

Science Policy Newsletter – a weekly round-up of policy headlines and stories

06 December 2019

News

Royal Society of Biology news

[RSB Questionnaire: Publication policy, Open Access and You](#)

We are interested in your experience and views related to academic publication policies, and the transition to open access. Please fill out this survey to give your input, and help inform our work on this area. The survey should take around 20 minutes, and will be open for responses until 20 December 2019.

Interested in publication policy news?

Sign-up via [mySociety](#) to our Research Communication Newsletter for monthly policy news with a focus on research communication and dissemination.

[RSB responds to the Dasgupta Review on the Economics of Biodiversity conducted by HM Treasury](#)

The RSB response to the Dasgupta Review discusses the advantages and limitations of natural capital valuations, the impacts of biodiversity loss and opportunities to tackle it, and the economic and non-economic benefits of protecting biodiversity.

Health and biomedicine

[Targeted stem-cell attack could make transplants safer](#)

Blood stem-cell transplants show promise for treating genetic and immune disorders, as well as cancers, but are currently risky.

[Why scrapping NHS dental costs won't make much difference to the UK's oral health crisis](#)

[Ketamine may reduce heavy drinkers' craving](#)

[Immunotherapy offers hope for men with prostate cancer](#)

[Depression: men far more at risk than women in deprived areas](#)

[Accessing healthcare is challenging for Deaf people – but the best solution isn't 'one-size-fits-all'](#)

[Nobel prize winner: Oxygen regulation discoveries are starting to lead to new anaemia, cancer drugs](#)

Drugs that activate or block the body's oxygen-sensing machinery to treat conditions such as anaemia in patients with chronic kidney disease and cancer are being made possible because we now understand the way that cells respond to oxygen deprivation, according to Sir Peter Ratcliffe, one of three winners of this year's Nobel prize in physiology or medicine.

Food and drink

[UK supermarkets 'not transparent enough' about pesticide use](#)

Information not routinely displayed on labels of food and gardening items, report finds

[Cosmic Crisp apple: New variety 'keeps in the fridge for up to a year'](#)

The new variety of the fruit took more than two decades to develop and allegedly lasts for up to a year in the fridge.

Agriculture and fisheries

[Cut the wrap! UK dairy farm aims to be first to go single-use plastic-free](#)

Staff at Mossgiel farm hope to promote a more sustainable model of dairy farming, including delivering milk in reusable glass bottles

[Fishing nations to lower catch limits for Atlantic bigeye tuna](#)

Plan aims to allow tuna population to recover from overfishing, but conservationists say endangered mako shark has been overlooked

Forestry

[Future forests facing climate balancing act](#)

Environment and ecology

[Why bogs may be key to fighting climate change](#)

There are, arguably, only two interesting facts about bogs. The first is that some people have a jolly good time swimming through them, notably at the World Bog Snorkelling Championships held each year in central Wales, UK. The second is that they could help save the world.

Climate and energy

[Carbon-markets shape agenda at UN climate summit](#)

The COP25 discussions also face a backdrop of uncertain geopolitics and intensifying public pressure.

[GM could help cut livestock methane emissions, say scientists](#)

Genetic modification, banned in Europe, could have 'great potential promise'

[Climate change should be Parliament's first priority, according to citizens](#)

[UN calls for push to cut greenhouse gas levels to avoid climate chaos](#)

Global emissions must fall by 7.6% a year for next decade to avoid crisis, report says

Waste

[More than 16,000 cans and bottles found in four days on UK beaches](#)

Charity says findings underline need for deposit return scheme for plastic and glass bottles

Animal Research

[Stem-cell therapies use immune system to repair broken hearts](#)

Study in mice shows that a chemical can also improve the organs' performance.

Government and Parliament

[General election 2019: Your Questions Answered on the environment](#)

[New animal and plant health safety rules coming into force in December](#)

New regulations aimed at modernising protections against animal diseases and plant pests and improving food safety come into force.

Research funding and higher education policy

[The road to 2.4 per cent lies beyond the university](#)

The election manifestos have revealed a strong cross-party consensus on the importance of boosting research and development spend.

Schools education policy

[Data skills for all](#)

Open access and publication policy

['Transformative journal' rules allow titles Plan S reprieve](#)

If periodicals hit open access targets, they could avoid being blacklisted by major European research funders in 2021

Diversity and inclusion

[Celebrating scientists with disabilities: Professor Sara Rankin \(FRSB\)](#)

[Things have improved for disabled students, but there's still much to do](#)

2020 will be a momentous year for legislation protecting the rights of disabled people.

Outreach and engagement

[Incredible Creatures at New Scientist Live 2019](#)

Four action packed days, thousands of enthused visitors, and countless ecological insights. Headlining the Earth Zone at New Scientist Live 2019, the society's 'Incredible Creatures' multisensory photography exhibition was a roaring success.

[Get Smart](#)

Our [Rothamstead Research] pest, weed and disease app CROPROTECT has received a major new update

International news

[Modified mosquitoes reduce cases of dengue fever](#)

Insects infected with a disease-inhibiting bacterium were released in communities in Asia and South America.

[Nicotine sickness: the latest vaping scare](#)

The rampant use of e-cigarettes in the US is raising concerns about nicotine poisoning and mental health issues among young vapers

[New Zealand begins genetic program to produce low methane-emitting sheep](#)

'Global first' project will help tackle climate change by lowering agricultural greenhouse gases

[Swine fever raises fears of bird flu pandemic](#)

[Unsustainable natural rubber poses major threat to wildlife and people](#)

World-first analysis of natural rubber producers by ZSL's SPOTT reveals transparency issues across sector.

Opinion

[How to handle 'moving targets' in the face of climate change](#)

[A genome editing month](#)

From time to time I have posted updates on this blog about the evolving international discussion surrounding human heritable genome editing...

[Why ageing should be classified as a disease](#)

[Restrict researchers to one paper a year, says UCL professor](#)

Uta Frith says limit would force academics to focus on quality over quantity

[Technologies to manage climate change already exist – but UK needs to scale up efforts urgently](#)

People

[Neville Drasdo obituary](#)

Opportunities

[RSB Events Officer](#)

An exciting, varied role working with all teams at the Royal Society of Biology. The events officer will be responsible for leading and supporting the delivery of key RSB events, including parliamentary receptions, policy debates, award ceremonies and careers days. Along with day-to-day event logistics, they will contribute to the events sponsorship strategy and generate event income. They will enhance the regional reputation of the RSB by supporting local activity delivered by RSB regional committees.

Closes: 8 December 2019

[UK-Canada Globalink Doctoral Exchange Scheme](#)

Closes: 12 December 2019

[School Biology Teacher of the Year Award](#)

Are you (or do you know) an amazing biology teacher? The Royal Society of Biology's School Biology Teacher of the Year Award aims to recognise outstanding and inspirational biology teachers.

Closes: 20 December 2019

[PULSE: Programme for Up and coming Life Sciences Entrepreneurs](#)

Closes: 31 December 2019

[British Biology Olympiad 2020](#)

The [British Biology Olympiad 2020](#) (31 January - 7 February) for post-16 students is now open for registration. The competition challenges and motivates students with an interest in biology, providing them with an opportunity to demonstrate their knowledge. High scoring students will receive certificates and be invited to an awards ceremony in London. Please contact [Raghav Selvam](#) with any enquiries.

Closes: 24 January 2020

[Biology Challenge 2020](#)

The [Biology Challenge 2020](#) (10 - 31 March) for students aged 13 - 15 is now open for registration. The competition stimulates students' curiosity for the natural world and encourages them to take an interest in biology outside of school. High scoring students will receive certificates and be invited to an awards ceremony in London. Please contact [Raghav Selvam](#) with any enquiries

Closes: 28 February 2020

[£500 student & early-career member travel grants](#)

Student and early-career members of the Royal Society of Biology can now apply for a travel grant of £500 to support future overseas travel in connection with biological study, teaching or research.

Closes: 1 March 2020

Events

[Athena Forum Prizes and Awards workshop](#)

31 March 2020

Newcastle University, Newcastle upon Tyne

And finally...

[Most dolphins are 'right-handed', say researchers](#)

Bottlenose dolphins found to have an even stronger right-side bias than humans

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