

IUCN National Committee UK Chief Executive's Report 2nd May 2018

1. The IUCN National Committee UK is very pleased to welcome the following new UK Members:

Margaret Pyke Trust with the Population Sustainability Network
Born Free Foundation

TREEAID

Department for Natural Resources, Welsh Government

Environment and Forestry Directorate, Scottish Government.

IUCN Council which is meeting as I speak, is likely to also approve the UK-based NGO Synchronicity Earth as a new IUCN Member.

Unfortunately, Royal Botanic Gardens Kew have decided to leave IUCN but will still be heavily engaged with the IUCN Red List.

The latest total from IUCN gives the UK 42 of 1333 Organisation Members of IUCN (over 3% of all IUCN Members are based here in the UK).

Last year we remained financially solvent – Stuart will speak about this but I do want to reiterate that the National Committee UK works on a minute annual budget of around £16,000 income and that this is dependent upon Members paying their subscriptions. We can do more with more resources.

We have a new Work programme 2017-2020 and it is worth mentioning that our model is being copied and adapted by other National Committees in Europe and is looked upon as an exemplar by the IUCN Regional Office in Brussels.

2. 'The UK has always played a disproportionately large part in the work of the Union' ref document entitled 'IUCN from the UK: highlights of the past triennium 1994-96'.

Maybe one shouldn't start a presentation with something somebody once said but there you are (it is referenced). It would be nice to say 'no change there then' and it is certainly true that there are many key individuals from the UK on the IUCN staff and leading IUCN Commissions (not to mention a British Councillor on IUCN Council, Jonathan Hughes, who is leading a variety of IUCN initiatives). Jane Smart and Stewart Maginnis are Global Directors, and there is Tim Badman leading on World Heritage and Dan Loffoley on the Marine Programme plus Kathy Mackinnon as Chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas. Until recently Simon Stuart headed up the Species Survival Commission. There is also of course the great work on the IUCN Red List and other activities delivered by the IUCN office in Cambridge and I am pleased that Mizuki Murai is here today to represent them. In addition the UK has a good percentage of IUCN's Organisation Members (over 3%) and individual members as environmental experts in the six Commissions (perhaps up to 10%).

See what you think of our National Committee contribution.



first ever meeting of national committees, Hawai'i 2016

3. I'd like to start at the global and regional levels as the UK National Committee is showing some leadership there. You may recall that at the World Conservation Congress in 2016, a Resolution was passed which called for the establishment of a Global Group for National and Regional Committee Development. The Global Group, which I have the honour to chair, has met online 6 times since Congress and

has already produced a Global Directory of National and Regional Committees and Country Focal Points. The Global Group has full representation from each of the IUCN regions, the Secretariat and a member of IUCN Council.

The Resolution to form the Global Group was supported almost unanimously with a record breaking number of votes and stemmed originally from the work of the Working Group for National Committee Development in Europe, North and Central Asia, which is also led by the National Committee UK.



National Committees and Regional Councillors meeting in Brussels and Amsterdam

This Working Group, ably supported with Secretariat services by Ann Katrine Garn, Chair of the National Committee for Denmark, has met 45 times since 2013, once a month online and several times in person most recently in Amsterdam 2 weeks ago). It has delivered a number of outputs including a 'toolkit for IUCN National Committees', which is now translated and used to support national committee development across the world. This group has just embarked on an important consultation with Members to form an InterRegional Committee for the two statutory regions (West Europe and East Europe, North and Central Asia) in order for Members to have a stronger, legitimate and collective voice in the IUCN framework as other Regional Committees of IUCN Members do.



Regional Conservation Forum for West Europe and East Europe, North and Central Asia, Helsinki 2015

4. These are significant outcomes for strengthening the Union and giving Members more access to IUCN's complex operations and opens up new opportunities for collaborative work. And it is the UK that leads. We aim to continue to play a leadership role in Europe (despite the implications of Brexit) and in the wider InterRegional Committee if and when it is established. The good news for all of us here in Europe is that the next IUCN World Conservation Congress will take place, probably in June 2020, in Marseille, France, and there will be an InterRegional Conservation Forum a year before in 2019, possibly in St Petersburg, with a pre-meeting to get the programme sorted in September this year in Prague. Altogether a great opportunity for Members to get engaged with IUCN particularly as 2020 is such a significant year for biodiversity reporting to the UN.

5. Another initiative now delivering at the global level is the IUCN UK Peatland Programme and I'm pleased that its Director, Clifton Bain, is with us today as its Chair, Rob Stoneman from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust. From peatland concerns in the UK this work has been adopted by the IUCN Commission on Ecosystem Management to fill a global

void in the IUCN Programme. Please find Clifton and Rob in the breaks and talk to him about the recently launched Peatland Strategy and all the other good work that this project is doing.

The UK National Committee's 'Putting Nature on the Map' project has also been yielding results. Producing recommendations on the application of IUCN Management Categories and Governance types for the UK's protected areas has been a labour of love, recently helping to overturn a proposal to make national parks centres for 'sustainable development', thus maintaining the Sandford Principle. With the help of JNCC this project has also delivered input to a request by the Convention on Biological Diversity for data on Protected Area Management Effectiveness, critical to help make sure Aichi target 11 is realistically met. New work on Marine Protected Areas with WWF has been undertaken and we look forward to developing a conference for MPA practitioners in the coming months.

Our River Restoration and Biodiversity project has entered its third phase and it is looking for demonstration projects to show the benefits and challenges in this field. Once again the National Committee UK has been the catalyst to bring together the many experts who work in this area to share knowledge and experience. I am pleased to say that Angus Tree from Scottish National Heritage is with us today – he is leading this work so please speak to him about detail. There is a poster and a leaflet for more information.

Some research and a nice bit of partnership working with WWF, World Heritage UK and the National Trust produced an interesting report on the relationships between nature and culture in the UK's World Heritage Sites. The research showed that over half of all the UK's 31 World Heritage Sites, mostly inscribed for their cultural

interest, have a high or very high nature conservation value. The report is available on the website.

6. So those are some highlights – some more mundane facts include that there is a new website for the National Committee UK iucnuk.wordpress.com which has a blog and where you can find pdfs of the documents I have mentioned and where the presentations from this meeting will be uploaded. We have an Executive Committee which keeps us on the straight and narrow and is always looking for new things that might benefit from an IUCN approach – nature conservation is a busy place in the UK but we have a niche, especially being the only UK organisation which has its State member and NGO members working together. We can do more with more resources.

7. A glimpse of the future? Well, we will continue to help deliver appropriate elements of the IUCN Global and Regional programmes for 2017–2020 and have already input to the mid-term review. In particular, we will progress some new work on MPAs and follow up work from this meeting on reporting on the SDGs and CBD Aichi targets. We look forward to encouraging and supporting a strong UK presence at the Regional Conservation Forum in 2019 and the World Conservation Congress in 2020 – a great opportunity to welcome IUCN colleagues from around the globe to this part of the world. And our work in strengthening national committees and the collective voice of members will I hope continue with your support.

The Executive Committee of the IUCN National Committee UK is keen to hear from the membership with their ideas for new partnerships and initiatives that can generate synergy for nature conservation. We would welcome your ideas.

Chris Mahon, CEO, IUCN National Committee UK