**IFAW submission to Bright Blue’s Conservative manifesto for Conservation**

**Marine**

1.Immediate threats include direct and indirect exploitation (i.e. commercial whaling, bycatch and entanglement), ocean noise pollution, risk of ship strike, habitat destruction from development, marine debris (plastics)

Longer term threat is climate change.

3.The Government should consider legislation and working with industry to reduce ocean noise, ship strikes on whales and bycatch. We  would also like to see further introduction of no-take MPAs to provide marine animals with areas where they face less anthropogenic pressures thus making them more resilient to those they can’t escape (i.e. climate change).

Specific recommendations to reduce noise from shipping:

* Implement and maintain slow-steaming practices for commercial shipping and cruise vessels, and implement further speed reductions when deemed necessary (i.e. in areas with particularly high marine mammal population densities, which could be enabled using the whales alert app developed in conjunctions with IFAW and collaborating internationally with other countries).
* Retrofitting existing vessels with more efficient propellers optimised for slower speeds and ensuring vessel design requirements are such so that ocean noise is minimised through funding innovation within the nautical engineering sector.
* Develop incentive programs to encourage the application of the 2014 IMO Guidelines on reducing underwater noise from ships (attached)
* Implement the IMO recommendation to identify the noisiest vessels in the UK fleet that would benefit most from efficiency-improving technologies that would also be likely to reduce underwater noise output
* The UK Government has the opportunity to adopt and best adapt particular facets of the EU MFSD (i.e. D11) to ensure that clear thresholds and targets are set to manage the impacts of underwater noise
* Establish adequate incentive, monitoring and enforcement frameworks.

Specific recommendations on bycatch:

* The bycatch situation for harbour porpoise and common dolphin in the South West is a high priority. We would also recommend task groups addressing harbour porpoise bycatch in the South East of England and entanglement of minke and humpback whales in coastal creel gear off the west coast of Scotland.
* The UK should expand bycatch monitoring schemes to include smaller vessels (<12m in length) and implement Remote Electronic Monitoring systems where it is not possible to place observers on boats.
* It is likely that bycatch will occur wherever gill nets are used, particularly of harbour porpoise which are present in most UK waters. The UK should encourage alternative gears to reduce gill net fishing effort.

5. Plastics

# The UK generated an estimated 5.2 million tonnes of plastic waste in 2018 and is ranked 5th highest in the EU for consumption of single-use plastic products (1). UK beaches are strewn with plastic litter, affecting tourism and causing socio-economic harm (2) (3). Around 90% of the costs for dealing with litter are borne by local authorities rather than the producers of plastic items. This needs to be addressed.

# A multitude of marine species such as dolphins, seals and whales have been found entangled in plastic or with stomachs full of plastic in UK waters (4) (5). Plastic fragments and residues are also present in UK caught seafood (6) and the health impacts of microplastic ingestion to humans are yet to be realised.

The Government’s priority must be a reduction in the production and consumption of plastic items, followed by an increase in reuse and, simple and cost-effective recycling, preferably within the UK. There should be an immediate ban on pointless and problem plastics (defined as; single-use plastic with limited practical social utility for which no alternatives are required and that can be phased out without significant behavioural or changes to waste infrastructure, and single-use plastic that is non-recyclable, recyclable only at considerable cost and/or is particularly harmful in the environment).

There should also be reduction targets for producers of single-use plastics, and taxes to reinforce these as well as economic incentives to drive consumer behaviour change and reduce usage. These measures should be designed to reduce single-use items at both production and point of consumption; reduce the number of polymers on the market; incentivise design, production and use of reusable and refillable packaging; facilitate increased recycling rates and recycled content; prioritise closed-loop recycling over down-cycling; focus on collection and recycling methods that are cost-effective and easy for end users; minimise extraction of raw materials and prevent the escape of plastic into the environment.

References for Plastics section:
(1) WWF, 2018. Plastic consumption and waste management (Commissioned from Eunomia Available online at:

<https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-03/WWF_Plastics_Consumption_Report_Final.pdf>

(2) <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-5142011/90-litter-beaches-plastic.html>

(3) Newman, S., Watkins, E., Farmer, A., Ten Brink, P (2015) The economics of marine litter, Marine Anthropogenic Litter, pp. 367-394

(4) <https://greenpeace.org.uk/press-releases/uk-wildlife-threat-ocean-plastic-pollution-greenpeace-expedition-finds/>

(5) <https://greenpeace.org.uk/press-releases/plastics-found-dead-dolphins-seals-whales-tested-british-waters/>

(6) <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3759269/Plastic-fish-caught-Britain-toxic-microbeads-used-shower-gels-toothpastes-beauty-products.html>

6. We would wish to see further action to reduce bycatch and lost/discarded gear as serious debris and plastic waste issues. Developing innovative technologies to mitigate these would make a substantial contribution.

**International**

3. The UK is seen as a global leader in the battle against wildlife crime and needs to ensure it is able to enforce its good intentions. The National Wildlife Crime Unit needs to be permanently funded with the addition of a post dedicated to combated cyber-enabled wildlife crime. In addition Border Force requires adequate resources to be able to monitor ports of entry for illegal wildlife trade items.

International

5. The UK’s leadership role in the Illegal Wildlife Trade summits has helped ensure the issue has been prioritised by governments across the world. This must be maintained.