

UKCEH at the Climate Science Showcase – Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh 6th November 2021



Jan Dick, Carole Helfter, Beth Raine, Stella White, Georgia Beel, Christine Braban and Karen Yeung

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 - UKCEH contactJan DickdetailsUKCEH Bush Estate, Penicuik, Midlothian, EH26 0QB

t: 0131 445 8578 e: jand@ceh.ac.uk

- Author Jan Dick, Carole Helfter, Beth Raine, Stella White, Georgia Beel, Christine Braban and Karen Yeung
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Summary

In total over 250 people engaged with the UKCEH Team at the Dynamic Earth hosted Climate Science Showcase on Saturday 6th November 2021 between 10 am and 4 pm (~40 h^{-1}).

The stand fulfilled its aim to raise awareness of publicly funded research conducted at UKCEH Edinburgh, including the national capability project UK Status, Change and Projections of the Environment (UK-SCAPE), as evidenced by the large number of people attracted into the stand, the remarks made in conversations with the team members and written in the answers to the wishing tree.

Three activities were offered to target engagement from everyone:

- Wish tree
- targeted all age ranges
- Interaction duration typically 2-5 min
- over 100 children and adults participated
- Intergenerational trend in CO₂ concentration
- targeted all age ranges
- Interaction duration typically 1-5 min.
- Estimated 70 children and adults participated by placing dots on the graph;
- in addition some said they would play the game with other siblings when they got home using the handout provided.
- How Scientists measure CO₂
- targeted all age ranges
- duration typically 5-10 min
- 55 children and adults participated.

A wide range of conversations were noted by the UKCEH team members primarily focused

- on the role of several greenhouse gasses in the environment and their link to climate change,
- the steep rise in CO₂ concentration in the lifetime of the people present
- the variety of wishes that people wrote that could improve the environment
- · the comments on the wish tree showed learning

1 Introduction

Dynamic Earth hosted a Climate Science Showcase Day on 6th Nov 2021 at Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh and sent an invitation to potential participants. The email invited researchers to bring their work to up to 1000 visitors, including families and community groups, right in the middle of when COP26 was taking place in Glasgow, and during a time when engaging people with climate science could not be more important.

The event plan, written prior to the event, followed the NERC Impact Development framework which focuses on five aspects of delivering impact, specifically: why, who, how, with what impact, with what evidence. The answers to these questions are detailed below.

1.1 Why engage?

What difference are we trying to make?

Increase public awareness of climate science, related UKCEH science and the UK Status, Change and Projections of the Environment (UK-SCAPE) programme of underpinning publically funded research.

1.2 Who are we targeting?

Who are we trying to engage with UKCEH and UK-SCAPE research?

The public of all ages who are attracted to the event – there was no selection process.

1.3 How to engage

What methods will we use to engage people with UK-SCAPE research and when?

Three interactive sessions displaying UKCEH science were showcased. A wish tree (Appendix 1) which encouraged conversations with the scientists.

The UK-SCAPE branded Intergenerational Game successfully trailed at the Climate Festival in Leith (Dick et al 2021 <u>http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/530922/</u>) was used again as it proved to be a successful way to engage people and open conversations about long-term monitoring (Appendix 2).

The third activity demonstrated how GHG fluxes might be measured in the field. A visually attention-grabbing peat core with detachable lid connected to a gas analyser and a display screen showing GHG fluxes varying depending wither the gasses were trapped in the core or vented to the room (Appendix 3).

How will we maximise involvement with the event?

- Tweet about the forthcoming event (Appendix 4)
- Write a blog post after the event for UKCEH and UK-SCAPE web site was planned but the communication team decided that this was not necessary following so soon after the other public facing event (Dick et al 2021 http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/530922/).
- By taking a stand UKCEH and UK-SCAPE had a physical presence for visitors to look at, and interact with the physical objects as well as the scientists
- Attract visitors by having clear signage and a visually appealing exhibit.
- People engaging in longer 'significant' exchanges, were offered a 'free gift', which will be branded and thus offer further 'advertising'.

1.4 With what impact

What do we hope will change as a result?

Visitors leave with an increased level of knowledge of climate and CO_2 changes in the atmosphere

Increased number of people aware of UKCEH and UK-SCAPE science

1.5 With what evidence

How can I evidence that change?

- a. Number of people entering stand/booth (count button badges)
- b. Number of people who take part in the interactive sessions
- c. Number of people who add dot on the 'What was the CO₂ concentration of the Earth when you were born?' poster
- d. Number of people who have significant engagement counted as those receiving 'branded gift' e.g. CEH pencil
- e. We kept a UKCEH/ UK-SCAPE notebook and encouraged all UKCEH team members to write down interesting or funny comments or interactions in the project notebook as a means of capturing feedback.
- f. A subset of 'visits' will be timed to gauge the duration of interactions.

2 At the event

The event planner was mostly followed, however, it was not possible to calculate the total number of people taking part in each of the three activities separately as only one Button sticker (Fig 1.) was given to participants if they interacted with any of the activities rather than use three Button stickers if they took part in all three activities. If data on the number of interactions for each activity is required then distinct button badges could be used for each activity. Many groups took part in more than one activity.



Figure 1 Button stickers (UK-SCAPE logo) given to anyone engaging in one the activities or a conversation with UKCEH Team members

Some UKCEH team members took a strip of 10 button badges and recorded each strip of ten they took in the 'Team notebook'. Others preferred not to use the button badge and simply record on paper number of interactions. UKCEH team members gave out approx. 250 Button badges at the event. Surprisingly adults liked them just as much as the children did.

2.1 Wish tree

Participants were invite to share their climate-related thoughts, learning and wishes by writing on a leaf shaped post-it and sticking it to the branches of a model tree (Fig 2). The Wish Tree proved very successful to engage passer-by of all ages. Younger children were attracted by the design of the tree and the possibility of a game while adults were keen to see what others had written. The length of time people

interacted with this game was very variable some adults declined to write anything and were only interested in reading the post-its already attached saying when pressed that their thoughts were already written by others. Many adults also did not write anything as they helped and encouraged their children to write. Many children required no help as they either wrote about what they had learnt at the event or knew exactly what they wanted to wish for because their schools were using the Glasgow COP26 conference in their learning activities.

The leave shaped post-its were very well received but did not stick well to the tree so bluetac was used. Some visitors innovated and used the sticky button logo of UK-SCAPE to adhere their leave to the tree (Fig 2).



Figure 2 The Wish Tree used to engage participants at the event and some of the comments written

The length of time participants took to consider and write their thoughts depended on a range of factors but in general, young children took 3-5 min., while adults generally took 2-3 min. In total 103 comments were attached to the Wish Tree and 14 leaves were attached by younger children who did not write a comment but rather scribbled on the leave or drew a tree, mountains or a river.

Approximately, a quarter of the comments related to pollution of the air, seas, water courses or environment and wishing for a better environment globally and for society was also a dominant theme (22%). The dominance of these themes reflects the

other stands at the event that included National Oceanography Centre and conservation organisations.

Great consideration of the planets flora and fauna was the third most dominant theme (17%) with planting more forests mentioned on over 10% of the posit-its Reducing the use of fossil fuels either by stopping their use or finding alternatives was also a prevailing theme (16%). Many interesting conversations on the role of science were sparked by this game, enabling staff to fulfil the aim of raising awareness of UKCEH and UK-SCAPE.

| Category | Number | example text |
|-----------------|--------|---|
| Pollution | 25 | |
| Water | 9 | Do not litter the sea |
| General | 6 | I wish for a cleaner world |
| Plastic | 6 | Make less plastic in the ocean |
| Air | 2 | No pollution |
| Litter | 2 | Stop littering |
| Global | 23 | |
| Environment | 15 | Look after the planet |
| Society | 8 | Priority shift away from personal wealth |
| Fossil fuels | 21 | |
| Transport | 8 | Car free roads and joined up cycle networks across Scotland |
| Alternatives | 7 | I wish that people can find a great renewable source of energy |
| Governance | 4 | That COP 26 changes things |
| Politicians | 4 | For leaders to lead by example: to be the role models we pay them to be |
| Extraction | 2 | Less oil mining |
| Flora and fauna | 18 | |
| Forests/plants | 12 | I wish I could save the rain forest |
| Animals | 5 | Think about animals more |
| Biodiversity | 1 | More biodiversity - without threating peoples livelihoods |
| Miscellaneous | 16 | |
| Food | 5 | Go Vegan |
| Recycle | 3 | Recycle more |
| Personal fear | 2 | I'm scared |
| COVID | 1 | I want the virus to go away at China |
| Oceans | 1 | No more sea level to be high |
| Weather | 1 | I would like it to be snowing - anytime |
| Unreadable | 3 | |

Table 1 Comments attached to Wish tree grouped by themes

2.2 Intergenerational trend in CO₂ concentration

This game proved very useful to engage passing public as the opening question "Do you know the concentration in the environment the day you were born?" was personal and interesting to them (see Appendix 2 for details of the activity). A handout sheet was created following interaction with the public at the Edinburgh Climate Festival (Dick et al 2021 <u>http://nora.nerc.ac.uk/id/eprint/530922/</u>). The handout sheet fulfilled a game deficit identified at the Leith Links event i.e. a take home activity sheet to re-enforce the learning.

It was not possible to determine the exact number of people playing the game as sometimes a family would each place a sticker on the graph to represent their birth year but then were also invited by the UKCEH team member to add a grandparent who was not present. While other families only placed one dot per generation. Placing a dot on the birth year and reading off the graph provided two useful learning points:

(*i*) to emphasise the slow increase between for example a grandmother and mother and the steeper increase between the mother and child present and

(ii) provide another opportunity for a child to improve their graph reading skills (it was invariably the child to wanted to add additional sticky dots – they often did so for the parent year of birth).

In total 72 dots were placed on the graph and it is estimated that around 80-90 individual people took part in this activity (often for family or larger groups, they only added a couple of dots). The duration of the interaction with the UKCEH team member varied between 1 and 5 min, although subsequent conversation could last a further 5-10 min. It is interesting to note that when staff were talking with one set of parents their three children added dots on the map well below the line because they could not reach the line. Rather than remove the dots the year they would need to have been born for them to be correct was discussed. This reinforced the raise in ambient CO₂ concentration as children of their height in 1900 would have been breathing air with approximately 300 ppm compared with today's ambient concentration of over 400 ppm.

Fewer participants were interested in the main sources of the greenhouse gasses (poster placed below the activity graph) and the poster explaining the role of gasses heating the planet (Appendix 4) those who did engage, tended to spend 5-10 min reading the posters with care and asking relevant questions.



Figure 3 Adults and children playing the Intergenerational trend in CO₂ concentration activity

2.3 How do scientists measure CO₂?

The interactive demonstration of actual real time greenhouse gas measurements proved a significant attraction to both children and adults (Fig 4). Approximately 55 people were keen to learn how the Greenhouse Gas Analyser (GGA) measured CH₄ and CO₂. The system was a closed dynamic chamber system. The GGA was connected to a monitor so participants could view the measured concentrations plotted in real time.

A demonstration was set up using a peat core taken from <u>Auchencorth Moss</u>, Penicuik. Auchencorth Moss is a field site where the UK SCAPE research monitors exchange of CO₂ and CH₄ as part of the global network Integrated Carbon Observing Systems (https://www.icos-cp.eu/observations/national-networks/united-kingdom)..

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During the demonstration, the core was exposed to direct light, via a lamp, to stimulate photosynthesis of the top layer of moss. When the light was switched off the CO₂ concentration increased again as respiration dominated.

Approximately half of the participants enquired about the exact method used to measure the gases. Staff explained the GGA works using cavity ring-down infrared spectroscopy. A pulse of light is emitted by a laser and is absorbed by the gas, different gases absorb at different wavelengths. The time taken for the light to be absorbed (the 'ring down' time) is an indicator of concentration. The shorter the ring down time the higher the concentration. The GGA on display had two lasers, one for CH₄ & H₂O and one for CO₂.

Staff explained the work conducted at UKCEH and that this GGA has so far been used to measure GHG fluxes from water bodies around the UK as part of the GHH Aqua project.



Figure 4 Closed dynamic chamber system to demonstrate how scientists measure CH_4 and CO_2 concentrations

3 UKCEH team and learning points

3.1 UKCEH Staff

In total six staff were involved in the event on the day and pre-post activities (Fig 5). Not all staff members stayed the whole day with a changeover occurring around midday.



Figure 5 UKCEH team at the event

3.2 UKCEH staff learning points

The team learnt a great deal by interacting with the public including:

- The need to enable children time to collect their thoughts to ask question or write on the post-its (silence when interacting was not bad).
- The accuracy of learning in schools around the COP26 issues.
- The value of different stands at the exhibition telling the 'same story' which reenforced learning as demonstrated by the wishes expressed on the Wishing Tree.

4 Acknowledgements

The authors are grateful to all the people who took the time to visit the stand and take part in the activities and shared their knowledge with the team. We are also indebted to all the adults, parents and children who allowed their photographs to be taken and gave permission for them to be included in this public report. Every photograph was shown to the individuals and all remarked that they were happy for their faces to be shown. All photographs would have been immediately deleted if permission was not granted do avoid mistakes.

Appendix 1 – Wish Tree

- A model tree was placed at the front of the stand and members of the public were encouraged to write their climate-related thoughts, learning and wishes wish for the planet.
- The wishes or thoughts were written in leave shaped post-its.
- The post-it's were collected at the end of the day and comments reviewed.



Table 2 Wish tree comments by category

| Category | Sub-heading | Text written on leaf post-it |
|--------------|---------------------|--|
| Biodiversity | animals | Save animals |
| Biodiversity | animals | save birds |
| Biodiversity | animals | think about animals more |
| Biodiversity | animals | tigers to stop getting hunted |
| Biodiversity | animals | protect the animals |
| Biodiversity | biodiversity | more biodiversity - without threating peoples livelihoods |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | I wish that more forests are planted |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | Return/restore previous ancient woodlands sites |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | Stop cutting down trees |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | I wish I could save the rain forest |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | Plant for plants!! |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | l wish for more trees |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | more trees please |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | grow more plants |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | stop cutting down our trees |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | plant more trees |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | less deforestation |
| Biodiversity | more forests/plants | no more cutting trees |
| Fossil fuels | alternatives | More solutions for home heating |
| Fossil fuels | alternatives | A carbon neutral future |
| Fossil fuels | alternatives | Less fossil fuel |
| Fossil fuels | alternatives | Stop using fossil fuels |
| Fossil fuels | alternatives | No CO2 |
| Fossil fuels | alternatives | carbon dioxide (with down arrow drawn) |
| Fossil fuels | alternatives | I wish that people can find a great renewable source of energy |
| Fossil fuels | extraction | less oil mining |
| Fossil fuels | extraction | Cut out coal production |
| Fossil fuels | transport | use less fuel cars |
| Fossil fuels | transport | stop buying diesel cars |
| Fossil fuels | transport | Car free roads and joined up cycle networks across Scotland |
| Fossil fuels | transport | I want people not using cars and busses |
| Fossil fuels | transport | More bike/scooter parking places to use them more often thanks |
| Fossil fuels | transport | more electric cars and less CO2 |
| Fossil fuels | transport | Better cleaner public transport |
| Fossil fuels | transport | Stop using cars and bus's walk more |
| Global | environment | I hope the earth won't always be too hot |
| Global | environment | We only have one Earth, one plant and one live |
| Global | environment | I hope the earth stays health |

| Category | Sub-heading | Text written on leaf post-it |
|---------------|---------------|--|
| Global | environment | Reduce emissions |
| Global | environment | For a clean healthy environment for all |
| Global | environment | Be kind to the planet |
| Global | environment | Stop producing greenhouse gasses |
| Global | environment | enjoy your planet, its nature and creatures |
| Global | environment | wishing for a clean environment for everyone to enjoy |
| Global | environment | look after the planet |
| Global | environment | Everyone to love the earth - we are part of it |
| Global | environment | respect the world |
| Global | environment | stop climate change now |
| Global | environment | I wish people with stop being butheads and help the plant |
| Global | environment | I want the environment to be fresh |
| Global | society | That my granddaughters have a future on a good earth |
| Global | society | I wish to have a sustainable and safe planet in the future for all the generations behind us |
| Global | society | I wish they would stop putting profit before people |
| Global | society | reduce the level of GHG save for planet for the future kids |
| Global | society | I hope everyone plays a part |
| Global | society | Priority shift away from personal wealth |
| Global | society | Help at risk communities around the world |
| Global | society | for all nations to act as one to save our planet |
| Governance | policy | that COP 26 changes things |
| Governance | policy | Vote out the Tories |
| Governance | Politicians | For leaders to lead by example: to be the role models we pay them to be |
| Governance | Politicians | I wish politicians would stop using COP as a tick box and start using it to make <u>REAL</u> commitments for the climate |
| miscellaneous | COVID | I want the virus to go away at China |
| miscellaneous | food | go vegan |
| miscellaneous | food | Go vegan |
| miscellaneous | French | je souhait un moyen de transport plus ecologique |
| miscellaneous | miscellaneous | Lava bread |
| miscellaneous | miscellaneous | the see was warm |
| miscellaneous | miscellaneous | more blue - carbon solutions # listen to the ocean |
| miscellaneous | Oceans | No more sea level to be high |
| miscellaneous | Personal fear | I'm scared |
| miscellaneous | Personal fear | me too :D |
| miscellaneous | recycle | recycle |
| miscellaneous | recycle | recycle more |
| miscellaneous | recycle | recycle more |
| miscellaneous | Unreadable | |
| miscellaneous | Unreadable | |

| Category | Sub-heading | Text written on leaf post-it |
|---------------|-------------|--|
| miscellaneous | weather | I would like it to be snowing - anytime |
| Pollution | air | less pollution clean air all nations working together |
| Pollution | air | no more pollution by 2030 Carbon - neutral futures |
| Pollution | general | l wish for a cleaner world |
| Pollution | general | No pollution |
| Pollution | general | No Pollution please |
| Pollution | general | I wish for pollution to disappear by 2030 |
| Pollution | general | Less pollution |
| Pollution | general | we stop polluting |
| Pollution | litter | stop littering |
| Pollution | litter | no litter |
| Pollution | plastic | use less plastic |
| Pollution | plastic | make less plastic in the ocean |
| Pollution | plastic | less plastic |
| Pollution | plastic | Reduce the use of plastics |
| Pollution | plastic | Use less plastic |
| Pollution | plastic | less plastic and more trees |
| Pollution | water | I wish for more investment in clean technologies so we can clean the ocean and help our planet |
| Pollution | water | Please stop polluting the seas, rivers and lakes and be especially helpful to turtles and dolphins |
| Pollution | water | I wish the oceans stay clean |
| Pollution | water | Getting all the rubbish out of the water |
| Pollution | water | do not litter the sea |
| Pollution | water | I wish for the sea to be clean |
| Pollution | water | Clean rivers |
| Pollution | water | stop polluting the oceans and seas |
| Pollution | water | cleaner water for fish |

Appendix 2 – Intergenerational trend in CO₂ Concentration

Game created to engage all ages and sexes at the Edinburgh Climate Festival, 14th Aug 2021.

Aim

- engage visitors in participatory game and subsequent conversation about the science conducted at UKCEH and within the UK-SCAPE program
- highlight the rise in atmospheric CO₂ in the time frame relevant to their family
- educate them on the sources of the main greenhouse gases
- Additional educational aspects Learn how to read a graph

Rules of the game

Approach visitors and ask them to take a small sticker and write the concentration of CO_2 in the atmosphere the year they were born. Only help if they do not know how to read a graph.

If appropriate, ask also to estimate from the graph the year their mother or grandmother or father or grandfather was born.

If a sticker is already on the 'spot' on the graph they want to use line up above on the correct year but wrong concentration (concentration is already written on the sticky dot).

In order to comply with social distancing rules - have an A4 copy of the poster to hand so it is possible to explain at a distance from the poster the rules of the game. Participants can calculate the CO₂ concentration they need to write on the sticky dot and where on the poster they should put it when it is safe to approach the poster.

Have one colour if the person present and another if they are adding someone who is not present.

Note the x-axis of poster taken to 2050 on purpose. No predictions have been added to enable conversation – i.e. participants think the concentration might be in 2050 and what would be the consequences and what would have to be done to change the 'direction' of the line.

Evaluation

Photograph final poster and count the dots of those present to calculate the total number of participants taking part.



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Carbon dioxide (CO₂): is the primary greenhouse gas, responsible for about 75% of emissions. It can linger in the atmosphere for 1000s of years. Carbon dioxide emissions mainly come from burning organic materials: coal, oil, gas, wood, and solid waste.



Methane (CH₄): is released from landfills, natural gas and petroleum industries, and agriculture (especially from the digestive systems of grazing animals). A molecule of methane doesn't stay in the atmosphere as long as a molecule of carbon dioxide—about 12 years—but it is at least 84 times more potent over two decades. It accounts for about **16% of all greenhouse gas emissions**.

K Store

Nitrous Oxide (N₂O): Nitrous oxide occupies a relatively small share of global greenhouse gas emissions—about 6% of emmissions—but it is 264 times more powerful than carbon dioxide over 20 years, and its lifetime in the atmosphere exceeds a century, according to the IPCC. Agriculture and livestock, including fertilizer, manure, and burning of agricultural residues, along with burning fuel, are the biggest sources.

Imagines of greenhouse gas molecules courtesy of https://climate.nasa.gov/ Text from National Geographic article

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Appendix 3 – How do scientists measure CO₂?

Using the LGR GGA Microportable Greenhouse Gas Analyser

What are we doing?

We hope to demonstrate how GHG fluxes may be measured in the field. The GGA will be measuring CH₄ and CO₂ from a peat core taken from Auchencorth Moss, in a closed dynamic chamber system. Measured concentrations will be plotted in real time and displayed on a monitor.

The core will be exposed to direct light to stimulate photosynthesis of the top layer of moss. When the light is switched off the CO₂ concentration should be seen to increase again as respiration dominates.

The GGA has so far been used to measure GHG fluxes from water bodies around the UK as part of the GHH Aqua project.

How does it work?

The GGA works using cavity ring-down spectroscopy. A pulse of light is emitted by a laser and is absorbed by the gas, different gases absorb at different wavelengths. The time taken for the light to be absorbed (the 'ring down' time) is an indicator of concentration. The shorter the ring down time the higher the concentration.

The GGA has two lasers, one for CH₄ & H₂O and one for CO₂.

It has a measurement frequency of 1 Hz (measuring every second).

The GGA is portable and can measure fluxes in real time (in comparison to closed static chambers, from which samples are manually taken at given intervals – at a much lower frequency).

How to operate ?

The GGA will be connected to a monitor, keyboard and mouse. It will be plugged in to a power supply during operation (rather than running on battery). There is a simple on/off switch on the case. Please don't leave the GGA plugged in to the socket when turned off.

When running, you can switch between multiple display screens.

Display 1 shows the wavelength scan; the absorbance peak and signal peak can be seen on separate plots.

Display 2 plots a running concentration (right to left), and automatically scales itself relative to measured concentrations. The plots can be refreshed to clear past data.

Display 3 shows settings and parameters.

Appendix 4 – Which air pollutants affect global climate warming?









BANGOR

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology Environment Centre Wales Deiniol Road Bangor Gwynedd LL57 2UW United Kingdom T: +44 (0)1248 374500 F: +44 (0)1248 362133

EDINBURGH

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology Bush Estate Penicuik Midlothian EH26 0QB United Kingdom T: +44 (0)131 4454343 F: +44 (0)131 4453943 LANCASTER

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology Lancaster Environment Centre Library Avenue Bailrigg Lancaster LA1 4AP United Kingdom T: +44 (0)1524 595800 F: +44 (0)1524 61536

WALLINGFORD (Headquarters)

UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology Maclean Building Benson Lane Crowmarsh Gifford Wallingford Oxfordshire OX10 8BB United Kingdom T: +44 (0)1491 838800 F: +44 (0)1491 692424

enquiries@ceh.ac.uk

