

Issue 48

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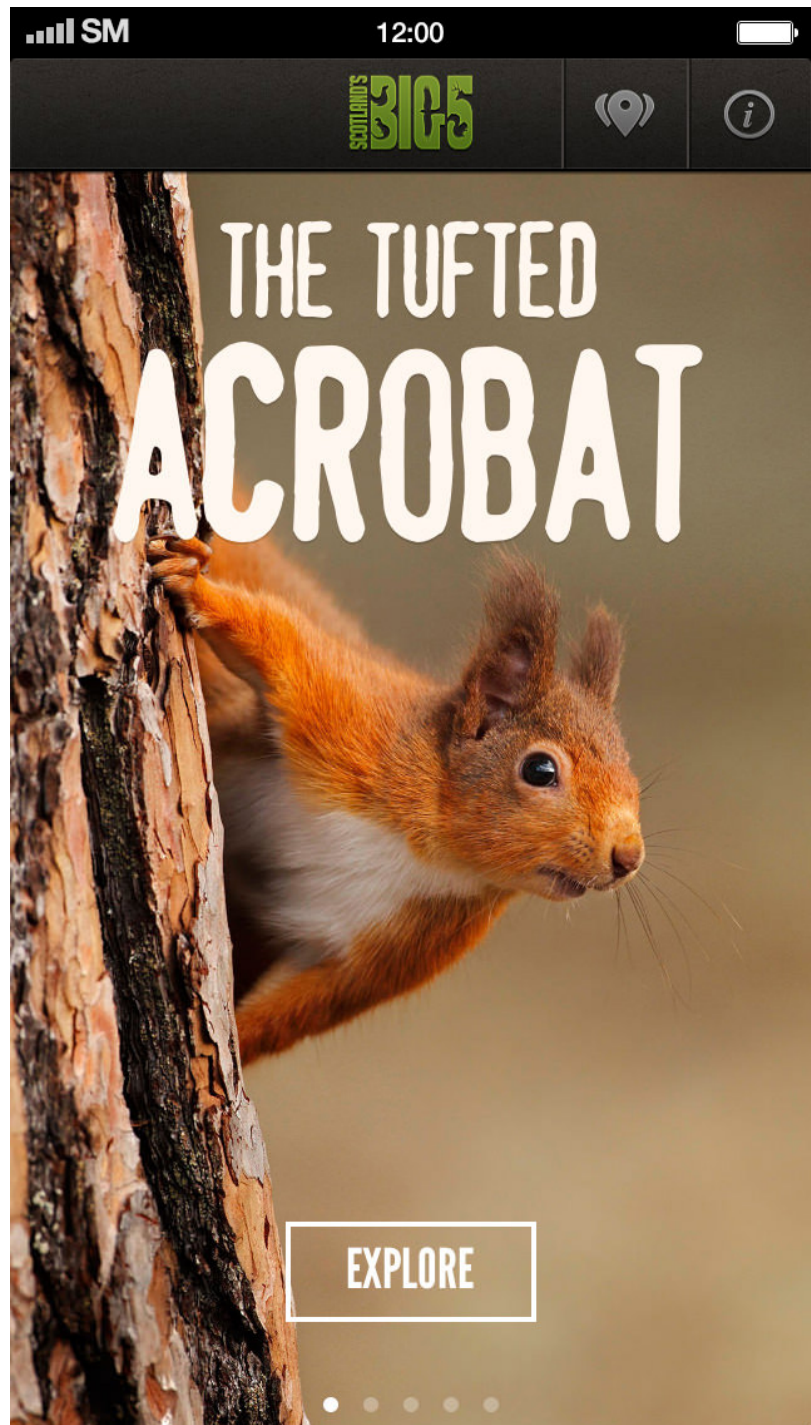
SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY FORUM

THE FORUM

Scotland's Biodiversity: Scotland's Big 5 app gets the iOS7 look

Scotland's Big 5 app for the iPhone is a pocket guide to five of the nation's most iconic animals – the golden eagle, red squirrel, harbour seal, otter and red deer.

Launched earlier this year by Scottish Natural Heritage to celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland, the app has attracted great reviews in the App Store. It recently picked up a commendation in the Education and Training category at The Herald Digital Business Awards. *(cont.)*



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Contact details

Do you have a news story? Are you involved in a project? If so, then let the Biodiversity Team 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



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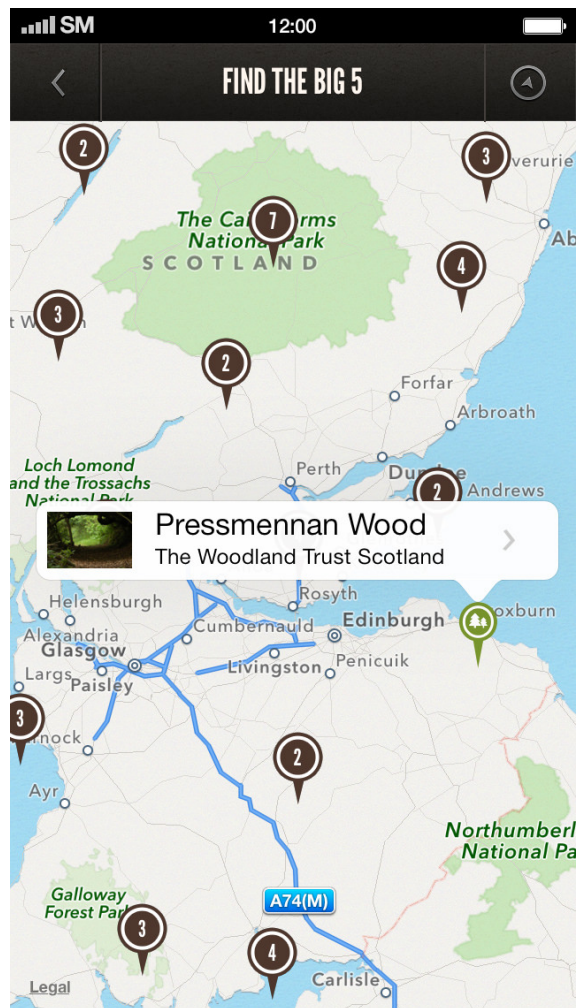
Scotland's Big 5 app gets the iOS7 look

A new iOS7 version is now available for free download from the App Store at <http://www.appstore.com/scotlandsbig5>. The iOS7 version features wonderful images, video and audio of the Big 5, and a whole stack of key facts that will take you on a journey through the often dramatic, always surprising, lives of these animals.

The app now highlights 90 locations across Scotland, from the Shetland Islands to the Solway Coast, where one or more of the Big 5 can be seen, with expert tips on how best to spot these elusive animals.

This includes some of Scotland's best natural places, managed by partner organisations such as the Forestry Commission Scotland, the John Muir Trust and the National Trust for Scotland, as well as locations in the Cairngorms and in the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Parks.

Beautifully animated menu screens and smooth transitions create a highly engaging path through all this rich media content, helping to make the app a fantastic interactive learning resource about wildlife.



For more information about the Scotland's Big 5 app, please contact:

David Rodger, Communications Unit, Scottish Natural Heritage

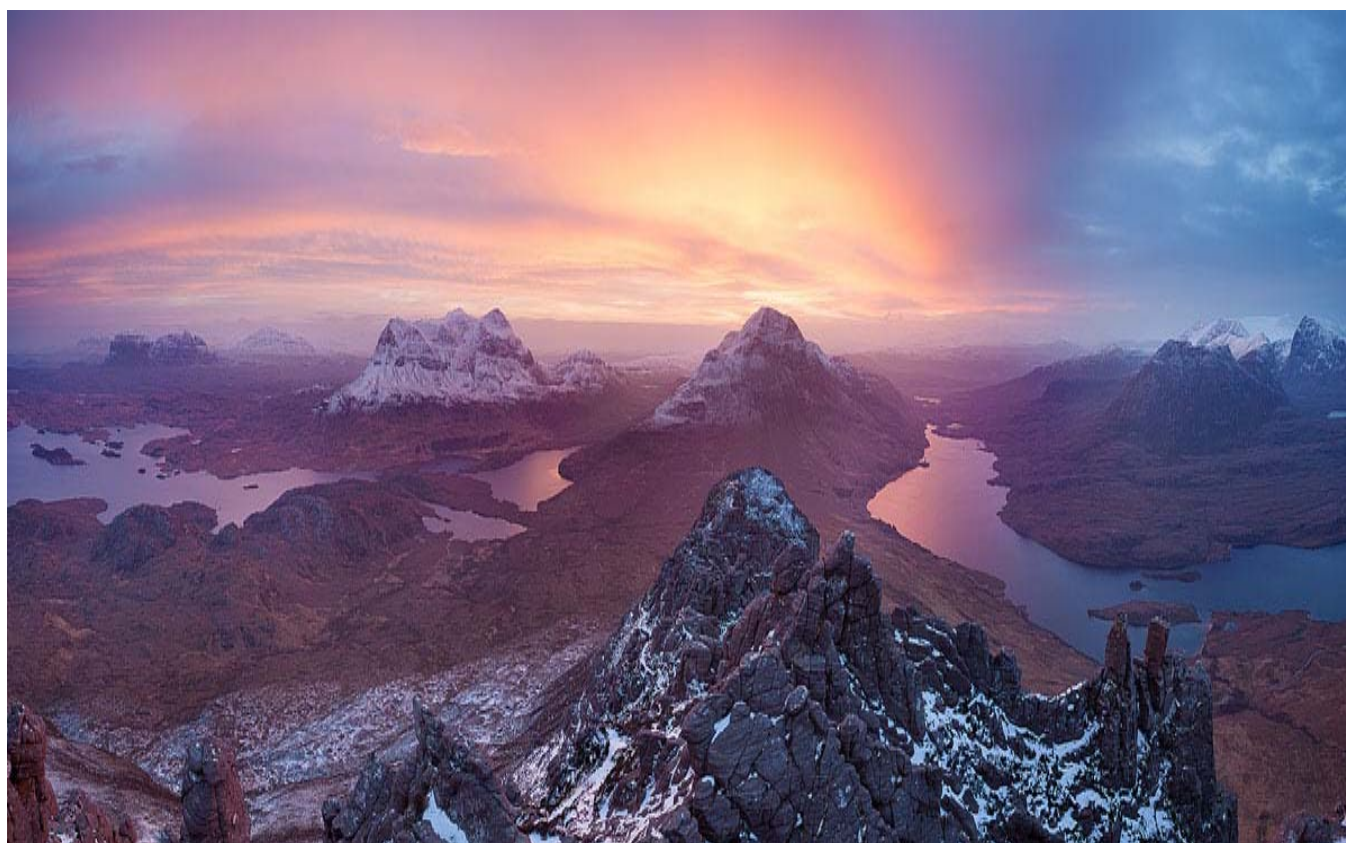
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Heritage Lottery Fund...



In October The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) announced a grant¹ of £3million, including £100,000 development funding to the Coigach-Assynt Living Landscape (CALL). The award will help conserve the landscape of Coigach-Assynt in the north west of Scotland, one of the remotest places in Europe. The investment will bring long-term social, economic and environmental benefits to the area.

With some of the most rugged and spectacular of Scotland's scenery, Coigach-Assynt is perhaps best known for its striking, steep-sided peaks including the iconic Stac Pollaidh. Its mountains, moorlands, lochs and coastline provide habitats for species such as golden eagles, wildcats, black-throated divers and freshwater pearl mussels.

Covering an area of 606km², the Landscape Partnership Project, part of a wider 40-year vision, has been developed by a partnership led by the Scottish Wildlife Trust. It will restore parts of the landscape, including regenerating and reconnecting the remaining native woodland, restoring blanket bog and heather moor, and repairing and improving pathways. The internationally significant Iron Age settlement at Clachtoll Broch, a local centre of power in 300BC, will be excavated and preserved. Local people and visitors will also be engaged through comprehensive volunteering and cultural learning programmes which will increase understanding of this vast area's complex heritage.

¹ A Landscape Partnership (LP) earmarked grant means that money has been set aside by HLF for the scheme in question. The applicant then progresses to the second round and submits a further, fully-developed application to secure the full award.

£3m to help conserve spectacular Scottish landscape

HLF's Landscape Partnership (LP) Programme² – which has now been running for a decade - is the most significant grant scheme available for landscape-scale projects. To date, over £160m has been invested in 91 different areas across the UK helping forge new partnerships between public and community bodies and ensuring people are better equipped to understand and tackle the needs of their local landscapes.

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund in Scotland, said:

“Nature lies at the very heart of what makes Scotland special and nowhere is that more evident than the astounding scenery of Coigach-Assynt. However, the enormous pressures upon these landscapes mean that we have to tackle their restoration and conservation on a bigger scale than ever before. The Landscape Partnership Programme does just that, and more. It brings real cohesion to the natural and built heritage of the region while reconnecting its communities with the nature that lies on their doorstep.

Project Manager of the Coigach-Assynt Living Landscape (CALL), Viv Halcrow, said:

“This Heritage Lottery funding could have a great impact across the whole Coigach-Assynt Living Landscape. It would not only benefit the natural, cultural and built environment, but could help to increase integration between communities, landowners, and organisations. The CALL Partnership is very grateful to have received a stage one pass and is looking forward to developing the project in preparation for a stage two submission.”

² HLF's Landscape Partnerships are helping bring together members of the community as well as local, regional, and national organisations to deliver schemes which benefit some of the UK's most outstanding landscapes and rural communities. Grants range from £100,000 to £3m. The next closing date for LP applications is May 2014 for decisions in October 2014.



Both photographs by kind permission of Alex Nail

LBAP Snippets....

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Update

We have just finished our public consultation on the next edition of our biodiversity action plan which is called Wild Park 2020. The document is available on line now at:

<http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wildpark>



North East Scotland LBAP Update



Biodiversity Toolkit for Businesses:

One of the key objectives for next year is to engage more fully with local businesses. With the assistance of a student placement, we began work on a Biodiversity Toolkit for Business. We now have a first draft and hope to have it completed within the next couple of months. The toolkit draws together a range of information which will enable organisations to take simple steps to help benefit biodiversity (managing grounds, corporate social responsibility opportunities and creating habitat).

Edinburgh LBAP Update

Freshwater and Wetlands: Riparian Invasive Non Native Species (INNS):

The Rivers And Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS) Forth Biosecurity project is delivering treatment of areas in the rural west River Almond catchment. LEADER funding prevents the project from operating in urban Edinburgh however local groups and our Rangers have been able to make use of training opportunities. Volunteers continue to monitor INNS in some areas and carry out control work on Himalayan balsam. Council staff continue to treat INNS on council owned land.



East Lothian Biodiversity Update

Conservation Grazing:



East Lothian Council introduced sheep grazing (the SWT Flying Flock) to a coastal site and hill site about four years ago. This pilot project has now expanded to include another hill site and another coastal site. Sheep, Dexter cattle and Exmoor ponies are now used, according to site conditions. A team of 30 volunteers are being trained to carry out vegetation, butterfly and bumblebee surveys to monitor the effects of grazing.

.....From around the country

South Lanarkshire Update

South Lanarkshire Council is piloting a “Biodiversity Assets” approach as a mechanism to assess development impacts on biodiversity and as an alternative to the Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and Local Nature Conservation Site (LNCS) approach. The approach will complement the Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and local greenspace sites networks. The proposed approach involves assigning habitats a score, based on their importance when in **favourable condition**.



These scores have been generated by the Partnership through a workshop session. The top scoring habitats will be referred to as “biodiversity assets”, with a GIS layer being made available which shows the distribution of these assets in South Lanarkshire.

These scores have also been used to produce a “habitat impact calculator” for use in assessing development proposals. Habitat scores by area are calculate and totalled, giving an overall score for the existing site. Proposals which would alter the habitat composition of the site can then be assessed by calculating amended scores. Any proposals which result in a reduced score would be viewed negatively, whilst those which generate a higher habitat score would be encouraged. The calculator can also be used to assess proposed mitigation work, when used in conjunction with the “mitigation decision making” tool. It is intended that details and guidance will be included in the new Built and Natural Heritage Scottish Government Document.

Cairngorms Nature Update



Improving biodiversity value in woodlands: Woodland Trust Scotland have recently recruited a Cairngorms specific officer to take forward the HLF funding for Planted Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) restoration. Highland Aspen group have been successful in growing Aspen from seed with the RSPB nursery in Abernethy establishing the plants. Discussions are taking place about possibilities for tree extraction by horse and plans to begin cattle grazing in the woodlands.

Highland Biodiversity Update

The Highland Seashore Project has been very successful see - <http://www.highlandbiodiversity.com/seashore.asp#subpage1>. Lots of events have been run for the public but also more advanced identification training for Rangers and others keen to improve their field skills.





© Mike Peacock

RSPB Scotland volunteers have discovered an extremely rare orchid growing on an island off the west coast of Scotland, where it has never before been recorded.

Irish lady's-tresses, named for its resemblance to plaited hair, is thought to grow at very few sites in the UK and Ireland, meaning the discovery of around 160 plants on Oronsay is a significant find. Due to its rarity, the reproductive habits of Irish lady's-tresses aren't well known, but in this case, they have possibly been lying dormant underground for many years just waiting for the right conditions in which to flower.



...Volunteers' hair-raising discovery on Oronsay



Volunteer Gill Watts, who found the orchids with her husband Richard, said: "We were actually surveying for marsh fritillary butterflies when we spotted all these white flowering spikes coming out of the ground. We thought at first they might be a more common orchid, but after checking with the RSPB reserve manager, we managed to positively identify them.

"They're amazingly beautiful flowers, with a musky vanilla fragrance. We didn't quite believe what we'd found at first, because we know they're so rare. And to top it all, we learned that it had been our privilege to make the first ever record of this plant for Oronsay!"

Oronsay, a tidal island just off Colonsay, is an RSPB Scotland nature reserve that is actively farmed to create homes for nature, particularly choughs and corncrakes. Its seal colony was featured on the BBC programme, *Hebrides: Life on the Edge*.

The management of the particular field where the orchids were discovered was altered a number of years ago to provide good conditions for devil's-bit scabious. This is the food plant of marsh fritillary butterfly caterpillars, another species suffering steep declines in the UK. The butterflies have now been breeding on Oronsay for several years and their range has expanded across the island. Meanwhile, the good conditions for devil's-bit scabious have also proved just right for Irish lady's-tresses.

Deborah Long from Plantlife, said: "2013 has been an exceptional year for orchids. And what is more exceptional than a new site for the very rare Irish lady's-tresses orchid? Plantlife has been working on this species for over 10 years and with new research indicating the extreme fragility of its populations in Scotland, to find a new population on an RSPB reserve inspires hope for the future of the species. Given appropriate management, it just shows that Irish lady's-tresses orchids can come back to their homeland."

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Pearls in Peril—PIP project

‘Pearls in Peril’ (PIP) is a UK wide LIFE nature project with 22 partners working together to restore river habitats benefiting freshwater pearl mussel and salmonids (salmon and trout). The project was approved in September 2012 and will run until September 2016. A total of 48 actions will be delivered across 21 rivers designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for freshwater pearl mussel.

In Scotland, small tree enclosures (with about 20 native trees in each) have been planted along the banks of the Geldie and Clunie Burns, tributaries of the River Dee, with more planting to be done this winter. Through working with land managers a number of SRDP applications have been approved securing 6km of tree planting on the River Spey, 13km on the River Dee and 16ha of native woodland creation on the River South Esk. These measures aim to protect the river banks from erosion, intercept silt laden runoff, provide shade and increase woody debris and leaf litter in the river.

River restoration is planned for the Rivers Dee, South Esk and Naver. Sites have been identified where artificial structures such as weirs, bank protection and croys could be removed or reduced in size to re-create river bed habitat for freshwater pearl mussels and salmonids. We have spoken with numerous landowners, tenants, crofters and fisheries managers to gain support and approval to investigate in river habitat creation

An important element of the project involves raising awareness of freshwater pearl mussel conservation. We are developing a ‘Pearls in the Classroom’ programme, which has already been implemented in primary schools in Deeside and Angus.



Pearls in Peril—PIP project



Combating illegal activities is crucial to safeguard mussels in Scotland. The PIP River Watcher has visited 16 SACs in Scotland to search for evidence of illegal pearl fishing, pollution and unauthorised in river works and has launched a Riverwatch scheme on Harris. The River Watcher has spoken to numerous people within each river catchment raising awareness of wildlife crime affecting freshwater pearl mussel and how to report it.

The River Ehen, in Cumbria contains the largest freshwater pearl mussel population in England. A detailed Conservation Management Plan has been produced in collaboration with local stakeholders. Tree planting and fencing to stabilise the river bank and prevent livestock from causing bank side erosion will be priorities. In August, a team from PIP, the Environment Agency and freshwater pearl mussel specialists successfully introduced mussel larvae to the gills of young salmon to boost reproduction. This is the first time this work has been done in England.

In Wales, a significant area of conifer removal has taken place by the Afon Eden. Fencing is now underway to prevent livestock and deer entering the area and to allow natural regeneration of native woodland. PIP is currently identifying locations for settlement ponds to intercept nutrient rich runoff from farmyards and fields before it enters the river.

What have we still to do?

Lots! All the actions combined aim to secure the population of freshwater pearl mussel in the UK.



Trees For Life wins People's Millions Public Vote



Conservation charity Trees for Life is celebrating following the announcement that it has won £50,000 of Lottery funding for a pioneering project to help restore Scotland's ancient Caledonian Forest and protect its rare wildlife from extinction, while benefitting hundreds of disadvantaged people from the Inverness region. The conservation charity's plan to create a new volunteer training programme at its Dundreggan Conservation Estate near Loch Ness was successful in yesterday's finals of the People's Millions public vote.

The Trees for Life training project is about people and places. In particular, it will benefit people from diverse backgrounds and those with limited access to healthy outdoor activities and training opportunities. Disadvantaged people – including those on low incomes or who are unemployed from the rural region around Inverness, and from deprived urban areas in Inverness – will be able to learn about threatened habitats and species, and gain health benefits from volunteering in green places. Activities will include planting trees and wild flowers, collecting seeds for propagating rare species, and growing trees and plants in a tree nursery. The project will be accessible for older people and those with limited mobility or affected by mental health issues. Accredited training for leading volunteer groups will also be on offer.

The People's Millions is a partnership between the Big Lottery Fund and ITV, in which the public decide which local community projects will receive Lottery funding. Dundreggan, in Glen Moriston, Inverness-shire, has been described as a Highlands "lost world". So far almost 70 priority species for conservation, including several species never recorded in the UK before, have been discovered there.

Award-winning Trees for Life has planted more than one million trees at dozens of sites in the Highlands. It has pledged to establish one million more trees by planting and natural regeneration by 2018. For details, please visit www.treesforlife.org.uk or call 0845 458 3505.



TREES FOR LIFE
Restoring the Caledonian Forest

Trees For Life—Planting Scotland’s wee trees!

A group of hardy volunteers braved the cold and ventured to Coire Sneachdta in Glen Affric National Nature Reserve to take part in conservation charity Trees for Life’s ‘wee trees’ planting day on 27 November.

This project – part of Trees for Life’s award-winning restoration of the Caledonian Forest in the Highlands to the west of Loch Ness and Inverness – was made possible thanks to a grant through the Community Service Volunteers (CSV) Action Earth scheme, which supports volunteers across Scotland in making a positive difference to their local environment. As part of this year’s CSV Action Earth campaign, Scottish Natural Heritage has supported more than 170 projects – including Trees for Life – with grants aimed at groups helping and encouraging volunteering through practical environment projects.

Project Coordinator for Trees for Life, Mick Drury, said: “We were pleased to welcome so many people along on the tree planting day, to help us plant 150 dwarf birch and 300 willow cuttings. It really was all about the volunteers, from those who grew and nurtured the seedlings in the nursery, to those who dug deep and planted the trees themselves.

“Thanks to CSV Action Earth and Scottish Natural Heritage, we’ve been able to buy the tools needed to carry out this vital project, which will shape the future of Scotland’s mountain woodland. We were delighted to team up once again with Forestry Commission Scotland, which manages the site, to deliver this project with a great result.”

To find out more about how to get involved with the work of Trees for Life, visit www.treesforlife.org.uk or call 0845 458 3505.



TREES FOR LIFE
Restoring the Caledonian Forest

NTS—Pup gives St Abb’s Head a seal of approval



The saying ‘there’s one born every minute’ was never truer than at conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland’s St Abb’s Head reserve, near Eyemouth, Berwickshire.

Lindsay Mackinlay, the Trust’s Nature Conservation Adviser, was with a team filming the grey seal pupping season at the property for a new nature channel on the NTS website and couldn’t resist taking this shot (left).

Lindsay said:

“This little one was probably just a few days old. Grey seal cows suckle their young with rich milk at this time of year but do sometimes leave their pups alone as they go out to sea. When mum is away, the youngsters seem content to just lie back and sleep a lot or watch the world go by until their mother returns. Often they lie so still it is sometimes easy to assume they have died but they are usually just snoozing! We were very careful not to disturb the seals too much when filming as we didn’t want the pups to be abandoned and, besides, our trained countryside rangers wanted to film their natural behaviour.”

The Trust’s Property Manager at St Abb’s Head, Liza Cole, added:

“It is a good time of year to see grey seals as at St Abb’s in October and early November, the females haul themselves out onto quiet beaches to give birth to a single, white coated pup. The mother suckles it for just three weeks, then leaves it to fend for itself as she needs to find a mate. Left alone, pups take some time to find their way in the world, and so they can often be found having hauled themselves out of the water in unusual places in late November and December. In the past it has not been unknown for a pup to have a snooze right on top of the Reserve’s coastal footpath.”

“Generally, it is wise for visitors not to get too close to the rocks and to stay clear of the water at this time of year to avoid any mishaps to either themselves or the seals. In the New Year, we hope to have the seal footage on our website so you can enjoy watching them without fear of disturbing the seals or falling off a cliff!”

 the National Trust
for Scotland

a place for everyone

Fungus Feature: *Clitocybe nebularis* (Clouded Funnel)

This species produces large fruit bodies with fleshy caps (up to 10cm across) and stipes. The cap is often umbonate (having a raised area in the middle of the cap) and sometimes can be variable in form.

The important features to look for are the size, habit (often in large fairy rings), habitat and rather pale greyish brown colours throughout, often with a whitish bloom on the cap. The gills should be crowded and have a tendency to run down the stipe slightly (some books describe them as decurrent and others as adnate / decurrent). The spore print will be a dark cream colour. The cap does not change colour as it dries out (not hydrophanous) and the smell is rather aromatic (a description that covers a multitude of sins!). [More information about some of these terms and fungal lifestyles.](#)

Fruiting:

The main fruiting period for this species in Scotland is in September and October but records occur in November, December and January so it is worth looking out for even late in the season.



For both photos © Liz Holden

Habitat:

This is a common species found in soil and litter in gardens and in both deciduous and coniferous woodlands. It is a saprotroph (lives off non-living material) and will tolerate rather enriched soil such as is found close to compost heaps. It can form large fairy rings amongst

the fallen leaves but for such a sizeable toadstool, remarkably it can often be difficult to spot.



Distribution:

The distribution is fairly 'common' throughout the UK, with over 5000 records on the [Fungus Record Database of Britain and Ireland](#) (FRDBI) for this species but interestingly only 202 from Scotland.

You can submit a record of your findings of this species [here](#).

Scotland's favourite tree... Scots Pine....



The Scots pine has been voted Scotland's favourite native tree and the Scottish bluebell is named the nation's most popular native flower, in a survey conducted by the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE).

The survey, which opened online last April, attracted 1,677 votes from Scotland and the UK as well as 37 countries around the world including the USA, Canada and Australia.

The results reveal that the iconic Scots pine is the number one choice with 15 per cent of the vote. Seen as evocative of Scotland's landscape, the Scots pine is an important provider of habitat for species such as crossbill, pine marten and capercaillie.

In second place, with 14 per cent of the votes, is the Scottish bluebell. Also known as the harebell, this flowering plant from the bellflower family grows abundantly around Scotland and is considered by many to herald the start of summer.

The ever-popular rowan tree is in third place, the Scottish primrose – one of a handful of flowers that only occur naturally in Scotland – is in fourth place and the distinctive silver birch in fifth place.

...and favourite flower... The Bluebell

Votes have also been received for some more unusual choices including bog myrtle, melancholy thistle, Arran whitebeam, round-leaved sundew, twinflower, eyebright and woolly willow.

Commenting on the results, RBGE's science conservation officer Dr Heather McHaffie said: "The survey has been fascinating and has also helped provoke discussion about the fragility of our trees and plants. Many of Scotland's native species are vulnerable or endangered. This can be for a number of reasons from changing land uses or grazing to climate change. From Shetland to the Borders, RBGE is taking a lead to bring at least 75 per cent of threatened native species into its conservation collections."

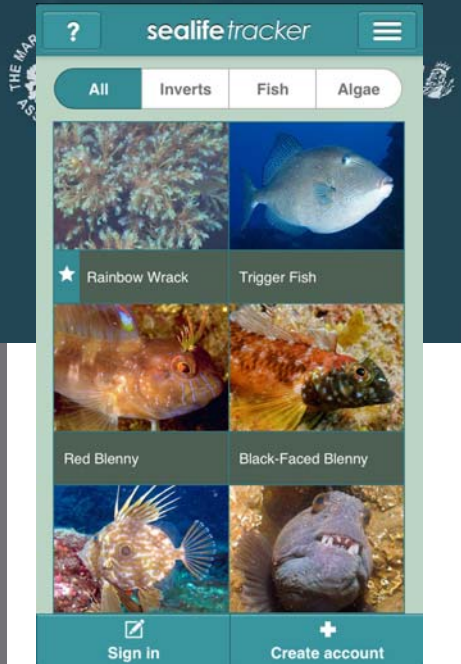
The survey was inspired by Scotland's Big 5 campaign to identify Scotland's favourite wildlife. When Scottish Natural Heritage revealed that its 'big five' were animals and birds, RBGE decided to find Scotland's five most popular native trees, plants and shrubs.

Both the SNH and RBGE surveys were part of the Year of Natural Scotland celebrations, championed by VisitScotland.



The invasive non-native species apps are here

Record invasive non-native species on the move with the PlantTracker, Aquainvaders and Sealife Tracker



Available for iPhone and Android (OS 4.0.3+)

Your records will be verified by an expert and will contribute to the national data set on invasive non-native species.

Download these apps for free and try them out — we would love to receive your sightings.

<http://naturelocator.org/snh.html>



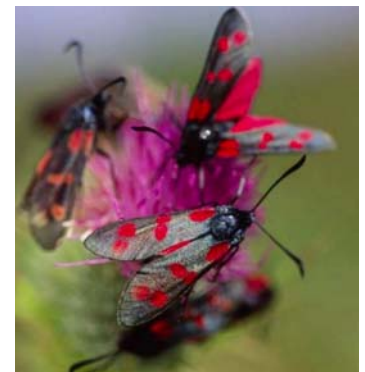
BRISC (Biological Recording in Scotland) & GNHS (Glasgow Natural History Society) are together offering 6 bursaries towards attending a training course in natural history field studies. The bursaries will be for up to £200 or 75% of the cost of the course, whichever is lowest. For details, see: <http://www.brisec.org.uk/Bursaries.php> or <http://www.gnhs.org.uk/bursaries.html>

Further information:

- Bursaries are open to anyone living in Scotland.
- Courses should be run by FSC www.field-studies-council.org or similar professional development courses run by universities etc.
- Courses should be completed before 31 October 2014.
- Applications for courses on plants, invertebrates and other animals where there is a shortage of taxonomic expertise will be particularly welcome.

The successful candidates are required to write a short article (300-400 words) on their course experience for *BRISC Recorder News* and/or the *GNHS Newsletter*. £15 of each bursary will be held back until receipt of the relevant article.

All applications should be submitted to: bursary@brisc.org.uk by **31 January 2014**



Scottish Wildlife Trust - Project Wild Thing

PROJECT WILD THING: RECONNECTING KIDS AND NATURE is a campaign to help kick-start the revolution of reconnecting kids with the outdoors, through a thought-provoking and funny documentary film, Project Wild Thing, which was released on 25 October at cinemas across the country. It is a feature-length documentary that takes a funny and accessible look at a complex issue, the increasingly fragile connection between children and nature.

The release of the film coincided with the launch of an ambitious, film-led campaign, **PROJECT WILD THING: RECONNECTING KIDS AND NATURE**, bringing together organisations, companies and individuals who want to help get children outdoors and enjoying the benefits of nature.

The campaign is supported by **THE WILD NETWORK**, a brand new collaborative movement committed to reconnecting children in the UK with nature. Founded by the [National Trust](#), [RSPB](#), [NHS Sustainable Development Unit](#), [Play England](#), [Play Wales](#), [Play Scotland](#), [PlayBoard Northern Ireland](#), [AMV BBDO](#), [Green Lions](#) and the [BRITDOC Foundation](#) and joined by scores of organisations and thousands of individuals who want to see kids enjoying the outdoors, **THE WILD NETWORK** was launched in September 2013. Full details at: www.projectwildthing.com



THOUSANDS SUPPORT BETTER PROTECTION FOR SCOTLAND'S SEA LIFE



Over 10,000 people have stated their support for more ambitious protection of sea life off Scotland. The Scottish Government's consultation on proposals for a network of marine protected areas (MPAs) closed in November and solicited views from across Scotland. Approximately 10,000 consultation responses were submitted as part of environmental campaigns to both support the concept of marine protected areas and challenge the Scottish Government to plug some major gaps in the proposed network.

Scottish Environment LINK's Marine Taskforce - a coalition of environmental charities campaigning to protect and recover Scotland's seas - urge people to back the proposals and show support for the "best 29 sites," which include some of the most important remaining areas for biodiversity in Scottish waters. However, Scottish Environment LINK suggests the Scottish Government plans do not provide adequate protection for all of Scotland's amazing sea life, with a number of iconic and nationally important species currently excluded from the proposed MPA network.

Calum Duncan, Convenor of Scottish Environment LINK's Marine Taskforce and Scotland Programme Manager for the Marine Conservation Society said: "The proposed Marine Protected Areas will be an important first step but there will still be major gaps in the network, notably for seabirds, whales, dolphins, porpoises and basking sharks, as well as other fragile seabed features. It's great to see this level of support for the proposals, but also to highlight these gaps to the Scottish Government. Beneath our waves is a precious marine landscape containing awe-inspiring biodiversity that sustains Scotland's maritime culture and economy. We must collectively make sure these MPAs do not end up becoming paper parks as has happened in other countries."

For further information: Contact: Nick Underdown, Scottish Environment LINK
Email: nick@scotlink.org

RSPB: Nature of Scotland Awards

Pioneers in Scottish nature conservation were honoured at the second annual RSPB Nature of Scotland Awards. Held at the Sheraton Grand Hotel in Edinburgh, and hosted by comedian and talk show host Fred MacAulay and broadcaster Sally Magnusson, the awards recognise and celebrate excellence, innovation and outstanding achievement in nature conservation. The event brought together a range of industry professionals, public sector organisations, community groups, politicians, charities and conservationists, all of whom have an interest in safeguarding and conserving Scotland's greatest asset - its natural heritage.

There was local success for The Ecology Centre, a Fife-based project which transformed a landfill site into an environmental education and volunteering centre at Kinghorn Loch. The Centre took home top prize in the **Community Initiative category**.

Caithness and Sutherland MSP Rob Gibson, picked up the **Politician of the Year Award** for his contribution towards a sustainable, natural Scotland.

It was a unique project to protect the iconic Scottish wildcat that won the **Innovation Award**. The Cairngorms Wildcat project impressed the judges with their work to bring land managers and conservationists together to gather vital information to better understand the species and raise awareness of it's plight.



Alan Watson Featherstone (centre) with Stuart Housden, Director, RSPB Scotland (left), and Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment (right) after his receipt of the 'Outstanding Contribution to Nature' Award at the RSPB Nature of Scotland Awards in Edinburgh



Conservation Pioneers Honoured

Edinburgh-based print distribution company, EAE, scooped the top prize in the **Sustainable Development category** for their specially developed biodiversity garden that creates valuable greenspace in an industrial setting.

Dedicated conservationist Nick Riddiford of the Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative was honoured with the **Marine Conservation Award** for his years of work campaigning for integrated marine resource management of the seas around Fair Isle, as well as for his efforts to preserve traditional values and practices.

Students and staff at Larbert High School in Falkirk took home the top prize in the **Youth and Education category** for their unique project to transform a neglected site at Carron Dams and the Lade into a wildlife haven.

Alan Watson Featherstone, founder of conservation charity Trees for Life, was selected as the winner of the **Outstanding Contribution Award** for his work to protect and restore Scotland's native Caledonian woodland.

A project to protect Common terns in the West of Scotland earned Clive Craik and the South Shian Tern Rafts the **RSPB Species Champion Award**. Clive devised a system using discarded mussel rafts to give breeding terns a safe place to raise young, out of reach of their two main predators – mink and otter.

The final accolade of the evening, the **Lifetime Achievement Award**, was given to Professor Aubrey Manning OBE - an acclaimed zoologist who has dedicated his life's work to the understanding and promotion of wildlife and conservation.

Stuart Housden, Director of RSPB Scotland, said: "With the Year of Natural Scotland coming to a close, the Nature of Scotland Awards are an opportunity to celebrate the very best in Scottish conservation and honour the leading lights in the field. Congratulations to the very worthy winners. We hope the standard set today will encourage many others across the whole Country to take action for wildlife, so that Scotland can continue to offer a fantastic home for nature."

North Lanarkshire Council...

In November 2013, North Lanarkshire Council celebrated the launch of its newest Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Brownsburn Community Park and becomes the seventh site in North Lanarkshire to be designated.

Brownsburn Community Park is an extensive mosaic of grassland, woodland, and wetland. From an industrial past, the site is now a green oasis for local people and wildlife in urban south Airdrie. In the centre of the park, a small remnant peat bog, is a haven for drifts of flowering bog asphodel, bog cotton, and cranberries. The wildflower rich meadows are home to colourful plants such as greater butterfly orchid, common spotted orchid and ragged robin. Some of the wildlife often seen are common garden birds, buzzards and roe deer and if you are lucky, water vole.



Ribbon cutting to mark opening of Brownsburn Community Park LNR with pupils from All Saints and Rochsolloch Primary School

Brownsburn Community Park Local Nature Reserve Launch



Councillor McKenna presenting pupils from All Saints and Rochsolloch Primary Schools with digital camera packs donated by Scottish Natural Heritage

In 2012, a new joint campus School, All Saints and Rochsolloch Primary Schools opened and is situated at the edge of Brownsburn Community Park. This offers huge potential for Brownsburn Community

Park to be used as an outdoor learning resource. To celebrate the LNR designation, North

Lanarkshire Council's Greenspace Development Service, Froglife and The Friends of Brownsburn Community Park visited the school and undertook a number of biodiversity related activities with pupils such as bat box making, bulb planting, bird cake making, and willow weaving as well as undertaking a forest school session within the park. The schools were then presented with wildlife recording equipment sets kindly provided by Scottish Natural Heritage. The LNR was officially opened by Councillor McKenna, Convener of Environmental Services, North Lanarkshire Council. A real highlight of the day was a piper who played the bagpipes during lunchtime and created scenes akin to The Pied Piper of Hamlet.

Biodiversity Project Officer Pardeep Chand said 'We are very excited to hold the launch of our new LNR at All Saints & Rochsolloch Primary Schools. The LNR already has strong community participation, but the location of the school and opportunity to use this valuable greenspace for outdoor learning will only help to facilitate a sense of community ownership of the site over generations. The schools have already displayed a keen interest in using the park for outdoor learning and it is hoped that this event will be used as a springboard and encourage children to discover the amazing biodiversity of their doorsteps'.

Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust—GWCT

Perth Museum and Art Gallery was the perfect surroundings for the official prize-giving for the recent Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust Schools' Art Competition.

Now in its ninth year, 2013 was the first time that the competition was opened up to secondary pupils and the judges have been incredibly impressed with all the entries they have received.

Ross Smith of Blackford Primary School scooped the overall primary school top prize while Brooke Watson of Perth High School claimed the top spot in the secondary category.

Ross' vibrant study of a capercaillie caught the judges' eye and has won him the coveted Michael Wolfe Murray Quaich. Brooke's intricate pencil study of a pheasant immediately impressed the judging panel which comprised GWCT's Katrina Candy, sculptor Julian Jardine, Dunkeld Hilton's Peter Richardson and the Provost of Perth and Kinross Elizabeth Grant. Brooke has been awarded an engraved glass trophy and both winners also receive a fun-packed day at Living Well at the Hilton Dunkeld House to include a mini Highland Games, lunch and lots of outdoor activities for their whole class as well as a place on a Julian Jardine art class and gifts from GWCT.

Joining the judges at the prizegiving reception was all the category winners and runners-up, their families, teaching staff, Gordon Walker, Vice Convener of the Lifelong Learning Committee and Bill Atkinson, Deputy Director of education and children's services.



Artistic pupils recognised at prestigious prize-giving



“This has been an excellent competition to organise and judge,” said Katrina Candy, Head of PR & Education (Scotland), GWCT.

We have been delighted with the response from local schools and especially pleased that we have such generous sponsors as Julian Jardine and Living Well at Hilton Dunkeld House. Perth & Kinross Council has been hugely supportive and Perth Museum has provided the perfect venue to house the exhibition of winners.”

Provost Elizabeth Grant said: “The standard of entries was very high and I would like to congratulate all school pupils who put forward art to be judged. I

Brooke Watson of Perth High School

was very impressed by all the work that came before the judging panel. This was the first time

secondary schools could enter, and the standard of work by their pupils was excellent.

Special congratulations must go to the winners Ross Smith and Brooke Watson for their excellent entries.”

Ross Smith
of Blackford
Primary
School



Creating an Inventory of Orchards in Scotland

A new survey of orchards across Scotland is being carried out under a SNH research grant. Its aim is to determine all relevant sites in a 'once in a generation study', looking at the location and condition of orchards in Scotland. The initial phase - which is in progress now - is a GIS desk study. The following phase will be field verification, and is currently being piloted in the Borders.

Data collection in the field includes a suite of biodiversity indicators, as well as identifying any remarkable trees, so that we can link sites to existing registers of notable individual specimens.

The project will provide a better understanding of this habitat in Scotland.

The cultural heritage of orchards is being increasingly recognised in Scotland, as is their contribution to Scotland's 'natural capital'.

For more information follow www.scotlandthefruit.org.uk .



One of the decrepit, but perhaps more interesting specimens in terms of biodiversity.
An orchard near Kelso.

Big 5—a Highland Safari

Coming to the close of 2013, the year of Scotland's Big Five is rapidly ending, so too, the year of Natural Scotland.

After 'Flyaway productions' first film project, "Wild Argyll" was completed in 2010 (a 45 minute DVD highlighting the variety of species to be found in Argyll's various habitats), Bob Grove started filming his second DVD on Scotland's Big Five animals. Three years in the making it was released in October of this year.

The idea for the film occurred to Bob Grove after a visit to Kenya on safari where he was taken to try and see Africa's Big Five. It was there that he thought, " what could be Scotland's Big Five?" Excluding any bird species (a film subject in its own right), the Big Five were selected through deliberations with fellow wildlife enthusiasts and filming began in 2010.



It is an hour long and commences with 10 - 15 minutes of introduction to the highlands and takes the viewer through a typical year with some of the flora and fauna that can be found. After this first sequence there is 10 - 15 minutes footage of potential animals that could be in the Big Five before the presenter, Julie Grove, guides the viewer through Scotland's Big Five in turn. The film is concluded with an invite to the viewer to come to Scotland and try to find the Big Five for themselves.

'Flyaway Productions' feel that the DVD carries on the year 2013 into the future with further wildlife films planned, with the next one focusing on some of the best nature reserves in Scotland, including the likes of Ben Lawers, the Cairngorms, Coll and other such areas.

For further information contact: Bob Grove on robertgrove23@live.co.uk.



Diary Dates



18th February 2014—Landscape Partnerships Networking event.—issues and opportunities. An opportunity for all those involved in Landscape Partnerships to share experiences, network and learn from others. A Sharing Good Practice event. Venue Battleby Centre, Perth. Further information: <http://www.snh.gov.uk/news-and-events/events/>

15th-16th April 2014—SRUC/SEPA Biennial Conference - Delivering multiple benefits from our land: sustainable development in practice. Venue: John McIntyre Conference Centre of the University of Edinburgh . Further information at <http://www.sruc.ac.uk/srucsepaconf>

Year of Natural
Scotland 2013 



The Biodiversity team would like to take the opportunity to wish our readers a Happy and 'Biodiverse' 2014.

A big thank you to all those who contributed items for the newsletter in 2013—please keep doing so.

We would also encourage others to send in articles—large or small—for next year.

We would love to hear from you.

