

## **SIR MARTIN DOUGHTY TO LEAD NATURAL ENGLAND**

Sir Martin Doughty has been appointed as Chair Designate of Natural England, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Margaret Beckett, announced today.

Natural England is the new statutory body that will have responsibility for conserving, enhancing and managing the natural environment.

Welcoming the appointment, Mrs Beckett said: "Sir Martin is a dedicated champion of conservation issues and the natural environment, which makes him the ideal person for this key post.

"His passion and commitment, together with his proven leadership skills and track record of service with public bodies, will be extremely valuable to Natural England during its development and formal establishment next year".

Sir Martin Doughty said: "I am delighted to accept the challenge of helping to create and lead the new organisation.

"Natural England will be a robust and influential advocate for the natural environment with the commitment and strength of purpose to make a real difference to people's lives."

Sir Martin will step down as Chair of English Nature later this month and will initially become Chair Designate of the new body. He will play a leading role in setting up Natural England before it assumes its full statutory responsibilities.

It is expected that Natural England will take on its full statutory functions, subject to Royal Assent, in October 2006.

Sir Martin's full appointment will be for three years, from 1 October 2006, and he will be paid £66,000 a year for a three-day week.