



# TO THE ACCUSED: UK GOVERNMENT CHARGE: CRIMES AGAINST NATURE





	WHAT THEY SAY		WHAT THEY DO
11 JAN 2018	“We will ensure seafloor habitats are productive and sufficiently extensive to support healthy, sustainable ecosystems”	31 DEC 2020	Permitted destructive fishing practices such as bottom-trawling and dredging in UK’s offshore Marine Protected Areas (designated for seabed protection). As many as 97% of the MPAs are subjected to trawling and there is still no commitment to completely ban the practice in MPAs. There was a 10% increase in total trawling hours in UK Marine Protected Sites from 2019 to 2020.
8 JUN 2021	“The UK is a global leader in marine protection, and we are leading the way internationally to deliver healthy and sustainable seas”	22 JAN 2021	Failed to reach 2020 biodiversity target for sustainable fishing. Only 3 of the 10 key UK fish stocks are in a healthy condition, with 6 classed as overfished or in a critical condition [according to Oceana’s UK Fisheries Audit].
11 JAN 2018	“[We are] increasing woodland in England in line with our aspiration of 12% cover by 2060”	31 MAR 2020	Missed the annual target for this (5000 hectares) by 75% in 2018-2019 and by 61% in 2019-2020.
24 NOV 2019	“We will reach an additional 75,000 acres or 30,000 hectares of trees a year across the UK by the end of the next Parliament [2025], as well as restoring our peatland”	31 MAR 2020	Off-track by 35 years to hit target for woodland cover for 2050 net-zero commitments at current annual rate of tree planting. 13,660 hectares were planted in 2019/20 which is less than half of the annual rate required for net-zero (30,000 hectares - according to the CCC).
		18 MAY 2021	Announced allocation of £50m to restore 35,000 hectares of peatland - just 1% of UKs total peatland. Currently only 13% of England’s peatlands are in a healthy state and are not emitting CO2. [according to England Peat Action Plan].
18 MAY 2017	“We will help Natural England to expand their provision of technical expertise...to deliver environmental improvements on a landscape scale”	31 MAR 2020	Cut DEFRA funding for Natural England for the 5th successive year to an all time low of £90.5m in 2019-20. £175m less than the funding in 2008/2009.
		1 MAR 2020	Missed the 2010 target to restore half of protected SSSIs (sites of special scientific interest) in England to favourable condition by 2020 - with no improvement made between 2015-2020. SSSIs in England are in a worse condition now than in 2010 (due to significant cuts to land management resources).
11 JAN 2018	“We will support nature’s recovery and restore losses suffered over the past 50 years...Public funding sources will continue to play an important role in protecting and enhancing the natural environment.”	31 MAR 2019	Cut public sector investment in conservation by 33% in real terms in just five years (2014-2019). In 2018/19 only 0.02% of UK GDP went towards funding biodiversity.



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11 JAN 2018	“We will make our air and water cleaner, and our natural habitats more diverse and healthy”	17 SEP 2020	Failed to meet pollution targets on any of England’s rivers in 2019, and made no improvement on the ecological condition of rivers since 2016. Only 16% of waterways are in “good” ecological condition [according to Environment Agency report] despite commitment to have 75% of rivers in “good” ecological condition by 2027.
26 AUG 2019	“The so-called Aichi targets must, in our view, be replaced with new, more ambitious targets to help us get back the biodiversity that this planet is losing, and has lost”	14 SEPT 2020	Failed on 14 of 20 UN (Aichi) biodiversity targets for 2020 set in 2010 - according to its own report. RSPB’s subsequent report assessed that in fact 17 of 20 targets were missed.
11 JAN 2018	“The UK supports further restrictions on the use of neonicotinoid pesticides because of the growing weight of scientific evidence they are harmful to bees and other pollinators”	13 JAN 2021	Approved temporary use of EU-banned neonicotinoid pesticide. Changes in weather conditions later meant it was no longer needed.
22 JAN 2021	“The UK Government is a global leader in tackling plastic pollution”	17 MAY 2021	Still not introduced a ban on plastic waste being exported to non-OECD countries despite 2019 manifesto pledge and continue to export unsorted plastic waste to developing countries - predominantly Turkey, which evidence shows lacks the infrastructure to process it. The EU banned this practice in Jan 2021.
		15 APR 2020	Delayed ban on the sale of single-use plastic items (plastic straws, drink stirrers and cotton buds) by 6 months, while European Commission (EU) refused to delay equivalent bans across the bloc.
18 DEC 2018	“Radical action is necessary to improve our use of resources and our handling of waste...with this [Waste] Strategy we will go further, faster”	25 NOV 2020	Delaying major recycling reform like Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) and the Deposit Return Scheme (DPS) until 2024. First announced in the 2018 Resource and Waste Strategy.
18 MAY 2017	“We will...provide stronger protections for our ancient woodland”	11 FEB 2021	Reviewed and permitted HS2 to fully go ahead at a growing cost of £98 billion despite reports of loss or damage to 108 irreplaceable ancient woodlands - (only 7% of ancient woodland in the UK remains in a good ecological condition in 2020). Plus loss or damage to 33 protected SSSIs, 5 protected wildlife refuges of international importance, 21 Local Nature Reserves, and further extensive areas of irreplaceable natural habitat.
14 NOV 2020	“As we build back greener we’re taking new steps to expand and enhance our landscapes”	11 MAY 2021	Proposing to loosen current planning laws as part of their ‘Project Speed’ initiative, which would mean automatic planning approval for development in any green space designated as a “growth” zone, with locals’ concerns no longer a consideration.



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11 JAN 2018	“We will achieve clean air by: meeting legally binding targets to reduce emissions of five damaging air pollutants”	3 MAR 2021	Still failing to contain nitrogen dioxide emissions within legal limits (set in 2010) in 33 of 43 zones measured across UK.
24 NOV 2019	“We will set strict new laws on air quality”	26 MAY 2021	Chose not to include any legally-binding commitment to meet World Health Organisation (WHO) air pollution standards in their Environment Bill (all versions to date), and voted against an amendment to include such targets.
23 SEP 2019	“The UK recognises that we are at a tipping point and that action now is both urgent and essential”	18 APR 2021	<p>Delayed the landmark Environment Bill (2020) for a third time until May 2021 following a previous 10-month delay.</p> <p>Delaying critical policy like the new Environment Land Management programme - that could bring a significant boost to nature funding (if designed well) - until 2024.</p>
21 JUN 2019	“We will not weaken any of our high environmental standards when we have left the EU and, where possible, will even look to enhance these even further”	10 MAR 2021	Replacing legally-binding EU environmental protections with non-binding environmental principles from which the Treasury and MOD are exempt (and that other departments are only required to consider in proportion with economic principles).
		1 JAN 2021	Chose not to mirror new EU laws on waste exports, instead reverting to looser international waste export regulations (known as ‘Prior Informed Consent’) on leaving the EU.
		30 JUL 2020	Only partially adopted EU Circular Economy strategy into the UK policy, with a long-term target of 65% recycling rate of municipal waste by 2035, rejecting EU legally-binding interim recycling targets for 2025 and 2030.
11 JAN 2018	“We will set out our plans for a new, world-leading independent statutory body to hold government to account and give the environment a voice”	10 MAR 2020	Put forward plans for an Office of Environmental Protections (OEP) which will not have the same independence and power as its EU equivalent and which is yet to be implemented, meaning since January 2021 there is no means to challenge the government on breaches of environmental law. Update: An interim OEP (with limited capacity and oversight) was launched on 2 July 2021.
		20 OCT 2020	Published an amendment to the Environment Bill to give government ministers the power to advise the new independent body (OEP) on how to enforce environmental law. On top their existing powers to determine its budget and board members.