



Scotland's Biodiversity: Celebrate the **YEAR OF NATURAL SCOTLAND**

The **Year of Natural Scotland 2013** is a Scottish Government initiative being led by EventScotland, VisitScotland and Scottish Natural Heritage. It is supported by a range of other organisations including Historic Scotland, Creative Scotland, the National Trust for Scotland and Scotland Food and Drink.

It is the fourth of a series of **Focus Years** following on from the Year of Food and Drink in 2010, the Year of Active Scotland in 2011 and the Year of Creative Scotland in 2012 all leading up to **Homecoming 2014**. These Focus Years are centred on domestic and international tourism and Scotland's developing events industry. They celebrate Scotland's reputation, its land, food and drink; Scotland as an active nation, a place of natural beauty, culture and creativity.

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/year-of-natural-scotland-2013/>



Take part in the 'The Big Five' Vote:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/enjoying-the-outdoors/year-of-natural-scotland-2013/scotlands-big-5-celebrations/welcome-big-five/>



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Contact details

Do you have a news story? Are you involved in a project? If so, then let the Biodiversity Implementation Team (BIT) know! Ask for our article guidelines to help you make the most of your article.

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The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily the views of the Scottish Biodiversity Forum. The editors reserve the right to edit or exclude articles; the editors' decisions are final.

For further information about the Biodiversity Implementation Team, log on to:

www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk



SCOTTISH
BIODIVERSITY
FORUM

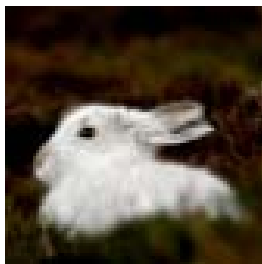
Year of Natural Scotland

In 2013 the **Year of Natural Scotland** will encourage people to celebrate Scotland's outstanding natural beauty, landscapes, wildlife and biodiversity. It will be a year in which people in Scotland can discover or rediscover the natural attractions of the country and take part in an exciting programme of events.

The Year will also be used as an opportunity to promote responsible enjoyment of Scotland's built and natural heritage and to explore opportunities for promoting conservation.

SCOTLAND'S BIG 5 CELEBRATIONS

Celebrate Scotland's most iconic wildlife and vote for your favourite Big 5. Visit your local National Nature Reserve and check out our ideas and tips on where to spot some amazing wildlife on your doorstep.



GREAT OUTDOORS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Get out and about with some great ideas for young people by young people to get active in the great outdoors. Look out for video snippets



and podcasts in partnership with Young Scot and share your stories on a new Facebook App.

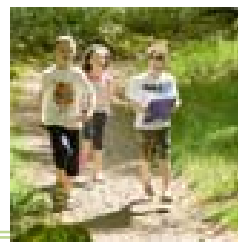
VIEW FROM THE TRAIN

Make your train journey memorable and discover some iconic natural landscapes. Check out the audio guide, App and leaflets for some fascinating stories about nature and history along Scotland's scenic train journeys.



EVENTS & FESTIVALS

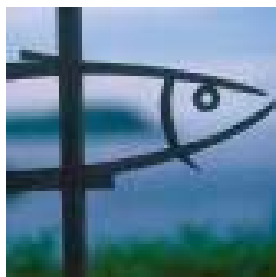
Join the year's celebrations at Scotland's nature and walking festivals, in National Nature Reserves and National Parks,



and look out for the stand at The Royal Highland Show; Scone and Moy Game Fairs or the Edinburgh Mela.

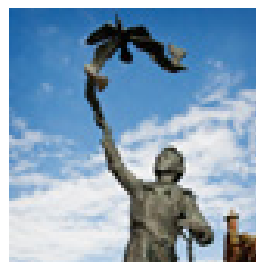
NATURALLY INSPIRED PROJECTS

Get inspired by some fantastic projects linking Scotland's unique culture and its natural landscapes, from artists in residence at key natural sites to outdoor theatre and classic films showcasing Scotland's nature.



CELEBRATE JOHN MUIR

Celebrate the first John Muir Day in Scotland on 21 April 2013, the 175th anniversary of his birth. Look out for special events across Scotland during the month of April and follow his steps into the great Scottish outdoors.



Eight UK Biodiversity firsts discovered in ‘lost world’ near Loch Ness

Biodiversity surveys in 2012 at Trees for Life’s Dundreggan Estate near Loch Ness revealed eight new species never recorded before in the United Kingdom, and brought the total number of species recorded on the forest restoration site to over 2,800. New species for the UK discovered at the 10,000-acre site in Glen Moriston, Inverness-shire are a sawfly (*Nematus pravus*), an aphid (*Cinara smolandiae*), two species of aphid parasitoids (*Ephedrus helleni*, *Praon cavariellae*), three species of fungus gnats (*Brevicornu parafennicum*, *Mycomya disa*, *Sceptonia longisetosa*), and a species of mite (*Ceratozetella thienemanni*).

Another key discovery, made by Trees for Life’s Executive Director Alan Watson Featherstone, included the first record in Europe of a biting midge in the genus *Atrichopogon* feeding on a crane fly (*Helius longirostris*). Although known in the tropics, this behaviour has never been observed in Europe before.

Alan Watson Featherstone said: “The surprisingly rich variety of life at Dundreggan highlights the vital importance of conservation work, and of protecting and enhancing habitats across the Highlands. The discoveries are not only demonstrating that the estate is a special site for biological diversity – they are also revealing that there is still much to learn about Scotland’s biodiversity.”

The 2012 surveys revealed a significant and diverse range of organisms, including sawflies, aphids, fungus gnats, slime moulds and mites. The findings, together with those of previous surveys, bring the total number of species recorded on Dundreggan to 2,815. This wealth of biodiversity includes at least 269 plants, 341 lichens, 92 birds, 20 mammals, 354 beetles, 207 moths and 125 sawflies.

A species of note discovered last year is the rare Lapland marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza traunsteinerioides* subsp. *francis-drucei*), never found in this area of Scotland before and

described by the Highland Biodiversity Recording Group as a “botanical gem”.

2012 was the third year of a sawfly study on the estate that is being carried out by a team from Liverpool Museums. The discovery of *Nematus pravus* means that there are two ‘new to the UK’ sawflies feeding on the dwarf birch at Dundreggan, with a third species previously unrecorded in Britain found feeding on the downy birches on the Estate.



New to the UK aphid Cinara smolandiae feeding on juniper;



In another project, Steve and Sarah Burchett from Plymouth University spent two weeks with a team of students, carrying out pioneering research into the biodiversity of Dundreggan's forest canopy. This included new techniques to survey for lichens, mosses and invertebrates that live in the treetops and the upper branches of oaks, birches and Scots pines, in what is believed to be the first study of its kind in Scotland.



Fly and cranefly on eared willow

At least 67 priority species for conservation have now been identified on Dundreggan, which has been described as a Highlands 'lost world'. The 2012 discoveries add to a remarkable range of rare and endangered species found on the Estate – some of which were previously unknown in Scotland, or which were feared to be extinct there.

Previous discoveries include the second-ever British record of a waxfly species; a golden horsefly (*Atylotus fulvus*) only seen once before in Scotland since 1923; the juniper shieldbug (*Cyphostethus tristriatus*), thought to be the first Highlands record; and species of spider, cranefly and dragonfly all listed in the UK's Red Data Book of endangered species.

Other species include black grouse, pine marten, water vole, lesser butterfly orchid, lichen running spider, and small pearl-bordered [fritillary] butterfly. On-going research aims to establish whether or not the Scottish wildcat is present.

Dundreggan, purchased by Trees for Life in 2008, is also home to some of the best stands of juniper – a priority species for conservation – in the Highlands, and what may be the most extensive population of dwarf birch in the country.

Trees for Life is planting half a million trees on the estate as part of its award-winning restoration of the Caledonian Forest to a spectacular wilderness region of 1,000 square miles in the Highlands, to the west of Loch Ness and Inverness.

What, Where, When, Who: North East Scotland Mammal Atlas



We are looking for records of **ALL** mammals to build an Atlas for the area.

Use your wildlife spotting skills to track down 4 facts:

What you saw (with a picture if you can)

Where you saw it (ideally with a grid reference)

When you saw it

Who saw it

Start Recording Today!

Send your records to mammals@nesbrec.org.uk

For more information go to <http://www.nesbrec.org.uk>

Please
affix
stamp

NESBReC
Room G29
University of Aberdeen
23 St Machar Drive
Aberdeen
AB24 3RY

NE Scotland Mammal Atlas 2015.
Please send in your records to us.
Many thanks!

More species to look out for....

Red Squirrel Variable in colour, can be ginger, red, or dark brown; large ear tufts and a bushy tail. In comparison, grey squirrels are much larger and have a silver-grey speckled coat.



Photo: Stephen Willis

Pine Marten About the size of a small cat, with dark brown fur; a whitish/yellow throat patch and a long fluffy tail, pine martens occur in a wide range of habitats, but prefer woodland areas.

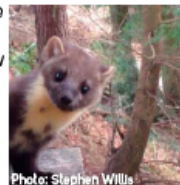


Photo: Stephen Willis

Badger Distinctive black and white striped long face. Badgers are nocturnal animals, and are often seen killed at the roadside. Sightings of dead animals are still valid, so please record these too.



Hedgehog Brown pointed furry face, small black eyes and nose, the hedgehog is our only spiny British mammal.



Otter A semi-aquatic species, the otter has a long slender brown body, often pale on underside; small ears on a broad head; a long thick tail and webbed feet.



Photo: Andy Coventry

We would also welcome sightings of bats

Produced by Aberdeenshire Council GD21135 March 2013



THEN LET US KNOW

Help us by sending in records of the mammals you see, and contribute to the first ever Mammal Atlas for the North East of Scotland and Cairngorms National Park.

Aberdeenshire
COUNCIL



Cairngorms
NATIONAL PARK



SCOTTISH
NATURAL
HERITAGE



NESBReC
North East Scotland Biological Records Centre



Pupils all aboard for outdoor learning



Redmyre Farm by Longforgan was the venue on Friday 15th March for a visit by Primary 7 of St Madoes Primary School.

The class was invited by the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust and the Royal Highland Education Trust to take

(l to r) Estate manager Brian Kaye, GWCT education assistant Alex Towns and gamekeeper Neil Gunn with the P7 pupils from St Madoes Primary School.

part in the 'Beyond the Farm Gate' experience which allowed the children to see first-hand what environmental benefits there were from sensitive game and wildlife management in the countryside.

The event was held as part of National Science and Engineering Week and involved Redmyre's gamekeeper Neil Gunn and estate manager Brian Kaye.

The class took a walk through the farm, visiting a red squirrel hide and flight pond before learning about predator management techniques and woodland management. A tractor and trailer ride to the top of the hill provided stunning views of the Tay which was an excellent backdrop to discuss deer and game bird feeding.

A finale of a gun dog training display ensured the pupils and teachers enjoyed a most educational day which ended back at the school where they cooked venison and redcurrant sausages generously provided by Hubertus Game of Pitlochry.

"We had an excellent day at Redmyre and are extremely grateful to Brian and Neil for their hospitality and expertise," said Katrina Candy, Head of PR & Education (Scotland) with GWCT – a scientific-based charity. These Beyond the Farm Gate events are an excellent way to educate youngsters about how and why our countryside is shaped the way it is. The grant we received as part of National Science and Engineering Week was incredibly useful and allowed us to transport the children to the farm where we could explain, in situ, how gamekeepers and farmers can benefit wildlife."



Wildlife Crime—New legislation success

In January 2012, a new offence called Vicarious Liability came into force. It is designed to target landowners and managers whose employees commit offences on their land. It appears to be working as a major deterrent, as numbers of birds of prey poisoned in Scotland has dropped to just three incidents in 2012, according to latest figures issued by the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW).

PAW chairman Paul Wheelhouse, Scotland's environment minister, said: "I very much welcome the significant reduction in the number of birds of prey poisoned, which I hope signals the real change in attitude that is required to end this outdated and cruel practice.



I believe that new measures brought in by the Scottish government over a year ago - which mean that landowners and managers can no longer turn a blind eye to offences against wild birds on their land - are a major deterrent to those who think they are above the law.

There has been real progress, but we will not be complacent. I am determined to stamp out these practices once and for all and will remain vigilant to any change in approach being taken by those who seek to persecute raptors."

There is still concern that birds could be killed using other methods such as shooting, trapping and nest disturbance which are harder to detect. However, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Land Estates and the Scottish Gamekeepers Association, all members of PAW, have stated they will continue in their efforts to eradicate these crimes completely.



Scottish basking shark tagging project

The current basking shark tagging project has been extended for another year. The project was set up to increase our understanding of the behaviour of the sharks which are found in large numbers around the islands of Coll, Tiree and Canna every summer. In 2012 researcher Colin Speedie recorded a shoal of seventy three off Coll and fifty sharks were counted around Hyskier, a group of islets near Canna.

It is part of a wider programme of marine research led by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Marine Scotland. The results will go towards the Government's decision on whether a Marine Protected Area should be put in place to safeguard the sharks and help strike a balance between environment, industry and recreation.

SNH and Exeter University tagged eight sharks last year with a further twenty nine planned for this summer.

Dr Suzanne Henderson, the SNH officer managing the project, said, "Last year's tagging produced some fascinating results. It was a surprise to see one swim as far south as Africa.

Another year of tagging will build on the work we've already done, increasing our confidence in the results and giving us more information on which to base decisions."



Dr Matthew Witt, of the University of Exeter, said: "Sharks play an important role in maintaining healthy marine ecosystems hence their conservation is important. In addition to the eight sharks tagged with real-time satellite transmitters last year, a further 12 sharks were tagged with technology that stores data on the tag for transmission at a later date.

We're looking forward to analysing the data from these over the next few months, once all the tags have detached from their sharks."

For further information :

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/about-scotlands-nature/species/fish/sea-fish/shark-tagging-project/>

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park....

The largest Regional Park in Scotland is gearing up to deliver an exciting range of events, activities and services to celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland 2013.

Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park has stunning scenic views, natural beauty and biodiversity. Throughout 2013 our award winning staff will help visitors to enjoy the beautiful landscapes, wildlife and heritage.



Something for Everyone:

- ✿ **Thrill seekers** - Our outdoor activities courses and events will help you sail, canoe, and cycle in the 108 square miles of Scotland's largest Regional Park.
- ✿ **Budding explorers and naturalists** - Join our Wildlife Safaris on land and water to discover the natural world of the Regional Park.
- ✿ **Families** - Spend memorable time together and win prizes in our Park wide Year of Natural Scotland treasure hunt.



- ✿ **Wildlife and Springwatch fans** - take part in our 'Windows on Wildlife' project and be WoWed by the secret lives of the wildlife around Castle Semple Visitor Centre. Access our array of webcams across the Park, view swallows in their nest or capture the flight of the rare 'sky dancing' hen harrier on the moors.
- ✿ **Parents and Pushchairs** - Join our 'Slinky Stroller' natural walks to enjoy the scenic views and find wildlife in unexpected places.
- ✿ **Wheelchair users** - Enjoy the Year of Natural Scotland on our free mobility scooters on the 'Greenock Cut' (one of the top 50 walks in Scotland) or take to the water on our specially adapted dinghies and canoes at our award winning 'Centre of Excellence'.
- ✿ **Astronomers** - Visit Scotland's most accessible dark sky location and marvel at the heavens above during one of our stargazing events.



...Year of Natural Scotland

- ✦ **Historians** - Discover the Semple Estate, view the built heritage conservation and interpretation project or join the 2013 Clan Semple gathering. Prefer industrial heritage? Explore the Park's scheduled ancient monument, the Greenock Cut.
- ✦ **Foodies** - Join our foraging for nature's wild harvest events. Cook and enjoy in the comfort of one of the Park's visitor centres.

- ✦ **Photographers** - Enter our annual photographic competition – there are cash prizes to be won. The theme is the Year of Natural Scotland!



- ✦ **Night owls** - Enjoy our viewing sessions of nocturnal creatures such as bats and badgers.

- ✦ **Dog walkers** - There are 66km of managed paths and trails where you can responsibly exercise your dog while enjoying the landscape.

- ✦ **Artists** - Carry on your creativity and be inspired by Clyde Muirshiel during the Year of Natural Scotland. Contribute to our exhibitions or enjoy viewing the work of others.

- ✦ **Sun bathers** - We invite you to glorious Lunderston Bay, the first sandy beach down the Clyde. Sunshine is not guaranteed... beautiful views are!

- ✦ **Beachcombers** - There are rock pools a-plenty and our skilled staff will help you discover the hidden wildlife - you will soon know the difference between a blenny and a butterfish or a periwinkle and a dog whelk.



- ✦ **Volunteers** - We are developing a wide range of opportunities for volunteers to take part in the Year of Natural Scotland 2013 at Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park.

For Clyde Muirshiel Park Authority the Year of Natural Scotland (YNS) 2013 will deliver social, health improvement, tourism and environmental priorities. Linked to YNS 2013 will be educational and learning activities, opportunities for volunteering and programmes that improve health and wellbeing. Habitat and species enhancement will go hand in hand with built heritage conservation and opportunities to get involved, learn new skills, meet new people and enjoy the wildlife, scenery and natural heritage of the Park. There will be a special emphasis on environmental justice with lots to do and lots of support for the most disadvantaged in our society.



Highland Birchwoods: Mountain Woodlands



After the success of last summer's plantings of endangered willow species in Glen Feshie, and increased media coverage of the issues surrounding 'wee trees', we're planning to keep the momentum going with a series of training



weekends designed to introduce project volunteers to a range of specialist montane plants. The first three courses in May and June, are already fully booked, but we're hoping to announce more soon, so keep an eye on the project website for more details. Also, for any sites with planting already planned that would like to get involved in the project — please do contact us, we'd love to work with you.



Former colliery near Bo'ness given official Local Nature Reserve status



Photograph © Tom Sargent

An abandoned colliery site near Bo'ness has been given official Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status by Scottish Natural Heritage.

An area of land stretching from Bo'ness Harbour to the former Kinneil colliery is recognised as a haven for wildlife and plants. The LNR will be called Kinneil Nature Reserve at the request of the local community. The

regenerated site has already been transformed with trees and shrubs and is a haven for local and visiting wildlife, which in turn will hopefully attract more visitors and more funding to the local area.

It is the 30th anniversary of the closure of Kinneil Colliery, the last pit in the area, which once dominated the local foreshore. The closure of the pit and the dismantling of buildings in 1983 was a terrible blow for the local community, with the resulting loss of jobs and investment in the local economy.

Parts of the area already had been recognised for their environmental importance. The mudflats and "island" off the foreshore are designated as a Special Protection Area for their conservation value.

It is the second LNR created in the Falkirk Council area. The local authority now plans to use the reserve status to attract funding to the area. The new status marks the end of an era for the site, which until the closure of its central colliery in 1983, spent almost 200 years being used for heavy industry.

Photograph © Paul Birrell



Visitor from the Arctic—"I am the Walrus"



The island of North Ronaldsay, Orkney had an unusual visitor from the North Pole. A young male walrus had found his way to a shoreline on the island.

The walrus was spotted on the 3rd March by warden Mark Warren. The visitor caused quite a stir with the locals and the media, even having his own social media account.

Photos by kind permission of Mark Warren

The large flippers marine mammals, characterised by their long tusks, spend significant amounts of their lives on the sea ice. Their population dropped rapidly as they were widely killed by humans for their blubber, walrus ivory and meat during the 19th and 20th centuries. However, their population rebounded after hunting them became largely outlawed.

The walrus appeared to be in good health and departed North Ronaldsay, the following day. He was last seen resting ashore near Bergen in Norway after his long swim across the North Sea .



MORAY DISTILLERIES TAKE ACTION TO RESTORE CALEDONIAN FOREST

Staff from six Moray distilleries are helping to bring Scotland's ancient Caledonian Forest back from the brink by taking up life memberships of conservation charity Trees for Life.

Representatives from the Speyside East distilleries, run by leading drinks company Diageo, recently received life membership certificates from Trees for Life's Executive Director Alan Watson Featherstone at a special event at Drummuir Castle, Diageo's home of Scotch Whisky on Speyside.

Matthew Desmond, who works at Mortlach Distillery near Dufftown, developed the scheme in order to promote the importance of a healthy environment for the Scotch whisky industry. He involved colleagues from neighbouring distilleries, and funded the life memberships through a £1,500 personal donation to Trees for Life. Diageo matched Matthew's donation with a further £1,500.

"We are really proud to be supporting Trees for Life's restoration of the Caledonian Forest. A healthy environment benefits everyone, and my colleagues and I were keen to play our part in helping to bring new life to the stunning wild landscapes of the Highlands," said Matthew.



Alan Watson Featherstone said: "I'd like to thank Matthew and his colleagues for their inspiring action. At Trees for Life, we depend on the support of our members to fund our vital conservation work. Members make a real difference to our project to restore Scotland's equivalent of a rainforest and to create a brighter future for the special wildlife of the Highlands."

Only a fraction of the former Caledonian Forest now survives, but Trees for Life has planted more than one million trees at dozens of locations, and has created 10,000 acres of new forest. It has pledged to establish one million more trees by planting and natural regeneration within the next five years. Almost all of the charity's practical conservation work is carried out by volunteers.

People can support Trees for Life by becoming members and by funding dedicated trees and groves. The charity's Conservation Weeks allow people to gain practical conservation experience in beautiful locations. For more details, see <http://www.treesforlife.org.uk> or call 0845 458 3505.

Seasonal Fungi—*Sarcoscypha austriaca* (Scarlet Elfcup)



The inner, fertile surface of the cup is a wonderful scarlet colour whilst the outer surface is much paler and covered with a white bloom consisting of tiny hairs. The cup is usually on a short stalk, growing out of fallen deadwood.

Sarcoscypha is a genus of wood rotting species generally found in sheltered woodlands on damp, broadleaf, woody litter. It is not possible to say whether there is any host preference as so many of the records do not specify the host species but alder, hazel, willow, beech, cherry and elm have all been cited in Scotland. The wood is usually damp, mossy and fallen onto the forest floor.

Members of the genus *Sarcoscypha* are all ascomycetes or 'spore shooters'. The spores are shot into the air at maturity from inside a special cell called an ascus.

Its appearance in the winter months is one of the features that focus the search for these fungi. *S. austriaca* is found from January, February, March and April in Scotland.



Photographs © Liz Holden

Conservation has grey results

The neighbouring farm of the 2012 Dods of Haddington Grey Partridge Trophy winner has lifted the same award in 2013.

Tanderlane Farm is the latest recipient of the conservation accolade which was presented to nearby Baro Farm last year. In presenting the trophy earlier this month, Hugo Straker, senior advisor with the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust said the result ably demonstrated how effective management over contiguous ownerships could further boost the fortunes of the iconic grey partridge.

“It is very exciting that Tanderlane Farm is the latest recipient of the prestigious East Lothian Grey Partridge Trophy,” said Hugo.



“Niall Donaldson is wisely utilising his Scottish Rural Development scheme to implement a good distribution of grass margins for nesting cover and provide specialist crops for brood rearing and winter holding cover. Foxes and crows are controlled and there is a considerable investment in the provision of feed hoppers. It is gratifying to note how often the resident partridges are found in the crops or seen under feeders. Fingers crossed for a dry, warm summer!”

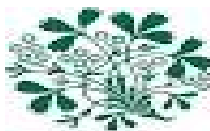
“I am particularly honoured to receive this trophy when I see who the previous winners have been,” said Niall. “It is very satisfying for me to see so many wild grey partridges in this area especially after the weather we have endured over the last year. I hope the conservation work we farmers undertake in East Lothian, with the help of Dodseed and the GWCT, continues to help restore partridge numbers to that of previous times”

Dods of Haddington are proud to be able to support farmers’ conservation work throughout the region and this trophy award is a wonderful way to recognize individual efforts as well as demonstrating how profitable farming can work hand in glove with sympathetic game and wildlife management.”

said Joe Harper, Managing Director of the trophy sponsors, Dods of Haddington.



(from left) Joe Harper, Managing Director of Dods of Haddington, sponsors of the trophy; Niall Donaldson, owner of Tanderlane Farm, Garvald, East Lothian and trophy recipient; Hugo Starker, senior advisor, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust.



One of the world's leading botanic gardens in Scotland's capital will become the latest charity to benefit from funding generated by players of People's Postcode Lottery. A massive £100,000 has been awarded to the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, and represents the start of long term funding relationship for the Garden.



As Clara Govier, Head of Charities at People's Postcode Lottery said "We are delighted that our players will support Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh," The gardens attract over 750,000 visitors a year and are part of the fabric of Edinburgh. They are such an amazing resource for the local community, and many visit as children, return with their own children and then with their grandchildren."

In addition to funding already received from players of £105,000, this new award will allow the conservation charity and well known visitor attraction to embark of the next stage of The Edible Garden project which actively encourages people to grow their own vegetables and fruit by offering advice on how to get started.



The Edible Garden project is run jointly with the Scottish Allotments and Gardens Society, the project is for those who are keen to grow their own food but don't know where to begin. The project ensures that there are demonstrations, workshops and drop in sessions to provide that added bit of support and advice to people who perhaps just need that extra bit of guidance.

Ian Edwards, Head of Exhibitions at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh said "This is excellent



news. In the two years since the Edible Garden Project has been running it has been possible to see a real change in people's lives. One young man, for example, who first came with a group of young adults at risk of homelessness has now joined up as one of the Project's volunteers, proudly helping others to grow their own food. This funding will help benefit so many more individuals".

Contact Shauna Hay on 0131 248 2900/07824 529 028 or s.hay@rbge.org.uk

Snippets.....

An Environmental Chaplain for Scotland

The United Reformed Church (URC) is appointing an Environmental Chaplain to visit and work with churches across Scotland. The chaplain will promote a Christian understanding of the need to care for creation and assist congregations to reflect on the issues theologically as well as taking practical



action. The post is ecumenical and will be based within Eco-Congregation Scotland, with salary funded by the URC and the main housing provided by the Church of Scotland. Other costs will be paid by Eco-Congregation Scotland and we will be raising money to cover these. We would like to thank the URC for their support. Recruitment is currently taking place and we hope to have news about an appointee by the time of the Annual Gathering in April.



The Atlantic Hazel Action Group (AHAG) is a partnership of consultants, government agencies, NGOs and individuals whose aim is to promote protection of Scotland's unique Atlantic hazel woodland. The group recognises the international importance of this woodland type for biodiversity, especially its epiphytic lichen flora, and a range of other values that this woodland provides for people and nature.

A revamped website is now available, to find out further information visit:
<https://sites.google.com/site/atlantichazelgroup/>



Dumfries & Galloway Wild Spring Festival 2013.....



www.wildspringfestival.com

Dumfries and Galloway's 10th annual Wild Spring Festival hopes to be the biggest and best yet, with over 100 wildlife events, many free and most hosted by local wildlife guides and experts. [Click here](#) for more information on this years' fantastic programme.

Set amidst beautiful unspoilt countryside, our festival is perfect for families and wildlife fans alike to discover this most surprising and naturally inspiring part of Scotland.



From frogs and fishtails to badgers and buzzards, and from red deer and reptiles to bats, moths and the charismatic red squirrel, Dumfries and Galloway is teeming with wildlife.



.....Galloway and South Ayrshire Biosphere



At the heart of the 2013 Wild Spring Festival is the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere. Put simply, our UNESCO Biosphere is an area of fantastic landscapes and wildlife covering over 5000 square km of the beautiful, unspoilt Galloway and Southern Ayrshire countryside.

From remote hill tops to sandy beaches, along footpaths and cycle trails, from local nature reserves to the Dark Skies Park and mountain bike trails like the acclaimed 7 Stanes, there are abundant opportunities for everyone to enjoy and explore the biosphere.

It's teeming with the best of Scotland's wildlife and

it's the perfect location for a great many exciting Wildlife events taking place during the 2013 Wild Spring Festival.



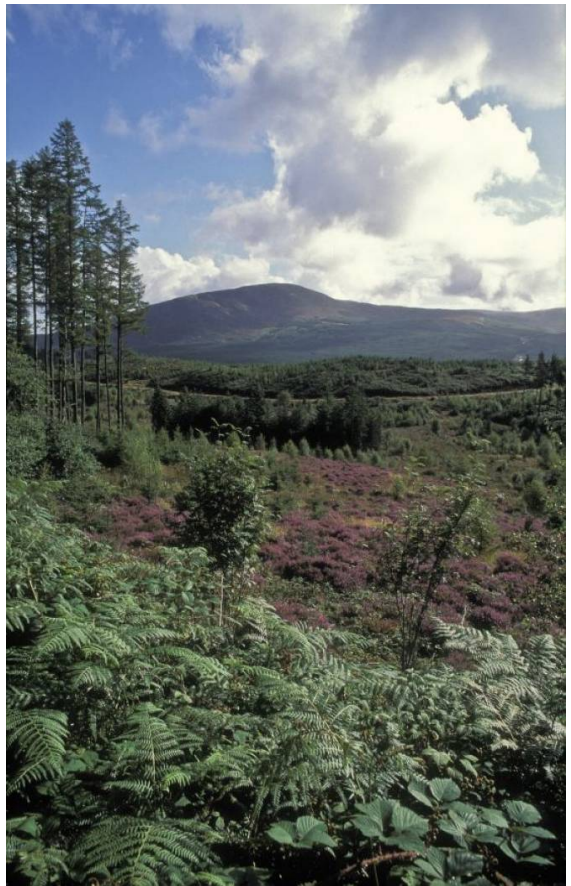
In fact, the biosphere is hosting more than 30 family-friendly wildlife events during

the festival from red deer watching to star gazing and from red kite secrets to fish up close.

You can find more about the Galloway and Southern Ayrshire Biosphere at;

<http://>

www.gallowayandsouthernayrshirebiosphere.org.uk/.



Scotland's Nature Festival –2013

Scotland's Nature Festival will take place this year from 18th to 26th May. The Festival used to be called Scottish Biodiversity Week and has been renamed to better convey a sense of fun, adventure, positivity and energy. With these thoughts in mind, we have set the theme for Scottish Scotland's Nature Festival 2013 as "Love Life, Love Nature".

Another major change this year is that events taking place during the Festival will be advertised on The List www.list.co.uk rather than on the Scottish Natural Heritage website. We are very excited about this new way of promoting events!

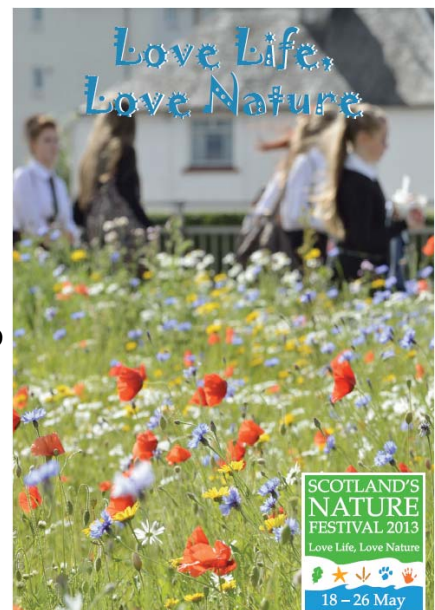


Promoting events through The List will allow the Festival programme to be viewed by a much larger audience and therefore events have a better chance of attracting more participants.

An added benefit is that event organisers, will be able to enter the details of their event/s directly onto The List website. More details about how to add events to The List website are available at <http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/naturefestival>

As in previous years, Scottish Natural Heritage is offering event organisers a range of resources to help promote events. Organisers can download logos and posters from the website. Other materials such as pvc banners, bookmarks and packs of wildflower seed can be requested and will be posted to you.

Visit: <http://www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk/naturefestival> to find out more.



Nature:
caring
and
sharing



Nature:
caring
and
sharing



Nature:
caring
and
sharing



We hope you will be able to contribute to the Festival as in previous years and we look forward to hearing from you.

Email: biodiversity@snh.gov.uk

Your opinion please....

Biodiversity Scotland Website Survey

We are reviewing the Biodiversity Scotland website - it's usefulness, usage and applicability. We have set up a short survey and would be grateful if you would take a few minutes to complete it. Thank you.

Please use the link below to take part:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/DKHRBHG>



Species Champions in Parliament

Species Champions is a new initiative from Scottish Environment LINK, celebrating Scotland's species. Kicked off at an event at Holyrood on 24 January, species champions have come about through our wildlife proclamation which we started for the Scottish elections last May. We are very pleased to have 43 MSPs signed up so far. We gave these 43 the first chance to become a species champion. Find out who has signed up here: <http://www.wildlifeproclamation.org.uk/>



The species champions project aims to open up the exciting world of Scotland's biodiversity. We have chosen 95 Scottish species, that are iconic and at threat. It may be that there are very few individuals left, or their habitat is being lost at a quick pace, or that they are especially susceptible to environmental change, including climate change or pollution. These species are symbolic. They are of course important in their own right but they represent much wider issues: their future is

linked to the impact of climate change or land or sea management issues. Their loss would reflect a failure on our part to address successfully negative trends that impact on them, on their habitats and on us.

As membership organisations, we know at LINK that the public is genuinely interested in species: it is often what sustains the membership of our organisations, knowing that the organisation people support is doing something for a particular species or species group that people care about. Politicians can help us. Whatever is happening to these species and their habitat, we want to work with policy makers at Holyrood to address this loss and to do something positive for Scotland's target to halt the loss of biodiversity by 2020, especially in 2013, Year of Natural Scotland.



Northern seafan © Calum Duncan/MCS attached



This is, of course, is what Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy, and its forthcoming sister document, Challenge 2020, are all about. Scotland's biodiversity is the basis for all living things in Scotland – it provides clean air and water, it pollinates our crops, it underpins our tourism industry, it flavours the water of life. It does all this and more. Yet the very thing that it does unnoticed is that it balances our ecosystems. This balance is wholly dependent on species. That is why we are inviting MSPs to work with us by becoming species champions.

...How does it work



Each species is sponsored by a member of the LINK Wildlife Forum which coordinates the initiative for their species. It supply's a factsheet with relevant information and offers to set up site visits if the champion would like one. It also coordinates activity so that no champion feels overwhelmed nor underwhelmed by the whole thing.



Firework anemone photograph © Owen Paisley



White Stalkball photograph © Liz Holden

The Forum is promoting the species champion initiative, aiming to get all 95 species adopted by the time we launch the initiative publically later in Spring. So far 33 MSPs have adopted 41 species, ranging from the pond mud snail to the golden eagle.



For a list of the species included in the initiative and a list of species champions so far, go to <http://www.scotlink.org/public/work/species-champions.php>



Diary Dates

6-7 April 2013—Certified Leave No Trace Trainer Training. The practical course gives recognised Leave No Trace Trainer status to successful participants. **Venue:** Glenmore Lodge, Aviemore. **Further information at:** <http://www.wild-scotland.org.uk/2013/04/leave-no-trace-certified-trainer-training/>

18 April 2013— Community Wetlands—a sharing good practice event.

Wetland management with community groups - a practical approach. The ecology and conservation of lowland raised bogs offers an opportunity for positive community engagement. **Venue:** Lenzie Public Hall. **Further information at:** <http://www.snh.gov.uk/news-and-events/events/event-details/?id=1964>

19-20 April 2013—The Scottish Crannog Centre: Coppice conference. Regenerating Hazel Coppice in Scotland. **Venue:** The Big Shed, Lawers Nr Killin. **Further information at:** www.crannog.co.uk

1st May 2013— Leading Edge—to infinity & beyond—trying out tomorrow's technology today — a sharing good practice event. The use of technology to deliver messages about the natural world. **Venue:** Battleby Conference Centre. **Further information at:** <http://www.snh.gov.uk/news-and-events/events/event-details/?id=1949>

11-12 May 2013—2nd Annual Bird Fair: Whether you are interested in birds, the natural world or just want to get back to nature—there is something for everyone at the Scottish Birdfair **Venue:** Hopetoun House, Edinburgh. **Further information at:** <http://www.scottishbirdfair.org.uk>

Year of Natural
Scotland 2013

