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JOINT NATURE CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

MATTERS ARISING

This paper deals with points not covered by substantive items on the agenda. The number relates to the minutes of the September 2005 meeting.

6. Fourth Quinquennial Review

The Chairman has written to Brian Harding, Director of Rural Affairs at Defra exhorting urgent action to be taken to implement the recommendations set out in the 4th Quinquennial Review of Schedules 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. The letter pointed out that no reply had yet been received to Professor Ingram's (then Acting Chairman) letter to the Minister dated September 2004.

7. Position Statement on Avian Influenza

The fast-moving development of the avian influenza issue required the position statement agreed by the Joint Committee to be amended. Following consultation with the agencies, and conferral with Dr Moser on behalf of the Committee, an amended statement was agreed and posted on the JNCC website in November 2005.

12. Update to the Joint Committee on conservation-related marine initiatives in the UK, Europe and North-East Atlantic

Marine Thematic Strategy

In October 2005, the European Commission published a Communication on the Marine Thematic Strategy, accompanied by a proposal for a Directive which lays down guidelines for the achievement of good environmental status for all the EU's marine areas by 2021. The proposed Directive has similarities to, but is simpler and less prescriptive than, the Water Framework Directive. Under the proposed Directive Member States would be required to develop, in respect to each Marine Region, a marine strategy and action plan for achieving good environmental status. Member States sharing a Marine Region would be required to co-ordinate their actions. The timetable for further consideration of the proposed Directive is not yet available.

Marine Bill

A public consultation document on the Marine Bill is now expected to be issued in January/February 2006. Officer level co-ordination arrangements have been established to assist JNCC and the country agencies discuss the range of elements likely to be included in the Bill preparatory to preparing their responses to this consultation.