

24th December 2014

Dear Constituents,

Thank you for contacting me about UK wildlife and the RSPB's 'Vote for Bob' campaign.

I am glad to say that the Conservative Party is committed to protecting our natural environment and safeguarding animal and plant health. The UK's vibrant native ecosystem is one of our most precious inheritances.

It is a fact, however, that biodiversity is under pressure. Many of our bird, butterfly and plant species are threatened. That is why I am proud that the Government published the first Natural Environment White Paper for 20 years and established a proper strategy, Biodiversity 2020, aimed at halting and reversing this decline. Progress is being monitored through annual statistics and there is plenty of scope for public engagement, with the latest news, including on how local conservation groups can contribute, spread through social media.

£7.5 million has been provided to establish 12 Nature Improvement Areas across the country. These are large areas containing more and better-connected habitats, providing space for wildlife to thrive. 148,000 acres of priority habitats and 20,000 acres of woodland are also being created. England's woodland cover is expanding at a rate not seen since the fourteenth century.

The Government is also on track to plant one million trees in towns, cities and neighbourhoods across England by the end of the Parliament and more than 945 miles of hedges have been restored and planted. It has also helped clean up 9,500 miles of rivers and 625 square miles of lakes. There is of course more to do.

My Party's manifesto will be published during the General Election campaign, but I believe the progress the Government has made shows our commitment to protecting our natural environment for future generations.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Alok Sharma MP