



Scotland's Biodiversity: Action Earth campaign celebrates 10 years across Scotland

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) launched this year's Action Earth campaign in Scotland with over £47,000 of conservation grants to give away.

Now celebrating its tenth year, CSV Action Earth encourages people to make a difference to their local environment by volunteering.

This year's campaign was launched in Glasgow in April with a team of volunteers planting wildflowers and building bird nesting boxes.

Thanks to a partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) hundreds of grants from £50-250 will be available to individuals, groups, charities, schools and businesses to support environmental projects in their communities.

CSV's Action Earth campaign is helping to get people and communities busy outdoors. We have grants to give to groups of volunteers who are carrying out environmental projects in Scotland. The campaign runs until February 2015.

Grants from £50 to £250 are available for practical activities that involve volunteers in improving outdoor spaces or creating habitats for wildlife. Grants can be used to purchase plants, tools and materials or to cover volunteer expenses.

If your group is volunteering on a Local Nature Reserve we can give you up to £500 for practical work, wildlife recording or educational activities that encourage more people onto the reserve.





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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.

Email: biodiversity@snh.gov.uk Tel: 01463 725325

Biodiversity Team

Scottish Natural Heritage

Great Glen House

Leachkin Road

INVERNESS IV3 8NW

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

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

www.biodiversityscotland.gov.uk



BIODIVERSITY SCOTLAND

Grab a Grant

Katy McTernan, CSV's Action Earth Manager, said: "Our campaign hopes to encourage people of all ages and backgrounds to get outside and improve their local environment. This could be anything from simply planting bulbs to transforming a derelict patch of land or creating a colourful wildflower meadow. These grants supported by our partner SNH, help to get environmental projects up and running and CSV can offer support so that everyone in the community can benefit from the end result."

Since its launch in 2004, the campaign has given out 1,792 grants to a diverse range of projects involving over 43,000 volunteers.

Urban Roots, a community organisation working to improve the environment and health of people in southern Glasgow, will be at the launch after receiving a £250 grant to buy bird box materials and tools for planting.

Abi Morden from Urban Roots, said: "We were delighted that CSV Action Earth launched this year's campaign at our Woodland project which will encourage people in the local community to make more use of the site in the future. Thanks to the grant we have built and installed 15 bird boxes to increase the numbers of wild birds and we've planted a variety of wildflowers to provide food and habitat for wildlife. I would recommend anyone who wants to get involved or has an idea and needs some support to contact CSV Action Earth."

Scottish Natural Heritage Chair, Ian Ross, a former volunteer himself, said: "When someone takes part in environmental volunteering they develop practical and social skills, grow in self-confidence and gain a sense of achievement, all qualities that can help them into employment. This type of volunteering also helps young people build a connection with the natural world and sustain a life-long interest in its care. The hard work and commitment of volunteers benefits communities, nature and landscape."

If you have any questions contact Robert Henderson at actionearth@csv.org.uk or call 0131 222 9083 / 622 7766.

For more information and to apply online go to: www.csv.org.uk



NTS—Puddle & Squeak on St Kilda

The pictured ball of fluff is actually a recently hatched Leach's storm-petrel, one of the subjects of an innovative monitoring project on the remote Hebridean archipelago of St Kilda, which is owned and managed by conservation charity, the National Trust for Scotland.

This particular chick was named 'Squeak' by rangers because he wasn't shy in letting everyone know that he wasn't too happy at being weighed!

Leach's storm-petrels one of the least common seabirds of the British Isles, known only from a handful of sites, of which St Kilda is by far the most densely inhabited, with about 94% of the known breeding population. Earlier studies showed that the petrel population on Dùn, one of St Kilda's islands, had halved between 1999 and 2003 and very little is known about the species' breeding patterns.



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Chief 'petrel-head', Gina Prior, St Kilda's Seabird and Marine Ranger said:

"Given what seems to be an increasingly precarious situation for this rarest of seabirds, it was vital we found out more about their breeding patterns and the possible causes of population decline. This is no easy task as Leach's storm-petrels are quite difficult to observe because they breed in hollows and cracks in the rocks and only return to their burrow after dark." she added:

"I know that it isn't the 'done' thing to name the animals we study but we couldn't help ourselves. Squeak, the loudest of the chicks, increased his weight by an amazing 40% in just two days. Puddle, the oldest chick of the three is a bit of chubster in comparison and is now starting to lose his downy fluff as his feathers come in. Squib, the youngest chick, is fast catching up with the other two.

Despite our successes with the project so far, we need to expand the number of nesting boxes if we are to gather more vital data. Steve MacDonald, a volunteer who joined an NTS work party on St Kilda, who happens to be a builder by trade, has come up with a fresh design of box which should be better at withstanding the harsh conditions here. We are mass producing the new boxes over the winter and we will have them in place for the 2015 breeding season and hopefully the results will be well worthwhile."



INNS— River Clyde

A Chinese mitten crab found in the River Clyde is the very first record of this alien species in the wild in Scotland. John Clark, a bailiff for the Mid Clyde Angling Association, discovered the remains of a female mitten crab near Dalmarnock while patrolling in search of illegal eel traps and handed the specimen to the Clyde River Foundation for examination.

Dr Willie Yeomans, Catchment Manager for the Clyde River Foundation said “Another invasive, non- native species appears to have arrived in the Clyde. This chance discovery by an angler poses a potentially significant ecological threat to the Clyde system, the biota of which is recovering from centuries of poor water quality and structural modification. Without putting too much emphasis on this one specimen, this finding potentially has very serious implications for river management under the EU Water Framework Directive. Our first priority is to follow up the finding with survey work to determine if there is an established population of mitten crabs in the Clyde and we are appealing for information from anyone who may have encountered these animals on the river.”

Dr Paul Clark, Natural History Museum added “An established River Clyde Chinese mitten crab population could pose an enormous environmental risk to the salmon and trout in this catchment. Recent research undertaken by Royal Holloway University of London and the Natural History Museum suggests mitten crabs can eat salmon and trout eggs. If this reported Clyde specimen came from a deliberate human release and if this were the case, then the environmental authorities need to urgently consider what appropriate actions are required to prevent such introductions happening again in the future.”



Photo: © Trustees of the Natural History Museum London/Phil Crabb

1st Sighting of Chinese Mitten Crab



The mitten crab, native to China, was introduced to Germany in 1912 and subsequently spread throughout Northern Europe. It was recorded in the Thames in 1935 and is now well-established in the Rivers Thames, Humber, Medway, Wharfe, Ouse and Tyne. It is thought they were first brought to the UK in ships' ballast water but the origin of the Clyde specimen is unclear. Mitten crabs spend most of their life in freshwater but return to salt water to breed. They travel well on land, which aids their spread. They are included in the IUCN's list of "100 of the worst alien species in the world" and not only negatively impact native biodiversity but can cause severe structural damage to riverbanks.



© Dr Willie Yeomans, Clyde River Foundation
The Clyde Mitten Crab claw

A full report has been submitted for publication (William Yeomans & John Clark 2014; in press) and the specimen has been deposited at the Hunterian Museum in the University of Glasgow.

The Clyde River Foundation, in partnership with the Mitten Crab Recording Project, is appealing for information relating to mitten crabs in the Clyde catchment. Please report any sightings, along with details (date, location, size) and a photograph if possible to info@clyderiverfoundation.org.



For more info about the Clyde River Foundation visit :
<http://www.clyderiverfoundation.org/>

For more on the Mitten Crab Recording Project see:
<http://mittencrabs.org.uk>.

© Dr Willie Yeomans,
Clyde River Foundation
the remains and claw of
the Clyde specimen

Glasgow is Buzzing, it is full of life! Over 6,000 species can be found living within the city, most of which are invertebrates. The Glasgow's Buzzing project has created and enhanced more than 13 hectares of wildflower meadow that has significantly increased the available habitat for a wide range of invertebrate species, particularly pollinating insects, but also for other wildlife such as small mammals, birds and amphibians. Meadows have been created through seed sowing and plug planting of native wildflower species such as field scabious, common knapweed and red clover in at least thirteen parks across Glasgow (including Hogganfield Park, Linn Park, Kelvingrove Park and Victoria Park).

Buglife has joined forces with Land and Environmental Services-Glasgow City Council throughout this three year project that started in May 2011 and was grant funded by Landfill Communities Fund.



During the project, Buglife has undertaken invertebrate surveys at the parks before and after meadow creation to identify species that are using the meadows and have benefitted from their creation and enhancement. These surveys concentrated on pollinating insects such as bees and wasps, hoverflies and butterflies and moths, but other invertebrate species found during the surveys were also recorded including beetles, grasshoppers, true bugs and spiders.

Surveys during the project have recorded a total of 125 invertebrate species across the parks. At least 17 of these were identified as being new to Glasgow including the distinctive leaf beetle *Galeruca tanacetii* found on common knapweed at Linn Park and the solitary parasitic bee *Sphcodes geoffrellus* recorded foraging on ragwort at Alexandra Park.

The most significant increase in species recorded at the parks after meadow creation was at Glasgow Green, a large area of amenity grassland within the city centre. Due to the large expanses of cut grassland at Glasgow Green, very few species of invertebrate could be supported at this park before meadow creation; this was emphasized during surveys before meadow creation that resulted in only the common wasp (*Vespula vulgaris*) being recorded. Since meadow creation within this park an amazing 30 invertebrate species have been recorded including a small copper butterfly (*Lycaena phlaeas*) and a female common green grasshopper (*Omocestus viridulus*) which was observed ovipositing. During the project we never thought we would have grasshoppers right in the centre of Glasgow!



The diversity of species recorded during the project highlights not only the importance of wildflower meadows for invertebrates, especially pollinators but also how under recorded invertebrates are, even in our big cities. The project also demonstrates that even a small area can make a huge difference, as seen at Glasgow Green.

Glasgow's Buzzing also has the support of the Friends of Kelvingrove Park, RSPB, Butterfly Conservation, Froglife and Glasgow Life.

Copies of reports written throughout the project, including species records can either be obtained from Buglife directly suzanne.bairner@buglife.org.uk or through the website: www.buglife.org.uk/.

Heritage Lottery Fund—The People & The Mountains

A project which brings together Scotland's two National Park Authorities to address the serious threat of man-made erosion to paths across areas of outstanding natural beauty has been given a major boost with the Heritage Lottery Fund today announcing its initial support for a grant of £3.28m.

The People and the Mountains project will see 41 eroded upland paths, covering a distance of 124.5km, restored and upgraded. It will train young people with the skills to gain employment and work with schools and volunteers to preserve Scotland's great outdoors.



From the high mountains and straths of the Cairngorms to the lochs and woodlands of Loch Lomond and the Trossachs, Scotland's National Parks encompass some of the country's most iconic landscapes, vital for their contribution to tourism and the wider economy, as well as for the health and social benefits of the

millions of people that enjoy them. However their popularity combined with heavy rainfall is damaging the habitat and causing highly visible scarring to the landscape.

Colin McLean, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund said:

"Nature lies at the very heart of what makes Scotland special and its beauty attracts and ever-growing number of walkers, climbers and tourists each year. Although this is a significant boon to our tourist economy, we need to ensure that it doesn't damage the special environment that so many have come to enjoy. Our natural heritage offers a rich resource for skills and education so HLF is delighted that this project will offer training to many young people.

Their newly learned skills will not only make a positive difference to their own lives, but will play an important part in looking after the future of Scotland's magnificent landscapes."

Heritage Lottery Fund: Shiona Mackay on 07779 42890/017868 701638

Protection of Scottish landscapes on the right path

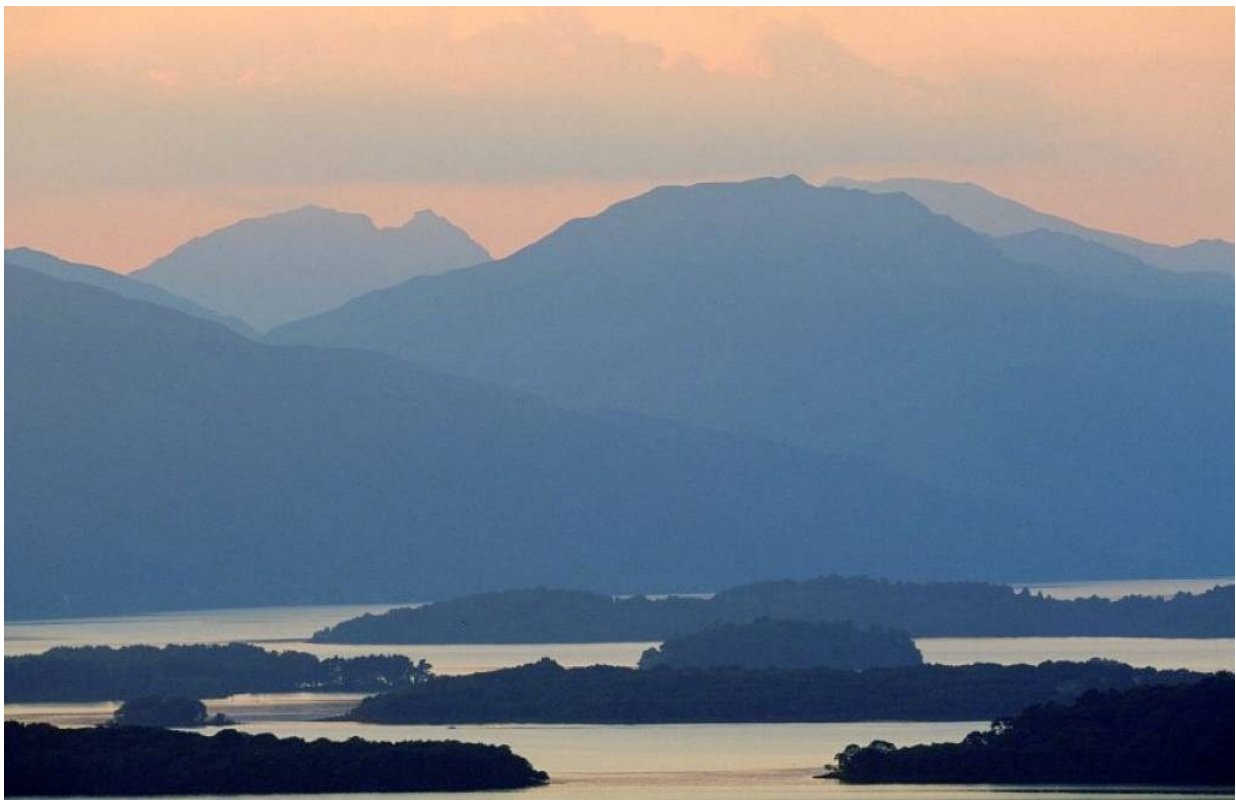


Dougie Baird, Chief Executive of the Cairngorms Outdoor Access Trust (COAT) added:

“This is fantastic news for the partnership behind this project, and will allow us to develop a project that directly involves the people of Scotland in the care of the priceless mountain assets within both our National Parks”

Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA) and COAT Board Member Gregor Hutcheon said:

“The CNPA is immensely proud of the work and efforts of COAT and this significant funding will allow them take forward this innovative and exciting project that will have real benefits for visitors and land managers. It’s great to be working together with Loch Lomond and the Trossachs Park Authority to help safe guard some of the most iconic mountains in Scotland”



The Turriff Team -

With ongoing pressure on resources, most organisations find it difficult to maintain a presence at “public events”. SNH’s staff in Tayside and Grampian have adopted a “joint presence” at non-NNR events and the Turriff Show is a good example of how this works.

Importantly, all organisations represented are there to promote their activities in relation to an agreed common theme (can you think of any human activity that doesn’t have a biodiversity element?) and **not** just to promote their own organisation. Partly by seeing people with various logos on their shirts manning a single exhibition, visitors begin to appreciate how we all work towards common, or at least linked, ends. Visitors always go home with suggestions/ideas of things they can do themselves and inevitably they get to understand more about the individual organisations anyway.



This year we jointly provided opportunities to try a forestry simulator to operate a forwarder, how to get involved in wildlife recording, the mini-beasts in soil and why they are needed, bee-keeping and the role of pollinators, wildlife gardening and a mass of quizzes.

- Spreading the word

From a practical perspective, it means each organisation only has to provide one individual to contribute to the event as partners share the operation of the whole stand. I could be advising on native plants suitable for gardens one minute and explaining why bees or earthworms are



important for agricultural production the next. If we couldn't answer a question, we passed the visitor on to someone else in the tent who could.

Does it work? None of us are naïve enough to believe that's biodiversity loss halted, but over two days we estimated 6,300 visitors to our stand and we won the prize for best large exhibitor in the show after two years as runners up. Visitors tell us they look forward to our stand because it is always different, interesting and their kids love it. And the camaraderie, generosity and good humoured participation by all involved is just great fun – it's good to have some of that in your job.



Members of the Turriff Team this year included FCS, SNH, [NELBAP](#), [NESBReC](#), Aberdeenshire Council Ranger Service, [Open Air Laboratories](#), [Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels](#) and we were all brought together by [Rural Development Initiatives](#).

We're not suggesting you follow our content, but you might like to consider our approach.

“ The Turriff Team”

Back from the brink: *Cupido minimus*

Along with the rest of the UK, Angus in North East Scotland has suffered butterfly declines, but still has isolated populations of the UK's smallest butterfly the small blue *Cupido minimus*. Surveys have been carried out at locations along the coastline since the late 1970's (see Figure 1) but although records of small blue are numerous, important data on the distribution of its host plant kidney vetch *Anthyllis vulneraria* have been missing.

Since 2012 Butterfly Conservation Scotland and the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership have worked together to facilitate annual volunteer surveys of both the butterfly and the host plant along the coastline. Historical data from Butterfly Conservation, together with Scottish Wildlife Trust and Scottish Natural Heritage survey data from Seaton Cliffs Local Nature Reserve and St Cyrus National Nature Reserve respectively, were used as a starting point to focus survey effort. Volunteer recording data have been mapped and Figure 2 shows the 2012-13 distribution of both species (note the retraction from locations where the small blue was once found).



Figure 1. The distribution of Small Blue records along the Angus coast based on records ranging from 1982 to 2013



Special thanks to Catherine Lloyd of the Tayside Biodiversity Partnership, Barry Prater and Duncan Davidson of Butterfly Conservation. David Lampard of the Dundee Naturalist Society, Anna Chesheir and Gill Smart of SWT, Kim Ross of SNH, Harry Bickerstaff and Butterfly Conservation. I would like to particularly thank all respondents to the questionnaire, all of the volunteers and Dr. Kim Picozzi at the University of Edinburgh.

Rescuing North East Scotland's fragmented Small Blue Butterfly Population

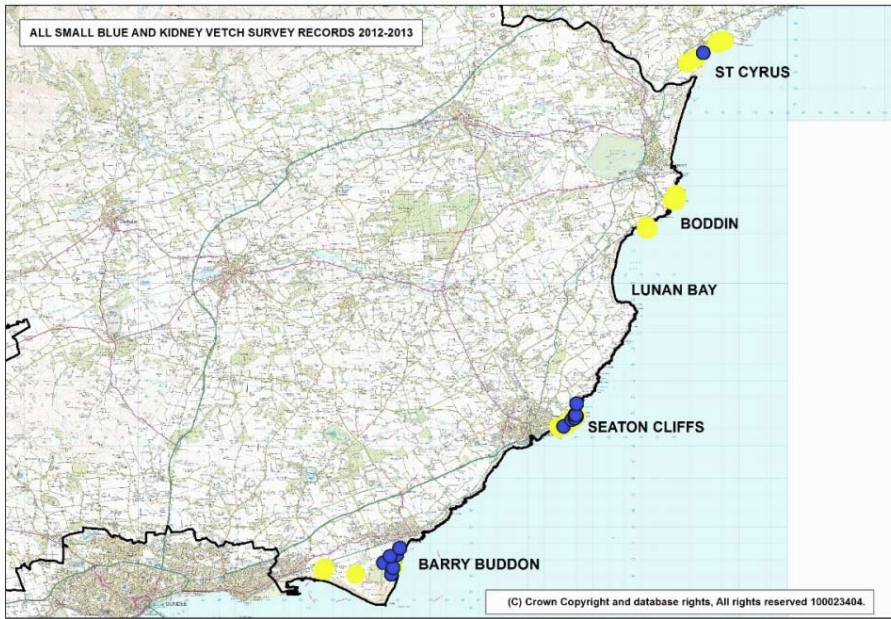


Figure 2. The distribution of Small Blue and Kidney Vetch along the Angus coast based on records generated by volunteer effort from 2012 and 2013

An MSc project carried out in 2013/14 analysed the historical data and more up to date 2012/13 records to identify locations where the two species still coexist and established their proximity to nearby populations. An investigation of land use practices along the coastline and landowner receptiveness to collaborative restoration works, will hopefully enable focussed work to reduce population isolation. It is reassuring that 79% of those landowners approached would consider managing land for wildlife a priority,

especially if practical habitat enhancement works can be funded and implemented by a third party.

During 2014, as an in-kind contribution to the project, Scotia Seeds arranged with local landowners to collect Kidney vetch seed (Figure 3) and are drying and cleaning the seed in anticipation of the Partnership being able to cultivate - it is looking hopeful at the moment with a few thousand seeds collected.

Looking to projects such as the Butterfly Conservation's and Scottish Wildlife Trust's Gales Marsh Project will guide us in best practice on how best to carry out restoration work at our chosen site in the future.



Figure 3. Kidney Vetch, Angus coast (2014)

©Kelly Ann Dempsey

INNS—Aliens in our midst!

Summer sees a rise in people exploring our countryside admiring the plants and animals. However not all is as it seems, aliens might be lurking in the undergrowth! Invasive non-native species are a major concern. It is estimated that in Britain alone they cost the economy £1.7 billion every year. They can also harm native species, spreading diseases out-competing them or even eating them!



To help people learn more about non-native species, SNH has helped produce an elearning module freely available on the GBNNS website at

<http://www.nonnativespecies.org/elearning/>. The module guides you through an informative course where you can learn why invasive non-native species are a concern, how many there are, their impacts, as well as how they get here and what we can do about them. There are lots of clear examples to explain the problem.



© Mike Majeus

Once you have completed the course, there is even an opportunity to take a test! Do you know how long ago the land bridge between Britain and Europe flooded? Do you know the percentage of non-native species that become invasive? – Once you pass you'll be awarded a certificate, to print and hang with pride.

Keep your eyes peeled next time you are out for a walk and if you see something a bit different please record it using irecord <http://www.brc.ac.uk/irecord/> or the mobile phone app that you can download at <http://naturelocator.org/>. You could have spotted an alien and by recording it you will have contributed to the national picture of non-native species!

For more information see <http://www.snh.gov.uk/protecting-scotlands-nature/nonnative-species/>



Featured Fungus—Cinnabar webcap

Cortinarius cinnabarinus

The genus *Cortinarius* is one of the most numerous groups of fungi on the planet and are therefore more difficult to identify. There are some though that once seen are never forgotten and this stunningly coloured species is just one such. Its specific name is given for the likeness of the fruit body colour to the vermilion colours of the mineral cinnabar. The colour is almost fluorescent on fresh, young material. The genus name comes from the cobwebby partial veil - the cortina - that in part characterises the genus.



© R Goodison taken at Killiecrankie

More information on the different divisions within the kingdom of the fungi

Fruiting

Recorded from August through to November, the majority of records are from September and October.

Habitat

In general this species is thought to associate with beech and in my experience, are associated with relatively fertile 'brown earth' soils.

Distribution:

The Checklist gives this as present throughout but frequency unknown. In Scotland it is rarely recorded but widespread with records from Mull, Tayside, the Central Highlands and most recently (and not shown yet on the map to the right) from Reelig Glen north of Inverness.



Please remember to submit your records to your [local recording group](#) or via the [Scottish Fungi online recording form](#)

© Liz Holden taken at Reelig Glen near Inverness

NTS—Seabirds soar at Trust colonies

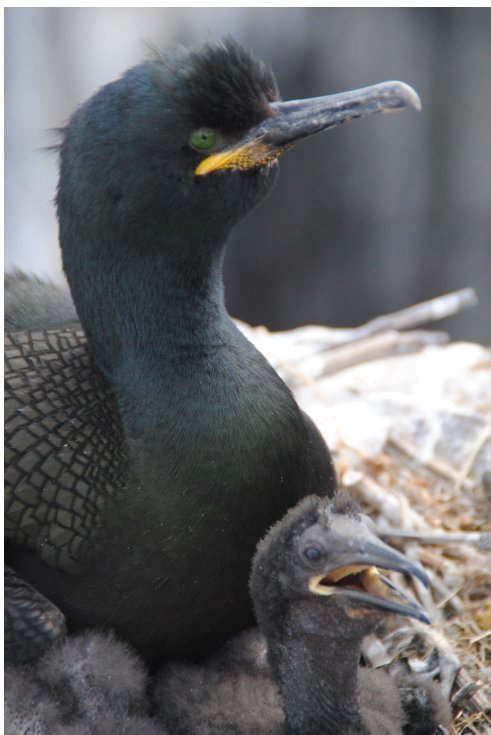
Some species of seabirds have had their most successful breeding seasons for a decade, reports the National Trust for Scotland.

Dr Richard Luxmoore, the conservation charity's Senior Nature Conservation Adviser said:

"Many seabirds have experienced a

good breeding season at colonies in the west of Scotland. After several years of bad news it is encouraging to be able to report that several species have had their best season in 10 years."

The National Trust for Scotland's studies on their property at Mingulay, showed that there were 1642 pairs of kittiwakes trying to nest, up 46 per cent since last year. More importantly, their breeding success, at 88 chicks produced per 100 pairs, was much better than 2013. Other species, such as razorbills, common guillemots and European shags also recorded substantial improvements in both numbers and breeding success.



Studies carried out by the Highland Ringing Group on Canna, in the Small Isles, showed that kittiwakes were up 14% since last year and also had excellent breeding success, similar to its near neighbour Mingulay across the Minch. Guillemots and razorbills also experienced better breeding success and higher numbers than in recent years. More excitingly, researchers located five occupied nest burrows of Manx shearwaters at three locations around the island. Shearwaters had been reduced to local extinction on Canna but a successful rat eradication project, completed in 2006, has allowed them to recolonise several of their former nest sites.

On St Kilda, a World Heritage Site 60km west of the Outer Hebrides managed by the Trust, annual monitoring has showed that puffins have had much greater breeding success than in recent years. A ground breaking programme to study the elusive and little known Leach's storm-petrel has been able to take detailed measurements of three chicks that have been reared in artificial nest burrows this year.

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On the east coast, the Trust's St Abb's National Nature Reserve has seen good breeding success of black-legged kittiwakes and European shags, the latter producing 195 chicks per 100 pairs (the highest productivity on record and double that of 2013). This follows many years of declining numbers on this and other North Sea colonies.

Many species of seabirds have been declining rapidly on west coast properties recently. On St

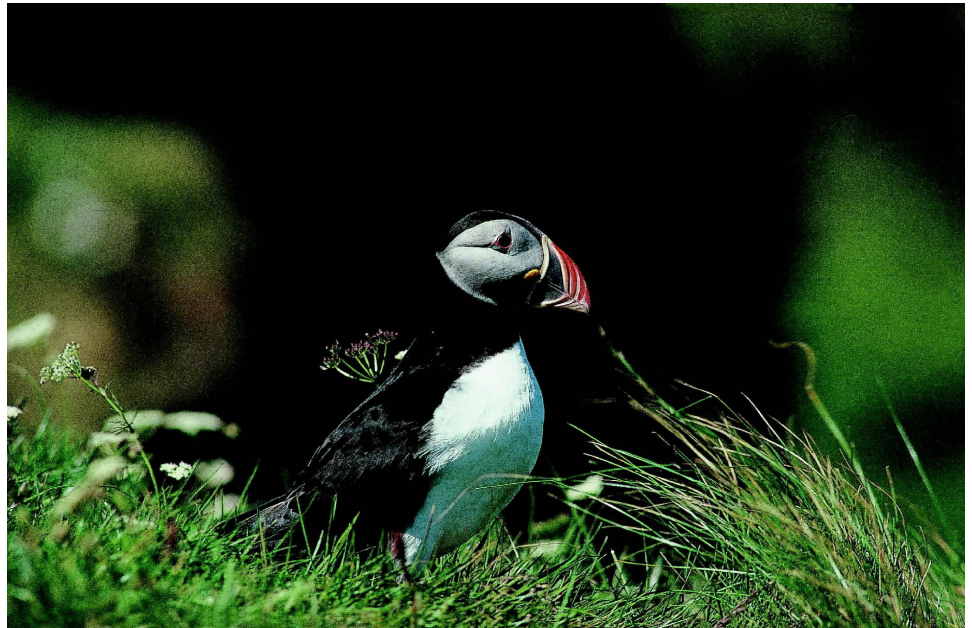
Kilda, black-legged kittiwakes have declined by 89 per cent at one study site since 2002 and were experiencing breeding success as low as 6 chicks per 100 pairs. On Mingulay they had declined by 60 per cent between 2003 and 2013, although this year's result has gone a long way to regaining some of this ground. Puffins, too, have been suffering a long term decline in breeding success. On St Kilda, the breeding success has gone down from about 80 chicks per 100 pairs to around 40 since 1975. The reasons for these declines are not always known but studies on the Isle of May have implicated rising sea temperatures in the breeding failure of kittiwakes through their impact on sandeels, the main prey species for several seabirds.

Dr Luxmoore continued: "After many years of depressing news it is wonderful to see so many species of seabirds having a good year in 2014. While this may only prove to be a blip in a long-term decline, it provides a great boost to colony sizes whose effects should be evident for several years to come."

Bob Swann, of the Highland Ringing Group, who have been running seabird studies on Canna for over 40 years, said: "It was great to see the colonies so full and so noisy this summer. Although we are unlikely to see a return to the peak numbers of the 1980s and 1990s, I'm

hopeful that the declines may have stopped and for some species even reversed."

Scotland is internationally important for its seabirds, having some 45 per cent of the breeding population in the whole of the European Union. The National Trust for Scotland hosts almost a fifth of these at its properties of St Kilda, Mingulay, Fair Isle, Canna, St Abbs, Iona, Staffa and Unst.





©Ben Hall(rspb-images.com)

Ecologists believe the reappearance of water voles at RSPB Insh Marshes is the result of work to eradicate American mink from large swathes of land in northern Scotland.

The small chubby rodents, which inspired the character of Ratty in the children's novel 'Wind in the Willows', have been discovered at the reserve in Strathspey for the first time in more than two decades.

Despite being the fastest declining mammal in the UK, RSPB officers say it looks like there is a strong colony of the creatures in the area.

Water vole numbers have dropped by 90% in the UK over the last 40 years, with predation by American mink, a non-native species, and habitat loss mainly responsible for the decline. They were wiped out along the main stem of the River Spey, with only a few holding on in isolated pockets in the hills and headwaters.

However, since 2011 the Scottish Mink Initiative has worked alongside organisations and landowners like the RSPB to eradicate mink from large parts of northern Scotland, including the Cairngorms National Park and Insh Marshes. This has allowed water voles to re-establish themselves in those areas.

In the first couple of years since efforts began around 30 mink were caught at Insh Marshes, and the trapping proved so effective that there have been only occasional sightings since then. No mink have been trapped on the reserve for several years.

Hebe Carus, the RSPB's Futurescapes Officer for the Cairngorms, said: "The return of the water vole to Insh Marshes is great news and all the staff and volunteers on the reserve are delighted. Concerted efforts across the Cairngorms National Park to remove the mink have allowed the water voles to re-establish themselves, and it just shows that landscape-scale conservation activity, involving willing landowners and other partners, can be really effective in achieving gains for wildlife."

- Mink eradication success

This new population of water voles was discovered in July, during a survey at the site by RSPB Officer, James Silvey, who said: "Water voles are extremely important mammals because they're a really good sign of a healthy wetland environment and, rather unfortunately for them, they're also an important link in the food chain. It's great to see them returning to Strathspey and we are hopeful this population will go from strength to strength. However, we have to remain vigilant to ensure that mink remain absent from the area. RSPB Scotland will continue to support the Scottish Mink Initiative in its efforts to remove mink from as much of the site as possible. People in the area can help protect water voles too, by looking out for them and reporting any sightings to us so we can monitor their populations."



Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) - Targets on target for 2020

New statistics show that for the sites designated by Scottish Government, including all the existing sites (SACs, SPAs, SSSIs etc), plus the new Nature Conservation MPAs that our total across territorial and offshore waters is 20.03%. (The figure would be larger if it was calculated for territorial waters alone).

So, well on the way to meeting our 2020 targets in advance!



Woodland Trust—

A sweet chestnut planted in Cumbernauld by Mary Queen of Scots and Scotland's oldest tree are among the specimens facing a public vote to be named Scottish Tree of the Year.

Scottish Tree of the Year is an annual search for the nation's best loved tree. It is organised by the Woodland Trust Scotland and supported by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Six trees nominated by groups from around Scotland have been shortlisted in this year's competition. Members of the public can vote for their favourite at

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/scottishtree until 26 October.

The winner will be revealed at a prize giving reception at the Scottish Parliament. It will go on to join trees from ten other countries to compete in European Tree of the Year 2015.

Carol Evans, director of the Woodland Trust Scotland said: "Tree of the Year is all about finding trees that are at the heart of local communities and that can bring people together. Scotland's grand old trees are as important as listed buildings or monuments but currently lack the same level of protection. By sharing stories and encouraging people to value them we can raise awareness of the need to protect these trees, so that their stories can be passed on to future generations."

Comedian and broadcaster Fred MacAulay is supporting the competition. He said: "It's fantastic that players of People's Postcode Lottery are lending their support to this unique celebration of Scotland's best loved trees. All of the shortlisted entries have amazing stories to tell, and I'm sure it will be a close run vote."



Lady's Tree, Loch of the Lowes, Perthshire Nominated by the Scottish Wildlife Trust .

This Scots pine on a nature reserve in Perthshire is part of a conservation success story. For the past 24 years an osprey affectionately known by many as 'Lady' has been returning to a nest in its branches. Over this time she has laid 71 eggs and fledged 50 chicks, and a webcam on the tree attracts over 1 million viewers a year in over 160 different countries. Lady's Tree is an integral part of the successful osprey breeding at Loch of the Lowes.

The Kissing Beech, Kilvarock Estate, Inverness-shire Nominated by the Ancient Tree Inventory. This very rare, layering beech, known as the "Kissing Beech", is five metres in girth and of considerable age. It recalls an incident where a member of an early Lord's family and a housemaid were seen embracing illicitly under its cloaking branches. Lovers have carved their initials in the trunk ever since, the smooth pale bark encompassing their declarations of love. It should be celebrated as a true 'trysting' tree where love has been celebrated under its boughs over the centuries.



Voting opens in Scottish Tree of the Year competition

The Fortingall Yew, Fortingall, Perthshire Nominated by Glen Lyon History Society. At between 2,000 to 3,000 years old the yew is thought to be the oldest living tree in Britain, and one of the oldest in Europe. It is thought to have been revered as a sacred tree as far back as the Bronze Age and was the focus of Beltane fires right into the 19th Century. The tree has been damaged by fortune hunters, fires and the ravages of time but it is still in good health. It is a major tourist attraction in Highland Perthshire.



Queen Mary's Tree, Cumbernauld, North Lanarkshire Nominated by Cumbernauld Community Council. Queen Mary's Tree is named after Mary Queen of Scots, who is reputed to have planted the tree in 1561 while visiting Cumbernauld Castle, the family home of one of her ladies-in-waiting. Over the centuries as the tree has stood and grown much has changed in its surroundings. Cumbernauld Castle was replaced by Cumbernauld House in 1731, designed by William Adam. The creation of the new town of Cumbernauld in 1956 meant that even more local visitors were able to enjoy the park and the tree.

The Gowk Tree, Moffat, Dumfries & Galloway Nominated by Moffat Wildlife Club The Reverend John Walker, known as the 'Mad Minister of Moffat', was local minister from 1762-1783. His reputation for eccentricity stemmed from the fact that he carried seedlings in a pouch and planted them wherever he went. The Rev. John planted an umbrella fir near an oak tree which was a favourite 'calling post' for cuckoos. As he did he remarked to the oak, that it would still be standing after the fir was long gone.



His words rang true as 200 years later the tree is still standing.



The Clachan Oak, Balfon, Stirling, Nominated by Balfon Community Council. Known locally as the Hanging Tree, the oak stands on the common green of the hamlet which grew to become the village of Balfon. There is debate as to whether William Wallace or Rob Roy sheltered under the tree, but as both had local connections – some 400 years apart - it could have accommodated both. The oak has undergone extensive work to improve its condition and ensure that it remains the living emblem of Balfon for many years to come.

Trees For Life

Hopes of protecting and restoring a magnificent Highland glen and its rare wildlife – including golden eagles, red squirrels and Scottish wildcats – have received a major boost after conservation charity Trees for Life was named as finalist for a major European funding project, with the winner to be chosen after an online public vote.

The charity's Glen Affric Landscape Project is in the running to secure almost £20,000 in the European Outdoor Conservation Association's 'Outdoor' funding scheme, with online voting taking place over two weeks until Monday 6 October. Trees for Life can be supported via www.treesforlife.org.uk/voteTFL.

The Trees for Life project will also create opportunities for outdoor activity and hill walking groups, local people and those from disadvantaged backgrounds to take part in practical action to help reverse the loss of native woodlands and rare wildlife in the Highlands.

“We are asking people to vote for us and help make the most of this opportunity to protect one of Scotland's finest wilderness forests. Glen Affric has been described as the most beautiful glen in Scotland, and this is a golden opportunity to help conserve its wildlife and wild places, and to reverse centuries of forest loss,” Alan Watson Featherstone, Trees for Life's Executive Director.



The charity was kindly nominated for the European Outdoor Conservation Association funding award by Northshots Photography (www.northshots.com).

Funding hope for conservation of iconic Scottish glen and rare wildlife

The Caledonian Forest at Glen Affric supports over 1,000 animal species. The pinewoods in the glen's eastern reaches represent the largest surviving core area of native pinewood which continues to benefit from conservation management. But there is still much work to do to encourage this native woodland to expand westwards and this project will make a big contribution to achieving this. Working in partnership with Forestry Commission Scotland, which manages the Glen Affric National Nature Reserve, Trees for Life aims to enhance and



extend the iconic glen's native Caledonian pinewood and conserve its rare forest-dependent wildlife through a range of activities, including the planting of 20,000 trees as well as endangered plants. Non-native trees and plants will be removed and habitats restored.

Key to this will be hands-on forest restoration training and volunteering opportunities for hundreds of people through forest skills courses, volunteer restoration days and conservation weeks. Guided walks and leaflets will allow hundreds of outdoor enthusiasts to learn more about the Caledonian Forest and how to help conserve Scotland's threatened habitats and species. The project also aims to boost the local and Highland economy through a growth in visitors for nature-based tourism, hill walking and outdoor and adventure pursuits. It will lay the foundations for a longer-term initiative to create a forest habitat corridor from Loch Affric to Scotland's west coast – leaving a lasting legacy of an expanded forest landscape and increased wildlife, transforming the experiences of outdoor users in the Highlands for future generations.

The Caledonian Forest supports a unique range of species. Once covering much of the Scottish Highlands, centuries of deforestation have reduced the forest to a fraction of its former range. Many forest remnants consist of old and dying trees, with grazing pressure by red deer preventing the growth of young trees. The remaining forests, such as in Glen Affric, are amongst our most fragile and endangered habitats.

Trees for Life is a leading conservation volunteering charity that 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, and this year is celebrating its 25th anniversary.

For more details about how to vote, please see www.treesforlife.org.uk/voteTFL or call 0845 458 3505.



TREES FOR LIFE
Restoring the Caledonian Forest



Diary Dates

2nd-3rd October 2014: [Biodiversity Science Conference](#). Protecting Scotland's Biodiversity: Monitoring in action. Venue—Royal Botanic Gardens Edinburgh.

20th-22nd October 2014: Annual IUCN conference. 'Investing in Peatlands' - Learning from Success. Venue: Eden Court Theatre in Inverness.
<http://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/news-and-events/events/peatland-action-learning-success-annual-iucn-conference-october-2014?destination=node%2F278>

11th-12th November 2014: Annual CIEEM Conference. Progress in Effective Habitat Restoration, Translocation and Creation. Edinburgh venue tbc. <http://www.cieem.net/events/675/progress-in-effective-habitat-restoration-translocation-and-creation>

20th November 2014—RSPB Nature of Scotland Awards . Sheraton Grand Edinburgh. Hosted by naturalist, author and TV presenter Chris Packham, the awards celebrate Scottish conservation's outstanding success stories. <http://www.rspb.org.uk/whatwedo/scotland/natureofscotland/gala/index.aspx>

