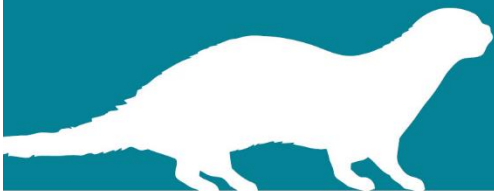




The
Wildlife
Trusts

Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (COP15)

The Wildlife Trusts' briefing



“By 2050, biodiversity is valued, conserved, restored and wisely used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people.”

UN 2050 Vision for the Convention on Biological Diversity

In 2022, China will host the Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity in Montreal – also known as COP15.

COP15 will be a crucial moment in the global fight to reverse the worldwide decline in biodiversity. It’s also an important moment in efforts to tackle the climate crisis and make the case for nature-based solutions to climate change.

What is COP15?

To put it simplistically, COP15 is like the COP26 climate conference held in Glasgow last year, but for nature.



Carbon storing peatland pool systems in Flow Country, Scotland (Peter Cairns)

COP (or Conference of Parties) is the decision-making body responsible for reviewing the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (or CBD), a global agreement on nature conservation. Through the CBD, 196 parties – usually nations, or groups of nations like the EU – agree to a set of 20 global targets which aim to halt biodiversity loss.

The last set of targets - known as the Aichi Targets - came to an end in 2020 and at COP15 the new targets for 2022-2030 will be decided.

Globally we failed to meet any of the last set of targets. COP15 is our last chance to reverse the decline of nature, before it is too late. It is essential that the new set of targets are more than just words on a page – they must lead to transformative action in policy and on the ground from all governments across the world.

COP15 has been delayed for two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. China holds the presidency for the negotiations, but due to covid restrictions in China, the conference will take place in Montreal, Canada.

What do we want to see from COP15?

The Wildlife Trusts want to see bold action to tackle the twin nature and climate crises. We need a nature positive decade so that by 2030 nature is on a path to recovery, with 30% of land and sea protected for nature. We need nature to be more abundant than it is now, so it can help us mitigate and adapt to changing global temperatures.

We want to see the following included in the COP15 agreement:

COP15 must agree a landmark legally-binding global treaty to halt and reverse the loss of biodiversity by 2030

- Just as the landmark Paris Agreement was set in 2015 at COP21 to limit global warming to below 2 degrees, we want COP15 to agree a similar treaty to on nature. This would ensure leaders across the world have to take action on nature as a priority this decade.
- This agreement must include targets to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030 across the globe, with 20% of land and sea put into recovery for nature.
- The agreement must include a ratchet mechanism which requires parties to return each year with more ambitious targets, like the mechanism included in the COP26 climate agreement made in Glasgow last year.

If the UK wants to be a world leader on climate and nature, it must ensure it is taking the same action at home it is encouraging others to take internationally

- If the UK Government does not take bold action at home to restore nature, it cannot expect countries to heed its calls for ambitious global policies.
- At home, progress must be made by all governments in the UK on the commitment to protect 30% of land and sea for nature by 2030. Currently, only 3% of land can reliably be said to be protected for nature.
- The UK must strengthen, not weaken, its environmental protections, ensuring that our most precious sites are safe for future generations.



The UK must provide effective financial and practical support to global majority countries and indigenous communities

- Indigenous communities manage some of the earth's most precious natural resources, which must be protected and restored if we are to tackle the nature and climate crises.
- Wealthy nations, like the UK, must ensure that these communities have the finance and support needed to protect these resources.
- The UK also needs to provide finance to global majority countries for nature restoration. These countries are often on the front line of the climate catastrophe, despite having contributed the least to global emissions, and investment in their natural environment can help mitigate this.

COP15 is about climate too

Tackling the climate crisis must be central to the negotiations at COP15 – otherwise we will not effectively make progress on the climate or nature crisis. Though COP15 is not explicitly a climate conference, it would be short-sighted if nature's ability to mitigate and adapt to climate change was not recognised in the discussions.

The Wildlife Trusts want to see integration between the agreements made at COP27 in November and the decisions that will be made regarding nature in Montreal. We welcome commitments from COP26 President Rt Hon Alok Sharma MP that he is working hard with China to align the outcomes of the two COPs.