



## NEWS RELEASE

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### UK 2010 BIODIVERSITY COMMITMENT

#### ***UK gets serious about its commitment to stop the loss of nature by 2010***

**14 June 2005, Bristol, UK (Countdown 2010 Secretariat)** – UK action on its 2010 biodiversity commitment was examined today at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual UK Biodiversity Partnership conference in Bristol.

The UK has committed itself at the global, EU, and National levels to reduce or stop the loss of biodiversity by 2010, but no specific plan on how this is to be achieved has yet been developed. The two day conference in Bristol organised by UK Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) brings together partners involved in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan for this purpose.

*"We have 5 years to meet our commitment but to achieve it we must map out how to get there now"* said Brian Harding, Director, Wildlife, Countryside and Land Use, Defra in the opening ceremony.

2005 represents an important year for conservation in the United Kingdom, as it sees the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan - the document that sets out how the UK will conserve its species. Within its structure are 427 species action plans and 179 local action plans. In order to update the Biodiversity Action Plan after ten years it is now going through a major process of review and updating.

*"The UK has made great advances in focussing global attention on the threats of climate change, but it must also be realised that the climate which regulates our atmosphere is linked to the biodiversity that sustains our ecosystems. Just as biodiversity is being lost due to changes in our climate, protecting our biological diversity is one of our best weapons to cope with and counter the impacts of climate change and to maintain the ability of ecosystems to support us in the future."* said Achim Steiner, Director General of the World Conservation Union (IUCN)

*"Now is the time for collective action on the 2010 commitment,"* said Steiner. *"IUCN has decided to take the 2010 target of halting the loss of biodiversity seriously and with our 373 State and NGO members in Europe we have launched the Countdown 2010 Initiative."*

*"Initiatives such as the UK Biodiversity Partnership and Countdown 2010 acknowledge that we can only reduce the loss of nature by getting NGO's, Governments and the private sector working together"* explained Sebastian Winkler, Countdown 2010 Executive Director.

#### **ENDS**

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## Notes for Editors:

### 1. UK 2010 Commitments

| 2010 Commitment                              | Level         | When it was made                   | What was said   |
|--|---------------|------------------------------------|---|
| WSSD-World Summit on Sustainable development | International | 2002                               | "the achievement by 2010 of a significant reduction in the current rate of loss of biodiversity"  |
| CBD-Convention on Biological Diversity       | International | 2002                               | "to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level"                                |
| Kiev Resolution on Biodiversity              | Pan European  | 2003                               | "to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010"  |
| EU Sustainable Development Strategy          | EU            | 2002                               | "to protect and restore the structure and functioning of natural systems and halt the loss of biodiversity both in the European Union and on a global scale by" |
| Gothenburg Agreement                         | EU            | 2001                               | "to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010"  |
| Public Service Agreement 3-                  | UK            | Public service Agreement 2005-2008 | "Bringing into favourable condition by 2010 95 per cent of all nationally important wildlife sites"   |

2. The UK Biodiversity Partnership comprises a wide range of people from those who provide funds, amateur and professional experts to those who are interested in the rich wildlife and natural history of the UK. They are private individuals, business, government and non government representatives and many are represented on several formal bodies as outlined below.

4. The Tracking Mammals Partnership, a collaborative initiative of 24 organisations in the UK, have assessed the status of 33 of the UK's 64 resident terrestrial mammals. Of the 25 native species assessed, 10 were increasing in range (such as the otter and badger), 4 were stable, 3 were declining (the Common Dormouse, Mountain Hare and the Water Vole) and 8 required more information. More alarmingly 6 of the 9 introduced species assessed were also increasing, including sika deer and the grey squirrel. Unfortunately there remains insufficient data to comment on the remaining 50% of the UK's resident mammal species.

3. The goal of Countdown 2010 is that all European governments, at every level, have taken the necessary action to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2010. To this end, the initiative brings together governments, NGOs, the private sector and citizens in actions to fulfil and draw public attention to commitments made to preserve biological diversity.

4. Further information on Countdown 2010 and its partners can be found on its website.  
<http://www.countdown2010.net>