

## Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

10 October 2019

### News

#### Top stories

[More than a quarter of UK mammals face extinction](#)

[Global wildlife trade higher than was thought](#)

#### Royal Society of Biology news

##### [Biology Week](#)

This week is #BiologyWeek. Please follow our [news](#) and [events](#) online and on [Twitter](#). On Friday, join biologists posting their career stories and photos as part of the #iamabiologist campaign.

##### [The UK's favourite freshwater species](#)

This year's Biology Week poll aims to focus on some of the inhabitants of fresh water areas across the UK. Vote for your favourite freshwater species by midday on 11 October 2019.

##### [Expert panellists come to discuss if it's too late to save our oceans at this year's Biology Week debate](#)

Biologists and non-biologists of all ages packed into the historic Faraday Theatre at the Royal Institution last night to hear a panel of experts tackle the question: Marine plastics: is it too late to save our oceans?

##### [Researchers and insect enthusiasts come together to discuss insect declines – fact and fiction](#)

Almost 100 people attended this year's Biology Week Policy Lates: "Insect declines in the headlights."

## [Stampeding zebras, leaping beetles and a shivering polar bear feature in this year's RSB Photography Competition shortlist](#)

Ten shortlisted entries have been released for this year's Royal Society of Biology Photography Competition, from both amateur and young photographers.

## [Amazing anatomical artwork feature in this year's Nancy Rothwell award winners](#)

The winning and highly commended pieces of art for this year's Nancy Rothwell award have been announced, with an array of intricate anatomical drawings including a running wolf, a soaring eagle and a swarm-raiding army ant.

## Health and biomedicine

### [Groundbreaking new platform launched to support mental health](#)

PHE and the NHS launch Every Mind Matters to help people take simple steps to look after their mental health, improve their mental wellbeing and support others.

### [Endometriosis: Thousands share devastating impact of condition](#)

### [Flu vaccine offered to every primary school child in England](#)

Health professionals to give 600,000 children aged 10-11 free vaccine against winter flu

### [Microneedle sensor aims to cut hospital superbugs](#)

### [Do summer heatwaves lead to an increase in deaths?](#)

When the UK's hottest day on record was recorded this summer, an increase in deaths followed. We look at how hot weather affects the number of deaths that occur.

## Food and drink

### [Sixty scientists sign open letter calling for less meat and dairy in schools and hospitals](#)

'Mayors are in charge of millions of meals every day – they should do everything in their power to create a healthy future for the planet,' they say

### [Should we be eating insects?](#)

There's a bit of a buzz around entomophagy (eating insects) at the moment.

### [Major step towards infant formula that is more like human milk](#)

Research team engineer plants to produce the human form of key fat molecule

## Agriculture and fisheries

### [How can shoppers make sense of sustainable fish labels?](#)

As North Sea cod and wild Atlantic salmon added to at-risk list, calls grow for simplified rules

### [£5 million given to AMR research partnerships between UK and Argentina](#)

The government has provided £5 million of UK aid as part of a programme to manage antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in agriculture and its impact on the environment.

### [Rise of the 'wonder bean': from deforestation to your plate](#)

The meat and dairy industry's demand for soya is driving environmental crisis in one of the world's most threatened forests. We trace the seven steps from the Chaco to the food we eat

## Environment and ecology

### [Top five threats to UK's wildlife \(and what to do about them\) – new report](#)

### [Reintroduction of native species comes after centuries of relentless persecution by gamekeepers](#)

### [Wildlife decline 'faster in Scotland than across the UK'](#)

### [No let-up in net loss of UK's nature](#)

## Water and air

### [Government provides more funds for local authority air quality action](#)

Local authorities are encouraged to bid for a portion of at least £2 million of government support.

## Climate and energy

### [What is carbon neutrality and how can it be achieved by 2050?](#)

Under the Paris agreement, the EU has committed to carbon neutrality by the second half of the 21st century. What does it mean in practice?

## Animal Research

### [Scientists hope to breed sheep that emit less greenhouse gases](#)

Initiative aims to improve the animals' feeding efficiency and reduce methane emissions

## Exiting the EU

### [Protecting the environment after Brexit](#)

Consultation gives support to Scottish Government proposals.

## Research funding and higher education policy

### [A kinder research culture is possible](#)

Wellcome is right to call out hyper-competitiveness in research and question the focus on excellence. But other funders must follow its move.

### [REF should accommodate more diverse outputs, says study](#)

Report for Research England warns assessment may be constraining academics' publishing options

## Open access and publication policy

### [Publication of Universities UK Open Access Monograph report](#)

#### [Most European campuses 'use journal impact factor to judge staff'](#)

Preliminary results of EUA survey suggest three-quarters of responding institutions draw on much-criticised metric

#### [Two-thirds of researchers report 'pressure to cite' in Nature poll](#)

Readers say they have been asked to reference seemingly superfluous studies after peer review.

## Diversity and inclusion

### [Why are so few women inventors named on patents?](#)

#### [Why aren't women leading research impact cases?](#)

There's just over a year to go before the 27 November 2020 deadline for submission of REF 2021 impact case studies. But how many will be led by women?

## Outreach and engagement

### [Honey fungus secrets fall to science](#)

## International news

### [India pushes for alternatives to animals in biomedical research](#)

Organs-on-a-chip and other technologies are becoming reliable models for testing drug efficacy and toxicity.

### [Paralysed man walks using mind-controlled exoskeleton](#)

French patient's breakthrough could lead to brain-controlled wheelchairs, say experts

### [Why the avocado is getting the GM treatment](#)

In Mexico, heatwaves threaten the stability of the agricultural staple, as scientists fight for the research funding that could save it.

### [Face masks could raise pollution risks](#)

People can get a false sense of security from flimsy gauze, and linger too long outdoors in toxic air, argue Wei Huang and Lidia Morawska.

### [It takes 21 litres of water to produce a small chocolate bar. How water-wise is your diet?](#)

### ['More women are being nominated': Nobel academy head discusses diversity](#)

Ahead of this year's award announcements, Göran Hansson speaks about measures to address the imbalance in gender and ethnicity among winners.

## Opinion

### [Highlight negative results to improve science](#)

Publishers, reviewers and other members of the scientific community must fight science's preference for positive results — for the benefit of all, says Devang Mehta.

### [We hail individual geniuses, but success in science comes through collaboration](#)

The Nobel Prizes give a human face to science. But does celebrating individuals risk undermining what's achieved through a collaborative research culture?

### [Why scientists need to engage with the media](#)

### [Seasonal diets could be the answer to food sustainability](#)

By eating produce grown close to home, we can reduce our carbon emissions and reconnect with the land

### [Why aren't there more academic experts in the media?](#)

The belief that it is far better to anticipate, lead, and take control of media opportunities (rather than suffer in response or serve as a moaning bystander) is one of the main findings that has emerged from interviews with some of the UK's most committed "media active" academics.

## Other

### [New measures protect animal welfare and increase woodland cover](#)

The Government has announced proposals on new measures to enhance the welfare of animals and increase woodland cover.

## People

### [Simon Baron-Cohen: 'Neurodiversity is the next frontier. But we're failing autistic people'](#)

All different types of brains are normal, but greater understanding has not led to more money for autism, says world-leading expert

### [Nobel Prize for medicine won by British scientist Sir Peter Ratcliffe](#)

Three winners awarded for discoveries of 'how cells sense and adapt to oxygen and availability'

### [Professor Rory Duncan appointed as UKRI Director for Talent and Skills](#)

## Opportunities

### [BioArtAttack Competition](#)

What is a BioArtAttack? Your entry can be anything from drawings and sculptures to models and collages of any scale. The piece of art created can be entered by an individual or as a group, including classes, lab groups or any group of biology enthusiasts.

**Closes: 13 October 2019**

### [Diversity in Science Grants](#)

The Biochemical Society's Diversity in Science Grants scheme provides grants of up to £500 to individuals, groups, charities or not-for profit organisations to support and address issues relating to diversity in science.

**Closes: 18 October 2019**

### [Education Policy Officer \(0.4 FTE\)](#)

The Royal Society of Biology is seeking a part time education policy officer to support the development of a framework for 5 - 19 biology, and drive forward the Society's education policy work to support the learning of teaching of the biosciences in schools. This role focuses on primary and secondary education, and would suit candidates with a science undergraduate degree (preferably in the biosciences) and experience of teaching or UK science curricula. For more information and to apply, visit [mySociety](#).

**Closes: 20 October 2019**

### [MRC / AMS Policy Internship Scheme](#)

The Medical Research Council and the Academy of Medical Sciences' are pleased to open applications to their [policy internship scheme](#). Students will receive first-hand experience of medical science policy and have the opportunity to build valuable relationships with key stakeholders across the sector. The scheme is open to all MRC-funded PhD students in their third or fourth year of study, and successful interns will undertake a 12-week placement at the Academy's offices in London.

**Closes: 21 October 2019**

### [Royal Society of Biology, Outreach and Engagement Volunteering Opportunities](#)

RSB are looking for local volunteers to help run our hands-on science activities at [Conwy Feast](#), at Conwy, Wales, on **26th – 27th October 2019**. If you live nearby and are interested in volunteering to help the RSB outreach team deliver our hands-on science activities please email Dr Amanda Hardy via [outreach@rsb.org.uk](mailto:outreach@rsb.org.uk)

### [RSB Big Biology Day Grant 2019](#)

Are you interested in hosting a one-day science outreach festival to share your passion for biology and the natural world? Apply for the Royal Society of Biology's [Big Biology Day Grant 2019](#) and get up to £500 to host your own Big Biology Day.

**Closes: 1 November 2019**

### **RSB Outreach and Engagement grant scheme 2020**

If you have an idea for an outreach and engagement event or activity and are looking for funding to make it happen in 2020. Apply now to the Royal Society of Biology's [Outreach and Engagement grant scheme online](#) and submit your application for a grant of up to £500.

**Closes: 1 November 2019**

## Consultations

### **Standards for biodegradable, compostable and bio-based plastics: call for evidence**

**Closes: 14 October 2019**

### **Developing a national food strategy**

The RSB response to this consultation is currently in draft. Please contact [consultation@rsb.org.uk](mailto:consultation@rsb.org.uk) for more information and if you would like to contribute.

**Closes: 25 October 2019**

### **Highly Protected Marine Areas review**

**Closes: 31 October 2019**

### **Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity**

HM Treasury launches a call for evidence for an independent global review, led by Professor Sir Partha Dasgupta, to assess the economic value of biodiversity and identify actions that will simultaneously enhance biodiversity and deliver economic prosperity. The RSB response to this consultation is currently in draft. Please contact [consultation@rsb.org.uk](mailto:consultation@rsb.org.uk) for more information and if you would like to contribute.

**Closes: 6 November 2019**

## Events

### **The Physiological Society's parliamentary launch of healthy ageing report**

**15 October 2019**

Houses of Parliament, London

'Growing Older, Better' is a culmination of a 12 month project looking at the role of R&D, funding and public health messaging into delivering the Government's 'Ageing Society' Grand Challenge. If you would like to attend please contact [Andrew Mackenzie](#).

### **Bioscience Careers Day 2019**

**26 October 2019**

Middlesex University, London

The Bioscience Careers Day (BCD) is the perfect opportunity to get your career on track - whether you are interested in working in research, science communication or even if you just want to know what options are available to you once you finish your bioscience degree. Our top programme will enhance your prospects. Find out what happened last year in our [YouTube video](#). Visit [here](#) for full details and to buy your £10 ticket. Direct queries to Harriet McAra at [events@rsb.org.uk](mailto:events@rsb.org.uk)

**[Athena Forum Prizes and Awards workshop](#)**

**6 November 2019**

Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne

**[STEMM-CHANGE conference](#)**

**14 November 2019**

Royal Society of Chemistry, London

**[Organ-on-a-chip: Current Gaps and Future Directions](#)**

**2 December 2019**

GSK Medicines Research Centre, Stevenage

**[Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation V](#)**

**9 - 10 December 2019**

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

**[Greater horseshoe bats living in Kent after absence of 115 years](#)**

Climatic change may be behind expanded range of very rare native mammal of British Isles

**Royal Society of Biology**

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