures are needed to help their recovery.

Working closely with stakeholders, Defra is developing a landmark Seabird Conservation Strategy, which will look at the range of pressures faced by different seabird species in order to take additional steps to build on today's achievement and further support our iconic seabird populations.

Planned system maintenance: 11pm 31 December 2020 to 1pm 4 January 2021

The Transition Period relating to the UK's exit from the European Union will end on 31 December 2020.

From the 1 January 2021 all existing EU Trade Marks (EUTM), Registered Community Designs (RCDs) and International Registrations designating the EU will only cover the remaining 27 EU Member States.

These registered rights will no longer provide protection in the UK.

On 1 January 2021, under the terms of the Withdrawal Agreement, the IPO will create a re-registered UK design and UK comparable trade mark for every RCD and EUTM (including International EU designs and trade marks) that are protected at the end of the transition period.

The IPO will need to amend our systems and undertake maintenance to create these rights. As a result, our customers will experience disruption to our internal and external services for trademarks and designs while essential work takes place.

Services will be disrupted from 11pm 31 December 2020 until 1pm 4 January 2021.

Effect on services

The following services will be affected:

Trade marks

Designs

Patents

The following services will be affected:

Effect on dates

Digital application services will be unavailable on this date.

If the filing date of 31 December 2020 to 04 January 2021 is important you can [apply for a trade mark](#) or [design](#) through our paper application channels.

Customers can file an [opposition](#) between 31 December 2020 to 04 January 2021 as services using the paper form are unaffected.

You will not be able to file a [threatened opposition](#) and we advise that you do this in advance of 11pm 31 December. Customers should contact our information centre information@ipo.gov.uk if they need to file during this service disruption.

You should respond in advance of any deadlines set by the IPO for your trade mark (including Right Start payments) or design application if it falls on 31 December 2020, 01 January 2021 or 04 January 2021.

Effect on our customer service delivery

Our Information Centre will not be available from 1pm on Thursday 31 December 2020. You should not rely on other direct line numbers being answered during this period.

Our [Information Centre hours over the Christmas and New Year](#) are available.

Our Internal services will also be affected until 1pm on 04 January 2021.

This means we will be unable to view and advise on the progress of your trade mark or design application. All areas of our internal services, from receipt to post-registration of applications will be unavailable.

For more information please refer to [Intellectual property after 1 January 2021](#).

More funding to support people with disabilities live independently

- Extra £68 million to help adapt homes for people with disabilities in England
- More than 280,000 home adaptations provided through the Disabled Facilities Grant
- Details of £4 billion Better Care Fund confirmed to better integrate health and social care

An extra £68 million will help thousands more disabled people to access grants to improve their homes so they can live independently, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Kelly Tolhurst has announced today (3 December 2020), the International Day of People with Disabilities.

The additional funding for councils will help people make the adaptations they need to live safely and independently in their own homes.

The Disabled Facilities Grant funding can be used towards the costs of home adaptations such as stair-lifts, level access showers, wet rooms, winches, grab rails and ramps. These can play a critical role in avoiding the need for hospital or care home admission, as well as helping to speed-up discharge from hospital.

This funding is in addition to the £505 million paid to councils in May 2020, increasing the overall government investment in the Disabled Facilities Grant to £573 million this year.

With Spending Review 2020 investment of £573 million in the Disabled Facilities Grant for 2021 to 2022, government has now confirmed over £4 billion funding for the grant since 2010.

This is part of the government's comprehensive programme to better integrate health and social care services. Today details of the £4 billion [Better Care Fund](#) were also confirmed – setting out how councils may use this funding to deliver effective care and support for people in their communities.

Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing, Kelly Tolhurst said:

I'm pleased that extra funding announced today, on the International Day of People with Disabilities, will see thousands more people benefit. This grant can be literally life changing and lengthening, helping more people to live independently in their own homes.

Since 2012 over 280,000 home adaptations have been funded through the

Disabled Facilities Grant Scheme helping many tens of thousands of people to live at home independently.

Minister for Care, Helen Whately said:

This grant will help hundreds of thousands of disabled people across England to live more independently in their own homes and improve their quality of life.

I know this year has been incredibly difficult for disabled people in particular and I'm pleased that, on the International Day of People with Disabilities, we're able to provide this additional funding.

The Disabled Facilities Grant is a really important part of our ambition to reduce health inequalities and support more people to live healthy, independent lives for as long as possible.

The Disabled Facilities Grant forms part of the Better Care Fund, a fund which brings together local government and health partners to jointly plan and pool budgets to support integrated care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated how health and social care systems can come together and focus on the public's health and care needs. This announcement is part of the government's ongoing work to address disparities across society, and its commitment to ensuring that health and care systems work effectively together at a local level, and the Better Care Fund is a key part of this integration.

UK Nationally Determined Contribution: Letter to the Climate Change Committee

Letter from the Alok Sharma, Secretary of State for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy, to Lord Deben, Chairman of the Climate Change Committee, regarding timing of guidance on the UK's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) – its emissions reduction target – under the Paris Agreement.

[Read the Climate Change Committee's response to the letter.](#)

UK proposes establishment of a UK-Bangladesh Trade and Investment Dialogue

World news story

The British High Commissioner, Robert Chatterton Dickson, met with the Honourable Commerce Minister, Mr Tipu Munshi, on Thursday 3 December to formally propose the establishment of a UK-Bangladesh Trade and Investment Dialogue on behalf of the UK Government.



The British High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Robert Chatterton Dickson, met with the Honourable Commerce Minister, Mr Tipu Munshi.

As a champion of free trade, the UK wants to deepen its already strong trading relationship with Bangladesh by developing a trade partnership that builds on our shared trade and investment interests. Increasing trade between our two countries will help increase growth and aid economic development.

The Trade and Investment Dialogue would look to facilitate the deepest possible future trading relationship between the UK and Bangladesh through a mutual commitment to identifying and addressing barriers to trade faced by our companies when exporting and helping improve the business environment.

The High Commissioner said

“The UK is looking to harness the opportunity presented by the UK’s exit from the European Union to develop a future trade partnership with Bangladesh that will increase two-way trade and bring greater prosperity to both of our countries”.

Further information

British High Commission Dhaka
United Nations Road

Baridhara
Dhaka – 1212
Bangladesh

Email: Dhaka.Press@fco.gov.uk

Follow the British High Commissioner to Bangladesh on Twitter: [@RCDicksonUK](https://twitter.com/RCDicksonUK)

Follow the British High Commission Dhaka on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#)

Published 3 December 2020