

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate use

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Give Seas a Chance Says Wildlife Trust

The County's leading wildlife conservation charity has recently announced its commitment to a national initiative to save wildlife across Britain. Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust is backing a UK vision to protect wildlife not just on land, but also in our seas - despite being a county lacking coastline of its own.

The UK's Wildlife Trusts collectively launched their vision for the UK's marine environment last week at an event in the House of Commons entitled 'Living Seas'. The event was hosted by Hertfordshire MP (for Broxbourne), Charles Walker, to recognise and celebrate the successful passing in November 2009, of the Marine and Coastal Access Act (MCAA). The Wildlife Trusts have campaigned for nearly a decade to achieve greater protection for marine wildlife and the habitats they depend on and the Act marks an important milestone.

HMWT (and its members and supporters across the two counties) has supported the campaign and endorsed the launch to ensure that the UK's over-fished, over-exploited, and currently under-protected waters may be restored to a thriving marine environment. The challenge for the next five years is to ensure the Act is effectively implemented. The Living Seas Vision outlines The Wildlife Trusts' plans for achieving it within a single generation through a wide range of actions including; promoting a network of Marine Protected Areas; carrying out research and collating data, working with stakeholders to find solutions to issues; raising public awareness of the UK seas and sea life and delivering campaigns to build public and political support for Living Seas.

The Wildlife Trusts are achieving great things across the UK, working at the local level to understand, protect and raise awareness of our marine wildlife and habitats, from seagrass meadows to dolphins and seals. Although Hertfordshire is without a coastline, no one is more than one hour's car journey from the sea and many of us regularly visit the Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk coasts.

Judy Adams, Chief Executive of HMWT said "It is important that we remember just how vital the sea- and the wildlife in it - is to us, even if we don't perhaps see it everyday. From the holidays or weekend breaks we take, to the fish we eat and the waste water that we generate (and makes its way eventually into the sea), when we bathe, use appliances or simply flush the toilet, our way of life here in Hertfordshire is still linked with the wellbeing of the marine environment."

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Herts & Middlesex

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President - SA Bowes-Lyon, PCA

She continued “We simply can’t ignore such a huge part of our natural heritage just because we don’t live alongside it and we must take an equal share in the responsibility of its care. This is why HMWT is fully backing the Living Seas Vision and will be working to ensure that everyone in Hertfordshire and Middlesex understands what we need to do to protect our seas and our wildlife for future generations.”

Launching the Living Seas vision, Professor Aubrey Manning, BBC television presenter and president of The Wildlife Trusts said: “The Living Seas vision is very direct in its aims. It sets out a clear plan of how we, The Wildlife Trusts, and our partners and supporters, can work to achieve them. The opportunities that the Marine and Coastal Access Act has opened up need to be seized immediately. We can no longer continue to treat the oceans as limitless. In particular, we need an effective and well-managed network of Marine Protected Areas by 2012.”

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Notes for Editors

- 1. Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust is a charity dedicated to protecting wildlife for future generations. It safeguards and manages 43 Nature Reserves across the two counties, advises on wider countryside issues and is at the forefront of developing long-term nature conservation strategies. It has over 21,300 members and is one of 47 local Wildlife Trusts across the UK.*
- 2. **The Wildlife Trusts (TWT)** www.wildlifetrusts.org There are 47 Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney. We are working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. With 791,000 members, we are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving the full range of the UK’s habitats and species, whether they be in the countryside, in cities or at sea. 135,000 of our members belong to our junior branch, Wildlife Watch. We manage 2,256 nature reserves covering more than 90,000 hectares; we stand up for wildlife; we inspire people about the natural world and we foster sustainable living.*
- 3. **Living Seas** The Wildlife Trusts have been campaigning for many years for comprehensive legislation to achieve better protection for marine wildlife and the effective management of our seas.*

*For further information, or for a Jpeg of the photograph(s) shown, please contact: **Clare Gray, Marketing & PR Officer, Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust on tel. 01727 858901 or clare.gray@hmwt.org***

Press Release

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Herts &
Middlesex



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l- r Stephanie Hillbourne OBE (Chief Executive, The Wildlife Trusts), Charles Walker MP (Broxbourne) Mike Master (Chairman HMWT) and Judy Adams (Chief Executive HMWT) at the launch of the Living Seas vision at the House of Commons