



Position statement on the implications of the EU referendum decision for our environment and wildlife

BACKGROUND:

On the 23rd June 2016 the United Kingdom will hold a referendum on whether to remain a member of the European Union. As part of this debate the Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust is keen to ensure that our environment is considered when people are deciding how to vote. This is in accordance with our charitable objectives “to promote and protect wildlife” and in keeping with the Charity Commission guidelines we have decided to make our conclusions publically available.

The Trustees of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust have considered and agree with the view taken by the Council of the Wildlife Trusts that the UK’s environment has benefited greatly as a result of EU cooperation and that our wildlife and habitats will be better off if they continue to benefit from EU environmental legislation and a cross-Europe framework for nature conservation. Therefore, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust believes that the UK’s wildlife would be better served by remaining in the EU. We know where wildlife stands with the UK as a member of the EU, but there is no certainty about its future under a Brexit. This view was formed due to the following key points:

- The collaboration between countries, since many species know no borders.
- The promotion of strong and ambitious laws that have protected Europe’s natural world.
- The high environmental standards found across Europe.
- The long term legislative stability which minimises the risks from short-term electoral cycles.
- The legal safety net that holds EU members to account if not complying to shared environmental objectives.

For further information on the Wildlife Trusts position on the EU referendum please visit their website: <http://www.wildlifetrusts.org/EU-Ref>

WHY DO WE CARE ABOUT THE REFERNDUM ON THE UK’S MEMBERSHIP OF THE EU?

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust believes it is important to provide its supporters, members and all those who care about our natural world with information and evidence on this important issue. We believe it is important for us to share our view on this matter, based on the evidence we have to date, and to speak up for wildlife.

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

- We are pursuing our charitable aims by presenting information about the impact of the EU on the environment and wildlife, and doing so in line with Charity Commission guidance.
- We are championing the cause of wildlife - as we promise our members we will do.
- We are only commenting on those aspects of EU membership that relate to our charitable aims i.e. those that affect wildlife and the environment - we fully respect that people will be voting as individuals and will be considering a wide range of issues as they do so.
- We are encouraging the public to ask representatives on both sides of the debate to explain what they will be doing for wildlife and the environment in either scenario.

WHAT WE ARE NOT DOING?

- We are not being “party political” - we have a broad membership with a variety of political views and we focus totally on our charitable objects.
- We are not formally affiliated to, or funding, either the “Remain” or “Leave” campaign.
- We are not, and will not, be telling people how to vote.
- We are not basing our position on potential funding opportunities linked to EU Membership
- We have not used any public funds in developing our statement.



Position statement on the implications of the EU referendum decision for our environment and wildlife

HOW WE ARRIVED AT OUR POSITION:

The Wildlife Trusts exist to protect wildlife and to inspire people to value and act for wildlife and wild places. The Wildlife Trusts strongly believe that wildlife and the environment has significantly benefited due to the UK's membership of the EU. In coming to this opinion The Wildlife Trusts have entered in dialogue with people from both sides of the debate. The Wildlife Trusts has also joined with other environmental charities to commission an in-depth analysis of the implications of a "Brexit" for the environment –The potential policy and environmental consequences for the UK of a departure from the European Union. Amongst other evidence, this report, jointly commissioned with the RSPB and WWF, illustrates how EU measures have safeguarded birds such as the bittern and nightjar; protected habitats that are essential for butterflies and important pollinating insects; and delivered cleaner air, rivers and beaches.

The report is also very clear that there should be changes and improvements, particularly in relation to the Common Agricultural Policy, which conservation groups believe should prioritise the protection and enhancement of public goods (such as wildlife), and not just the intensification of production. This report can be found at: www.ieep.eu/assets/2000/IEEP_Brexit_2016.pdf

The position taken by the Wildlife Trusts has been considered and endorsed by the Trustees of Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust. The EU has delivered a strong body of environmental legislation, without which in all probability, we would have lost some of our finest wildlife sites, including a key area of Sherwood Forest. The EU has inspired the UK's own wildlife legislation and where necessary has held us to account.

INFORMING THE DEBATE:

We respect that there are many other factors which people will be considering when they decide which way to vote, but feel that it is essential to raise awareness of environmental issues in the context of the Referendum debate. The Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust is therefore recommending that the public asks campaigners on either side of the debate some key questions including:

1. How would you make sure that action on nature protection, pollution and air quality is maintained and enhanced?
2. How would you exercise international leadership on climate change?
3. What is your vision for more environmentally responsible agriculture and fishing in the UK?

Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust

With around 11,000 members, Nottinghamshire Wildlife Trust is the county's largest environmental charity run by local people for the benefit of local wildlife and wildlife habitats. Improving people's understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural world is fundamental to our work. We manage more than 60 nature reserves covering more than 2,000 acres, liaise with farmers and landowners to promote and encourage conservation stewardship, campaign for the protection of threatened species and habitats and work to influence government policy and decisions affecting the future of wildlife. Our efforts are part of a nationwide network of 47 local Wildlife Trusts working in partnership to protect our precious natural heritage.