

# AVERTING DANGEROUS CLIMATE CHANGE



We're pushing the UK for the strongest ambition and measures to decarbonise, to help tackle the climate emergency.

## 2020-21 TARGET

We'll influence the UK governments – in the run-up to the UN climate summit – to raise their climate ambition and to support nature-based solutions that contribute to climate action, human development and the recovery of nature.

This year's UN climate summit in Glasgow (known as COP26) is a critical opportunity for the UK to show leadership and secure the action needed to prevent climate breakdown. We've taken every opportunity to press the UK governments to demonstrate strong ambition.

Among our highlights were delivering the Leaders' Pledge for Nature together with the UK and other governments at the UN Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020. By the end of our financial year more than 80 presidents and prime ministers (including Boris Johnson) had endorsed the pledge, committing by 2030 to reverse nature loss and protect 30% of land and seas.

And our *Feeling the Heat* report delivered a powerful message about the urgent need for world leaders to act at COP26. The report highlighted many species, including beloved UK wildlife, that will struggle to survive if the planet heats up by more than 1.5°C.

We partnered with the UK government to deliver the Climate Ambition Summit in December 2020. This summit marked the fifth anniversary of the Paris climate agreement. It brought together 75 world leaders to galvanise international action towards a resilient, net-zero emissions future. Announcements before, during and anticipated after the summit mean that by early 2022, countries responsible for around 65% of global carbon emissions will have committed to net-zero emissions or carbon neutrality.

In the lead-up to the Climate Ambition Summit, our advocacy – including our influential [report](#) with Imperial Consultants – contributed to the UK boosting its 2030 emissions reduction target from 53% to at least 68% as

part of its enhanced 'nationally determined contribution' (NDC), a requirement of the Paris Agreement. The UK's ambitious NDC helped to pave the way for a series of strong commitments from other countries. Working with coalition partners we also helped secure a commitment for an 'indicative' NDC from the Scottish government.

The build-up to COP26 was an important focus for us throughout the year. We provided regular expert input to the UK government, including meeting with the prime minister to discuss our asks for COP26.

## 2020-21 TARGET

We'll influence the UK business and finance sector to implement measures aligned with a 1.5°C pathway in their operations, supply chains and investment activities.

The size and scope of carbon emissions produced by companies funded by the UK finance sector make this a critical area to transform if we're to meet the Paris climate agreement targets. This year we mobilised an NGO coalition pushing for the UK government to commit to creating a Paris-aligned finance sector, and ultimately to make it mandatory for regulated financial institutions to publish a plan that outlines how they will align their portfolios with the Paris agreement and net zero requirements.



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With Greenpeace, we published *The Big Smoke* – a report that estimated the scale of financed emissions that UK financial institutions are responsible for. We used the research findings to demonstrate how huge the UK financial sector’s contribution to climate change is – and the need for new UK regulation to drive urgent emissions reduction targets in line with the Paris climate agreement. The momentum on this topic has increased substantially and tackling the finance sector’s contribution to climate change has become a mainstream discussion in the sector. WWF helped to influence this direction.

Our ambitious work with corporate partners included influencing Tesco both on its science-based climate targets and also in adopting climate risk into its corporate risk register. Tesco also supported our *Emission Possible* report, which helps companies understand their climate impacts and how to measure and reduce them. And with Scottish Power we launched a *Climate Collaboration Challenge* – to inspire new innovative partnerships (between government, civil society, finance, academia and many business sectors) in Scotland that will deliver faster and more ambitious action to tackle climate change. We’ll showcase the new climate projects at the UN climate summit in Glasgow.

### 2020-21 TARGET

**We’ll influence economic recovery packages, including pushing for a new rule that public spending must help decarbonise the economy. We want environmental impacts considered in all economic and financial decisions.**

Greening the economy is essential if we’re to keep the UK on target to meet its Paris climate commitments. This year we developed the idea of a ‘net zero test’ for the Treasury to apply to its Budgets and Spending Reviews, to ensure they keep us on track to a 1.5°C future. We worked with the Treasury, Bank of England, Office for Budgetary Responsibility, International Monetary Fund and others to make the case for a net zero test and other fiscal reforms to support a green recovery.

We worked with Vivid Economics to demonstrate how a net zero test could measure the environmental impact of all new policies in the March Budget. We’re using this evidence in our autumn 2021 ‘We Won’t Forget’ campaign.

Our work with the Environmental Audit Committee and Climate Change Committee led to them making the net zero test a key recommendation for government – increasing the pressure for a response. Following our lobbying, the Treasury also joined the OECD’s Paris Collaborative on Green Budgeting, further strengthening the enabling conditions for the net zero test.

We also helped to shift the Treasury’s thinking around economic and fiscal reform by inputting to the Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity, which was published in January. At WWF, we’d been calling for the UK government to assess the economic contribution of biodiversity and nature for many years. The review is a global analysis of the implications of nature loss to economies and human wellbeing. It highlights the need to transform economic and financial systems to be nature positive. We supported the review with evidence from our

Global Futures initiative, and organised an event with leaders from government, business and finance to build support for strong action to put the review’s findings into practice. Our messages were reflected in the government’s response to the review; it’s helped cement our position as a major voice on economic and fiscal policy in this area.

### 2020-21 TARGET

**We’ll launch Walrus from Space – our pioneering method of assessing the global walrus population in the context of the climate crisis and Arctic sea ice loss, involving satellite imagery, citizen science and tracking.**

This year we and British Antarctic Survey led the development of a new five-year citizen science project called Walrus From Space, to help better understand the effect the changing Arctic is having on walrus populations – and,

by extension, other Arctic species. With partners including satellite imagery company Maxar, we identified and mapped all known terrestrial haul-out sites across the Arctic, and completed the image capture and processing of 90% of them. In summer 2021 we are capturing a second year of images.

We also worked with Maxar GeoHIVE to develop an online platform that will allow the public to take part in counting walrus and helping us identify changes in walrus locations and numbers. The site went live for testing during the year and we presented the initial outcomes at the Global Biodiversity Festival in May 2021. We reduced the scope of the project to focus on Atlantic and Laptev walrus, in response to Alaskan indigenous community sensitivities related to Pacific walrus. We intend to start using the platform to engage with a mass public audience this autumn, with a launch event in Greenwich alongside the UK’s new polar research ship *Sir David Attenborough*, and a series of events during the UN climate summit in Glasgow.



### OUR 2021-22 PRIORITIES WILL INCLUDE

We’ll influence the UK government’s vision for UK food and farming to ensure it’s compatible with a 1.5°C future. We’ll identify emissions targets and develop plans to meet them.

We’ll influence the UK government’s climate commitments at the UN climate summit in Glasgow.

We’ll continue to advocate for the UK to apply a net-zero test to public spending. We’ll publish and apply a pilot net-zero test.

We’ll press the UK government to commit to making it mandatory for UK-regulated financial institutions to publish their plans for aligning with the Paris Agreement.