

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

15 November 2019

News

Top stories

[Climate crisis: 11,000 scientists warn of ‘untold suffering’](#)

Statement sets out ‘vital signs’ as indicators of magnitude of the climate emergency

Royal Society of Biology news

[New programme by RSB and ITN Productions highlights the biosciences that impact everyday living](#)

The Royal Society of Biology and ITN Productions Industry News have co-produced a news and current affairs-style programme “Biology Impacting Lives,” reporting on the advancement of biological sciences and their crucial impact.

Health and biomedicine

[Smoking may increase risk of mental health problems – study](#)

Researchers find link between tobacco cigarettes and depression and schizophrenia

[Cannabis-based medicines: Two drugs approved for NHS](#)

Agriculture and fisheries

[Europe must act on intensive farming to save wildlife, scientists say](#)

EU’s agriculture policy needs urgent reform, organisations tell incoming commission president

Forestry

[New findings on nitrous oxide emissions from northern trees surprised scientists](#)

A recent study demonstrates that boreal forests of the Northern Hemisphere are sources of the greenhouse gas nitrous oxide (N₂O). The study provides new information on the significance of trees as sinks and sources of greenhouse gases, proving that forests have relevance not only in the absorption of carbon, but also as a source of other greenhouse gases

Environment and ecology

[Turtle dove flies towards extinction as numbers halve in UK](#)

Bird suffers 51% decline over five years but some species show signs of recovery

[October was hottest in Earth's recorded history, say scientists](#)

Temperatures in Europe 1.1C higher than 30-year average, EU data shows

[Badger cull activists hit out at cost of shooters' tracking devices](#)

Defra revealed that more than £300,000 of public money has been spent on the devices

[Down, But Not Out](#)

Rothamsted Insect Survey data on moths shows no evidence of the supposed 'Insect Armageddon', according to a new paper in Nature Ecology and Evolution.

[Deadly virus spreads among marine mammals as Arctic ice melts](#)

As climate change worsens, scientists fear the virus—once found only in European waters—could spread to the West Coast.

Water and air

[Sea levels set to keep rising for centuries even if emissions targets met](#)

Generations yet unborn will face rising oceans and coastal inundations into the 2300s even if governments meet climate commitments, researchers find

Climate and energy

[COP25: MEPs push for CO₂ neutrality by 2050](#)

The EU should commit to net-zero CO₂ emissions by 2050 at the UN Conference and step up its emissions' reduction ambition for 2030, said the Environment Committee on Wednesday.

Waste

[Can laboratories curb their addiction to plastic?](#)

Research scientists have largely gone unnoticed as major users of unrecyclable material. Now some universities are helping them kick the habit

[How to... reduce your lab's plastic waste](#)

David Kuntin on how he and his colleagues have cut the amount of plastic their lab sends to landfill each year by more than a tonne

[Welsh farmers' anger over slurry pollution rule changes](#)

[Worms and fleas used in green water treatment](#)

Animal Research

[Revamped cancer drug starves tumors in mice](#)

A study out today shows that an updated version of a failed cancer drug can not only prevent tumor cells from using an essential nutrient, but also spur immune cells to attack the growths.

Exiting the EU

[Post-Brexit plan to create elite UK research funder takes shape](#)

Report recommends forming 'British ERC' if the United Kingdom drops out of European Union funding programmes.

Research funding and higher education policy

Among other [RSB Consultation responses](#), you can read the RSB response to Professor Adrian Smith's call for evidence on future frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation [here](#).

[Expert reaction to the Smith-Reid Review into future frameworks for international collaboration on research and innovation](#)

Reaction to the publication of the Smith-Reid Review "Changes and Choices" which gives advice on international partnership opportunities for UK research and innovation.

[Research and innovation Infrastructure Opportunities Report and Landscape Analysis published](#)

Two significant documents, produced by UK Research & Innovation (UKRI), that analyse the UK's research and innovation infrastructures for the first time and highlight investment opportunities across the country, are published today.

Schools education policy

[Children should spend an hour a day in wild, says Wildlife Trusts](#)

Government urged to create spaces where young people can connect with natural world

Open access and publication policy

[Action plan to eliminate gender bias from research publishing](#)

We are calling on all scientific publishers to join us in transparently reporting gender statistics in a move towards equality in research and academia.

Diversity and inclusion

[Helpline to tackle bullying in chemistry](#)

International news

[Man has chip implanted in his brain to help tackle opioid addiction](#)

Brain implant 'could prove to be a valuable tool in our fight to keep people alive and well', doctors behind study claim

[Oil spill threatens vast areas of mangroves and coral reefs in Brazil](#)

Pollution stretches across 2,400km of coastline, with scientists fearing contamination of food chain

[Poorly planned Amazon dam project 'poses serious threat to life'](#)

Operator faces choice of weakening 14km barrier or potentially devastating a biodiversity hotspot

[Africa poised to lead way in global green revolution, says report](#)

Continent is set for massive urbanisation but can avoid relying on fossil fuels, says IEA

[AI project to preserve people's voices in effort to tackle speech loss](#)

Clinic hopes to help those at risk of losing ability to speak maintain sense of identity

Opinion

[It's time to rethink the way we talk about one of the most urgent threats to our health](#)

Tackling big health challenges is dependent on science and innovation, but also on the public understanding and engaging with them.

People

[Maddox Prize 2019](#)

Two courageous scientists, forest fire expert Bambang Hero Saharjo and pharmacist Olivier Bernard, awarded the 2019 John Maddox Prize for Standing up for Science

Opportunities

[UKRI Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Centres](#)

Closes: 19 November 2019

[UKRI Interdisciplinary Circular Economy Coordinator](#)

Closes: 19 November 2019

[FY2020 JSPS London Call for the Short Term Pre/Postdoctoral Fellowship for Research in Japan](#)

Closes: 2 December 2019

[Invite to build interdisciplinary networks to address air quality challenges at the indoor/outdoor interface](#)

Closes: 5 December 2019

[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

[Register as an organisation getting funding directly from the EU](#)

Closes: 31 December 2019

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

Closes: 31 December 2019

[The Nuffield Council on Bioethics are seeking new Council members](#)

Closes: 6 January 2020

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 2019

[£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

[Organ-on-a-chip: Current Gaps and Future Directions](#)

2 December 2019

GSK Medicines Research Centre, Stevenage

[Quantitative Methods in Gene Regulation V](#)

9 - 10 December 2019

Institute of Physics, London

And finally...

[Mouse deer species not seen for nearly 30 years is found alive in Vietnam](#)

Silver-backed chevrotain caught on camera after it was feared lost to science

Royal Society of Biology

Science Policy Team

1 Naoroji Street

London

WC1X 0GB

policy@rsb.org.uk

Please note that any views or opinions presented in this email are solely those of the author and do not necessarily represent those of the Royal Society of Biology.

[Click here to unsubscribe from this publication](#)

Or, manage your subscription to this and to other RSB publications by logging into [mySociety](#) and choosing 'My Subscriptions' under 'Me and the RSB'.

© Royal Society of Biology 2019. Registered Charity Number: 277981
1 Naoroji Street, London, WC1X 0GB