

Joint Statement on Nature

A Renewed Mission for the Government

16 February 2026

We, the undersigned, reaffirm our commitment to the Government’s mission to build a fairer, greener and more prosperous Britain. We stand ready to work constructively and collaboratively to help deliver the transformative change our communities, our economy and our natural environment urgently need.

We wish to express our concern that, on nature policy in particular, the Government appears to have lost its way. Recent speeches, legislative proposals, and policy changes have included attacks on nature protections, including changes to species protections found regressive by independent watchdogs such as the Office for Environmental Protection, the disapplication of important habitat and species safeguards, the abandonment of scientific evidence-based methods, and the addition of new exemptions to biodiversity net gain requirements that weaken rather than strengthen nature recovery. There has also been a worrying increase in hostile rhetoric towards nature protections in the media and public debate, while pledges to improve people’s access to nature appear to be forgotten.

These actions stand in stark contrast to the manifesto on which the current Government was elected. In the Labour Party Manifesto 2024, the party pledged to tackle both the climate and nature emergencies and “deliver for nature, taking action to meet our Environment Act targets, and... work in partnership with civil society, communities and business to restore our natural world”, implementing solutions “without weakening environmental protections”. These commitments were not peripheral footnotes – they were a core part of the platform that local candidates campaigned on, that members rallied behind, and that voters trusted the elected Government to deliver.

As the Government looks to reset and rebuild trust, it must fully embrace this element of its manifesto and take ambition forwards, not backwards. If the Government is serious about fulfilling its pledge to restore and protect the natural world, and with it, our national security, the approach must strengthen, not weaken, key nature policies and protections. This is what communities and the wider public want – and have a right to expect – from a Government elected on a clear promise to restore nature.

We urge those able to use this moment to recommit to turbocharging investment in nature, to support policies like biodiversity net gain and nature friendly farming, and to champion those who are pioneering habitat restoration and species protection across the country. The

Government must end its attacks on nature protections and instead support those who are working hard to restore ecosystems - for the benefit of future generations and for our natural world.

The natural world is the foundation of our national security, health, our economy and our heritage. Protecting it is not just a policy option, it is a moral and necessary imperative.

This reset for nature is endorsed by the following, politically neutral, signatories:

Jamie Agombar, Executive Director, SOS-UK

Nida Al-Fulaij, Chief Executive, People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES)

Kate Ashbrook, General Secretary, Open Spaces Society

Mark Avery, independent author, conservationist (formerly RSPB, Wild Justice)

Estelle Bailey, Chief Executive, Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust

Craig Bennett, Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts

Rachael Bice, Chief Executive, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust

Professor Jeremy Biggs, Chief Executive, Freshwater Habitats Trust

Evan Bowen-Jones, Chief Executive, Kent Wildlife Trust

Sarah Jane Chimbwandira, Chief Executive, Surrey Wildlife Trust

Alastair Chisolm, Director of Policy, Chartered Institution of Water and Environmental Management (CIWEM)

Paul Coulson, Chief Executive, Institute of Fisheries Management

Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta GBE, Emeritus Professor at Cambridge University, author of The Economics of Biodiversity: The Dasgupta Review, President of Beds, Cambs & Northants Wildlife Trust

Matt Larson-Daw, Chief Executive, The Mammal Society

Georgia Dent, Chief Executive, Somerset Wildlife Trust

Professor Justin Dillon, President, National Association for Environmental Education

Rosie Downs, Head of Campaigns, Friends of the Earth

Adam Eagle, Chief Executive, The Lifescape Project

Peter Egan, Chair of the InstRE Sustainability Forum

Bob Elliot, Chief Executive, Wild Justice

Jim Foster, Conservation Director, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust

Dr Tim Graham, Director, RSK Wilding

Sally Hayns, Chief Executive, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)

Professor David Hill CBE, Founding member and former Deputy Chair, Natural England, ecologist, conservationist, nature finance entrepreneur, Founder, Foundation for Nature, Environment Bank

Fiona Howie, Chief Executive, Town and Country Planning Association

Martin Kelly, Chair, Trees and Design Action Group Trust

Professor Sir John Lawton CBE, former Chair of the Making Space for Nature review, former Chair of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, former CEO Natural Environment Research Council

Joseph Lewis, Head of Policy, The Institute of Environmental Sciences

Eliot Lyne, Chief Executive, Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Craig Macadam, Co-leader and Director, Buglife

Amy McDonald, Co-Executive Director, Zero Hour

Nick Measham, Chief Executive, WildFish

Lydia Meryll, Trustee, Greater Manchester Environmental Education Network

Carina Millstone, Executive Director, Foodrise

Professor Dame E.J. Milner-Gulland DBE, Tasso Leventis Professor of Biodiversity and Director of the Interdisciplinary Centre for Conservation Science, Oxford University

Dr Darren Moorcroft, Chief Executive, The Woodland Trust

Sarah Mukherjee MBE, Institute of Sustainability & Environmental Professionals (ISEP)

Robin Nicholson CBE, Convenor of The Edge Think Tank

Pascale Nicolet, Chief Executive, Newt Conservation Partnership

Dr Rose O'Neill, Chief Executive, Campaign for National Parks

Chris Packham, Director, Wild Justice, naturalist, nature photographer, television presenter and author

Maya Pardo, Campaign Lead, Communities Against Factory Farming

Ian Phillips, Chair Policy & Public Affairs Committee, the Landscape Institute

Nina Pindham, Barrister, Cornerstone Chambers

Professor William Pope, Chair, Environmental Policy Forum

Ruby Sleigh, Chair, Architects Climate Action Network (ACAN)

Kit Stoner, Chief Executive, The Bat Conservation Trust

Debbie Tann MBE, Chief Executive, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Wildlife Trust

Ben Heaven Taylor, Chief Executive, Trust for Oxfordshire's Environment

Ruth Tingay, Director, Wild Justice and Raptor Persecution Blog

Fay Vass, Chief Executive, British Hedgehog Preservation Society

Dale Vince OBE, Founder Ecotricity, and Trustee of the Green Britain Foundation

Joan Walley, Former MP Stoke on Trent North, and Chair, Environmental Audit Select Committee (EASC) 2010 - 2015

Matt Walpole, Chief Executive, Cornwall Wildlife Trust

Emma Wilcox, Chief Executive, Society for the Environment

Emily Wilson, Head of Programmes, Four Paws UK

Rosie Wood, Chair, The Badger Trust

Kathy Wormald, Chief Executive, The Froglife Trust