

Thu 22/07/2021 14:33

Dear Colleagues,

A step too far?

I don't envy the C-OPT working their way through yet more guidance changes. I'm trying to make sense of the rules that insist that despite being double jabbed I would have to quarantine after spending time in rural France. Instead I could go nightclubbing with no jabs, masks, social distancing or apparent consequences. Not wanting you to dwell on that particular mental picture, I'll move onto our response to Step 4. FSC took a view on how to manage England's so called freedom day in line with many other organisations. It's important that you and our visitors feel and remain safe. We also want to reduce the risk of a "pingdemic" closing our centres down. Therefore we are asking staff and visitors at the current time to continue to wear face coverings in shared indoor space (unless exempt), maintain social distancing, clean their hands regularly and for visitors to test before arrival.

The announcement that some fully vaccinated critical workers may be able to come out of self-isolation in exceptional circumstances won't help us either. They mean *really* exceptional such as needing to keep planes up in the sky and as we would have to ring up a government department to get individual permission, the changes in the rules on the 16th August might come around first.

Extending the Ivory Act – a genuine opportunity to save the whale

Just occasionally a very short government consultation comes out that has the potential to make a big difference. FSC will be doing a response as this has nature recovery and biodiversity at its heart, but it's one where many of you might want to put forward your views as individual citizens.

Government is consulting on 3 options relating to the sale of ivory:

- 1 extend the ban to cover hippo ivory
- 2 extend the ban to cover five CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) listed species - hippopotamus, narwhal, killer whale, sperm whale and walrus and
- 3 do nothing.

Hippos are already endangered but option 2 would be a precautionary approach to protect other species where there is little data, where habitat destruction is already impacting on their numbers and this option also reduces the risk that they become increasingly hunted for their ivory which is then passed off as elephant ivory. The background document with a sneak preview of the very few questions is [here](#) and the overview and online survey response form is [here](#).

FSC Youth Updates

The [generation green](#) project in which FSC is a partner continues to provide opportunities for young people in England aged 16-25. During June, after a successful wildlife ID guide campaign, over 9,000 guides were posted to young people for free for some summer wildlife spotting. The expanded [Young Darwin Scholarship](#) applications closed in June and this year saw 285 young people apply for a scholarship. 75 scholarships were awarded to young people aged 16-25.

Staff Discount for [Stay with Us](#)

If the shifting sands of the green and amber lists make a Staycation more attractive, don't forget that staff have a 15% discount on the Stay with Us Booking.com prices. You need to book directly with the centres to take advantage of the offer.

Special Mention

The above brings me to my special mention which is for all of you who have worked hard to generate such good feedback from Stay with Us holiday makers. Just flicking through the comments that they have left on the booking.com site about the staff makes me very proud.

Stay safe and keep well

Mark