



Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

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Caroline Lucas MP
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Dear Caroline,

I am writing in relation to the debate on the Biodiversity Loss, on Wednesday 15 May.

In my closing speech, I stated: *“We will produce the next environment improvement plan in the summer, and it will only be the second one”*. I wanted to make clear that this will not be the second Environmental Improvement Plan, but the first Annual Progress Report of the Environmental Improvement Plan 2023.

In respect of our targets to restore peatland I wanted to clarify that so far we have provided £35 million for peatland restoration projects, financially committing us to restoring approximately 27,000 hectares of peatland. Our target is to restore 35,000 hectares of peat is by 2025 (not the 2030 I mentioned). We are therefore making good progress to deliver this commitment.

Finally, I spoke about our species abundance indicator where I stated: *“We have something called a species abundance indicator, which is the official statistic telling us how we are doing on our species. We need that so we can work out how we are getting to our targets. We published the official statistic last Friday, and I urge people to have a look at that. It is a complicated tool, covering 670 species used as indicators of how we are doing on our targets and informed by an expert committee”*

I would like to highlight that this is an official statistic in development, and we are only at the beginning of our process to make this an official statistic. We are keen to get feedback from users and experts that may help to improve further releases. The statistic published also includes data for 1,177 species rather than the 670 species included in the initial metric developed during the development of the biodiversity targets. This is almost all of the 1,195 species that should be monitored as part of the species abundance targets was published in Schedule 2 of [the Environmental Targets \(Biodiversity\) \(England\) Regulations 2023](#).

I will place a copy of this letter in the House Library. I am also copying to Theresa Villiers MP, Kerry McCarthy MP, Olivia Blake MP, and Toby Perkins MP who also raised questions on peat.

Yours sincerely,

Rebecca Pow MP