

## Media release

For immediate release: 21 December 2010

### High Speed Rail plans off-track

The Government's proposed High Speed Rail route announced yesterday (Monday) will rip through ancient woodland and devastate sensitive wildlife areas.

Stephanie Hilborne, Chief Executive of The Wildlife Trusts, said: "*Whilst consideration may have been given to noise and visual impacts on those people who live along the proposed route, Rt Hon Philip Hammond MP made no reference at all to the impact on the natural environment.*

*"The proposed route will destroy or irrevocably damage a large number of important sites, dissect the landscape and fragment isolated patches of habitat. In the context of the recent [Making Space for Nature](#) report, the very last thing we should be doing is damaging existing wildlife sites and creating new linear barriers to the movement of wildlife."*

Ahead of Monday's announcement by the Rt Hon Philip Hammond, The Wildlife Trusts' own analysis indicates it will impact directly on two Wildlife Trust nature reserves, four sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), 10 ancient woodland sites and 53 Local Wildlife Sites or potential Local Wildlife Sites.

Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust is one of the seven Wildlife Trusts\* affected by the High Speed Rail route between London and Birmingham. Philippa Lyons, Chief Executive of the Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust, said: "*The new route for HS2 will be devastating for wildlife especially protected species such as bats, nationally-rare butterflies, water voles and otters in our most sensitive habitats such as chalk grassland, ancient woodland and flood meadows.*"

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### Contact information:

Anna Guthrie (Media & PR Manager)  
Office: 01636 670075  
Mobile: 07887 754659  
Email: [aguthrie@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:aguthrie@wildlifetrusts.org)



#### The Wildlife Trusts

The Kiln  
Waterside  
Mather Road  
Newark  
Nottinghamshire  
NG24 1WT  
Tel (01636) 677711  
Fax (01636) 670001  
Email  
[info@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:info@wildlifetrusts.org)

Website  
[www.wildlifetrusts.org](http://www.wildlifetrusts.org)

#### Press Office

Anna Guthrie  
media & PR manager  
Tel (01636) 670075  
Fax:(01636) 670001

Email:  
[aguthrie@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:aguthrie@wildlifetrusts.org)

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HRH The Prince of Wales  
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Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts  
Registered Charity no. 207238  
Printed on environmentally  
friendly paper

Tanya Perdikou (Media & Campaigns Officer)  
Office: 01636 670057  
Mobile: 07887 754657  
Email: [tperdikou@wildlifetrusts.org](mailto:tperdikou@wildlifetrusts.org)

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The Wildlife Trusts has an ISDN line available for radio interviews. Please contact us to book an interview.

### **Notes for editors:**

**The Wildlife Trusts (TWT)** [wildlifetrusts.org](http://wildlifetrusts.org) There are 47 individual Wildlife Trusts covering the whole of the UK and the Isle of Man and Alderney. All are working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. We have more than 800,000 members including 150,000 members of our junior branch [Wildlife Watch](#). Our vision is to create [A Living Landscape](#) and secure [Living Seas](#). We manage around 2,300 nature reserves and every year we advise thousands of landowners and organisations on how to manage their land for wildlife. We also run marine conservation projects around the UK, collecting vital data on the state of our seas and celebrating our amazing marine wildlife. Every year we work with thousands of schools and our nature reserves and visitor centres receive millions of visitors. Each Wildlife Trust is working within its local communities to inspire people about the future of their area: their own Living Landscapes and Living Seas.

**Seven Wildlife Trusts** affected by the proposed High Speed Rail route announced are:

- London Wildlife Trust
- Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust
- Berks, Bucks & Oxon Wildlife Trust
- The Wildlife Trust for Beds, Cambs, Northants & Peterborough
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- Birmingham & Black Country Wildlife Trust
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust

**Making Space for Nature:** A review of England's wildlife sites was published in September 2010. It is an independent review of England's wildlife sites and the connections between them, with recommendations to help achieve a healthy natural environment that will allow plants and animals to thrive. Led by Professor Sir John Lawton, the review was set up to look at our wildlife sites and whether they are capable of responding and adapting to the growing challenges of climate change and other demands on our land.