

RSPB Communication on Engagement April 2022

Statement of Continued Support by RSPB Chief Executive

27th April 2022

H.E. António Guterres
Secretary-General United Nations
New York,
NY 10017
USA

This report outlines the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' activities engaging with the United Nations Global Compact between the periods of April 2020 and April 2022.

PART 1: Statement of Support by Chief Executive, Beccy Speight

Dear Mr. Secretary General,

I am pleased to confirm that the RSPB reaffirms its support of the Ten Principles of the United Nations Global Compact in the areas of Human Rights, Labour, Environment and Anti-Corruption.

In this, our first annual Communication on Engagement, we describe how our actions continue to incorporate the principles of the Global Compact into the RSPB's business strategy, culture and daily operations for those activities recommended for organisations such as ourselves.

A crucial decade looms ahead of us, one which has already seen the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, and the COP26 in Glasgow in November 2021. We have worked to ensure that these gatherings set the right global frameworks for nature restoration and climate action. Translating these frameworks into domestic legislation and using nature to beat the climate crisis – through peatland restoration, and the creation of new intertidal habitats and native woodland – will be crucial.

But to make the biggest possible impact for the planet, we must continue to work at all levels – from the changes required in our world economy and agricultural systems, to large-scale habitat restoration, and the protection of individual threatened species. We must inspire more people to discover nature and protect it. We must continue to speak up as an influential voice through our evidence-based conservation work.

To deliver this huge shift in our relationship with the natural world, we need to unlock more funding and collaborate at a greater scale to continue to save threatened species. Only through working together can we prevent the greatest threat in our generation and build a world where nature thrives. Our founders showed us that hearts can be swayed, situations changed, and one voice can make a difference. Together, we can help create a healthier planet. It has never mattered more.

Beccy Speight

RSPB Chief Executive

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The RSPB is part of BirdLife International,
a partnership of conservation organisations
working to give nature a home around the world.

Patron: Her Majesty the Queen **Chairman of Council:** Kevin Cox
President: Miranda Krestovnikoff **Chief Executive:** Beccy Speight

The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654

Communication on Engagement (COE) report to UN Global Compact

Part 2 - Communication on Engagement (COE) report to UN Global Compact

Our annual report contains full details of our work and its impact.

RSPB Annual Report (PDF): <https://www.rspb.org.uk/about-the-rspb/about-us/how-the-rspb-is-run/annualreport/>

RSPB Annual Report Highlights (Video) : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XfcxglHF3jo> (4mins 57 secs)

Also available with Welsh subtitles: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WlxLpeAjGpQ>

Highlighted below are some specific examples under the headings of recommended activities for non-business signatories to the Compact:

WORKING WITH PARTNERS ON CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY AND WIDER ENGAGEMENT

Delivery and successful completion of the “Back from the Brink” partnership conservation project. Back from the Brink is a partnership conservation project to save 20 species from extinction. It is mainly funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The partnership project also received significant funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and People’s Postcode Lottery, alongside other project partners

Field crickets are so rare in the UK that most people have only heard them sing in the background of films and TV shows. By the 1980s there were fewer than 100 left, all at one location. The Back from the Brink project is the latest effort to save them. They’re one of the UK’s most threatened species. As they are flightless, they have difficulty recovering from local extinctions.

Back from the Brink began in April 2017, aiming to establish a new field cricket colony at our Pulborough Brooks reserve in West Sussex, as well as a second colony at Farnham Heath in Surrey. Our reserve wardens heard field crickets singing at the release sites in May 2020, during routine fire and livestock checks. We were delighted as it showed the first proof of successful breeding. We have now extended this successful approach with engagement in developing partnership projects “Species on the Edge” in Scotland and “Natur Am Byth” in Wales. 59,000 people directly engaged with Back from the Brink– including over 10,000 who learnt new skills and nearly 4,000 people actively volunteered their time.

Our work with corporate partners. RSPB’s corporate partner Barratts is the UK’s largest housebuilder, we have been working together to explore how new houses and developments, can be built in a way which provides benefits for nature and people. The flagship site of Kingsbrook when completed, will be more than 60% greenspace and wildlife habitats (excluding gardens), with a 100-hectare nature site managed for wildlife and people. The conservation and ecological enhancement also extend into the built environment, to include hedgehog highways, bird and bat boxes, native planting and wildlife-friendly gardens. Barratts also engage residents at Kingsbrook, to show the measures they can take to give nature a home.

Other corporate partnerships include Cemex and idverde. Our work with Cemex, has helped restore over 1000 hectares of priority habitat, helping to combat the decline in biodiversity. The idverde partnership has allowed us to increase engagement with nature, for urban communities. With idverde being awarded the London Borough of Bromley’s Parks Management Service, initially worked focused around Bromley’s parks, and other community spaces such as allotments, becoming greener places that benefit both people and wildlife. The success of this work has seen the partnership expand across other local authorities, managed by idverde, including Northampton, Charnwood and Telford.

Riskier Business: In 2020, we co-produced a report with WWF called Riskier Business: the UK’s Overseas Land Footprint. It shows that the UK’s demand for seven products is associated with high levels of deforestation overseas. These products are soy, palm oil, cocoa, beef and leather, pulp and paper, timber and natural rubber.

The report shows just how interconnected our food systems are, and the risks they pose if they are not properly regulated. In it we demand a legally-binding global footprint target in the Environment Bill, plus a due diligence obligation requiring UK businesses to prove their supply chains are secure and do not cause undue harm. We are pleased to say this obligation has since made it into the Environment Bill, although much work remains to raise the level of ambition and ensure it is implemented in a satisfactory way.

Helping to restore the St Helena cloud forest. St Helena's cloud forest once covered all the high-altitude areas over 600 metres, but it is now reduced to just 16 hectares spread across 120 different fragments within the Peaks National Park. 250 unique species are found solely in these precious remnants, and the Peaks provide the majority of this drought-prone island's water. We have now secured an agreed plan between all partners in St Helena to restore the fragmented cloud forest.

The plan is to re-vegetate the 'Diana's Peak' ridge, create new cloud forest habitat, and diversify the existing habitat. This will enable the remaining fragments to stabilise, with connecting corridors. We expect to double the plant output every year. In addition, we plan to enhance the experience for visitors, creating access, focal points, and visitor interpretation, enabling visitors to enjoy the forest without causing undue harm.

Tristan Da Cunha Marine Protection Zone (MPZ). Tristan da Cunha is now one of the largest sanctuaries for wildlife. Initially, the RSPB worked with the Tristan da Cunha government to lay the conservation groundwork and support Tristan's management of their sustainable lobster fishery, followed by a five-year programme of UK Government Blue Belt support. Then an international coalition of partners supported the final phase which was the creation of a MPZ.

Almost 700,000 square kilometres (270,271 square miles) of its waters are now safe for wildlife as a Marine Protection Zone (MPZ). It has become the largest 'no take' zone in the Atlantic, the fourth largest on Earth. This means that fishing and other associated activities are all banned from the area, which is three times the size of the UK. The announcement also helps the UK government achieve its ambition to secure protection of 30% of the world's oceans by 2030. The UK has a duty to help the Territories to protect their wildlife and will be responsible for long-term monitoring and enforcement of this vast MPZ.

JOIN AND/OR SUPPORT ISSUE PLATFORMS AND WORKSTREAMS.

Launched e-action with Suffolk Wildlife Trust to protest against Sizewell C's impact on nature. Iconic RSPB nature reserve Minsmere is under threat from a new nuclear power plant, Sizewell C, proposed by EDF Energy. The RSPB and the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, along with supporters across the UK, are protesting against the plans. We launched an e-action with the Suffolk Wildlife Trust in November 2020. An incredible 104,836 people responded, demonstrating they share our concerns about Sizewell C's impact on nature.

If Sizewell C goes ahead, it will sit on the border of RSPB Minsmere, home to more than 6,000 different types of animals, plants and fungi. It could destroy an area equivalent to 10 football pitches of the protected wildlife site Sizewell Marshes, managed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust. Otters, water voles and marsh harriers will lose their homes. The fight continues.

Birds of Conservation Concern partnership. RSPB are part of the Birds of Conservation Concern partnership, who review the status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. Together with a coalition of the UK's leading bird conservation and monitoring organisations, a report is produced to show the conservation concern of each species, who are then placed on either a green, amber or red list. Understanding which species need urgent action, means conservation efforts can be prioritised.

State of Nature partnership. Alongside fifty nature conservation groups, the RSPB is part of the State of Nature partnership. The partnership reviews the status of wildlife in the UK and its Crown Dependencies and Overseas Territories; including the pressures acting upon nature, and the

conservation response being made to counter these pressures. With the partnership collecting the best available data on the UK's biodiversity, trends can be identified on the key pressures that have caused the net loss of nature.

Revive Our World Campaign. For millions of us at home during lockdown, escaping into nature never felt more important. But nature is in crisis too. In September 2020, we launched the “Revive Our World” campaign, to coincide with a UN report showing that the international community had failed to stop environmental decline over the last 10 years. We asked people to join the campaign by signing up to our call for legally binding targets to secure nature’s recovery. Nearly 80,000 people did in just a few weeks.

Over the next year world leaders will be negotiating last-resort targets to save nature and address the climate crisis at two global UN summits. The Convention on Biological Diversity will set new targets for global action on nature. Meanwhile, COP26 brought together world leaders to seek agreement on urgently tackling climate change. Every UK country writes their own environmental laws. Initially, we focused the campaign on influencing national and local elections in England, Scotland and Wales; and the programmes the new governments, mayors, and local authorities would pursue. In Northern Ireland, our priorities have been to secure targets to save nature in new devolved laws, and a green recovery from the pandemic. Elections follow in early 2022. The UK countries have the power to lead and set the bar for the rest of the world.

Revive Our World alongside coalition advocacy with Greener UK, Green Alliance and Wildlife & Countryside Link helped secure nature recovery targets for England in the Environment Act. We continue to demand action, which puts us on the path out of the nature and climate emergency, to a more hopeful future. Our campaigns for similar legislative targets, in the other devolved countries of the UK, are ongoing.

Working towards a more diverse and inclusive RSPB. Over the last year, we recognised that to achieve our vision of a world richer in nature, we must become more diverse and inclusive. We must also work with and support more diverse people and communities, and be a more inclusive organisation, supportive of a variety of efforts to connect to and protect nature.

To support this, we set up a new Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity (EDI) programme and commissioned an external consultancy of EDI specialists called Full Colour to help us move forward with greater pace and impact. The result was a comprehensive report outlining high level recommendations, which we are responding to. Alongside this new programme, we are listening to and learning from some wonderful organisations whose purpose it is to bring nature to everyone.

PARTICIPATE IN GLOBAL COMPACT GLOBAL, AND LOCAL EVENTS.

The RSPB have created the role of Environmental, Social & Governance Performance (ESG) Officer to measure and report on RSPB's ESG performance to meet obligations and assure strategic achievement. This role and other key stakeholders have, throughout the past 2 years attended a number of webinars, UN Global Compact working groups and Q&A surgeries and general meetings with other members to pursue mutual objectives such as Transitioning to Net Zero and Climate Changes initiatives. The most important of this being COP 26 in Glasgow in November 2021.

MEASUREMENT OF OUTCOMES:

The following measures demonstrate the achievements towards our outcomes:

- Increase in specific species in areas where they have previously been absent.
- Influences in changes in UK legislation following evidenced based reporting.
- Restoration and stabilisation of natural habitats both in the UK and Internationally.
- Success in campaigns and changes in internal processes leading to a more diverse workforce.
- 700,000 square kilometres (270,271 square miles) of waters around Tristan da Cunha are now safe for wildlife as a Marine Protection Zone (MPZ).

- 80,000 people signed up in a few weeks to RSPB “Revive our World” campaign calling for legally binding targets to secure nature’s recovery.
- 103, 836 signatures on RSPB e-petition against the building of nuclear power plant, which would destroy an area equivalent to 10 football pitches of the protected wildlife site, Sizewell Marsh

