



**SCOTTISH
POLICY
GROUP**

BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Scottish Policy Group Newsletter

Issue 1

BES Policy Groups exist to promote the use of ecological knowledge and support the involvement of ecologists in all levels of policymaking in each of the nations of the UK. They bring together BES members and people working in national environmental policy to highlight and promote how knowledge can aid policymakers with decision-making.

This is the newsletter of the Scottish Policy Group (SPG). Information on our other groups and policy work can be found on the [BES website](#).

Changes in the BES Policy Team and to the SPG Newsletter

The BES Policy Team now sits within the newly formed department of Policy and Communications. We have recently welcomed Joanna Bromley as the new Director of Policy and Communications and the new Welsh Policy Officer Rebecca Walley. For general team structure and information on who to contact please refer to the '[People](#)' page on the BES website.

The Scottish Policy Group newsletter will now come every quarter (this first one for 2023 is admittedly a little late), please expect the next update at the end of June! You will now be able to find the most up to date newsletter on a [new page on our website](#) with previous editions archived. We will also get in touch in between these regular updates to let you know about other events and opportunities as they come up.

HPMA consultation

The BES Scottish Policy Group has submitted our response to the Highly Protected Marine Areas consultation. The response was based on the expert input of colleagues who were contacted to provide their reflections. In principle, we welcome the Government's commitment to highly protect 10% of the sea in Scotland. There are some overarching key points that we highlighted:

- We recommend defining the key terms robustly. Throughout the consultation there is a lack of definition and vague language is often used. This will make appropriate monitoring and evaluation difficult and ineffective. It will also create confusion and uncertainty for key stakeholders who use the marine environment.
- HPMA's provide an opportunity for effective monitoring, which we can learn from and build into adaptive management processes.
- We recommend that a list of excluded damaging activities is clearly defined. This will assist with clarity, delivery, monitoring and accountability. It is currently quite vague as to what exactly will be excluded which makes it less effective.
- We also note that HPMA's need to be delivered inclusively and we make reference to BES Protected Areas Criteria D(i) taken from the BES Protected Areas Report (Bailey *et al*, 2022):

'Co-designed systems of governance should be embedded to ensure that conservation goals, incentives, and penalties (to limit pressures on nature) are developed with local communities in partnership with landowners, NGOs, researchers, government agencies, and other stakeholders.'

- We recommend that a clear connection is made between HPMA's and our international commitments, e.g. Target 3 in the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework. This connection is vital for ensuring that Scotland meets its international targets and commitments.

We hope that this response is constructive and look forward to seeing the response to the consultation process.

CIEEM Scottish Conference

CIEEM have opened the call for papers for our Scottish Conference 'The Role of Trees in a Sustainable Future', which will explore how we can achieve the Scottish Government's vision to expand woodlands to cover 21% of Scotland's area by 2032.

We're inviting presentation proposals on the following:

- How do we ensure that ambitious woodland expansion targets are met while delivering increased habitat and species diversity, nature networks and a suite of ecosystem services? What does the right tree in the right place mean for Scotland?
- Case studies of sustainable woodland creation, restoration, and expansion. What does a 'successful' woodland creation and restoration project look like?
- Green investment, ecosystem markets (e.g. carbon and biodiversity credits) and innovative approaches to increasing sustainability in the sector.
- What are the barriers and opportunities for woodland restoration and expansion e.g. for integrating trees and woodland into farming, riverine systems and urban environments? How can regional land use planning and collaborative ways of working help address the management challenges and scale of restoration needed?
- Woodland resilience and tree health.
- How do we ensure a skilled and diverse workforce to deliver the Scottish Government vision?

Interested in getting involved? Head to CIEEM's website to [download a proposal form](#). This event will be held on the 3rd of October 2023.

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Future work

Keep an eye out on BES social media and your inbox our 2023 Policy Fellowship with the Scottish Government which will be opening very soon!