

Issue 46

Summer Issue 2013



SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY FORUM

THE FORUM

Scotland's Biodiversity: Scottish Biodiversity Strategy launched

2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity



**A Strategy for the conservation and
enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland**



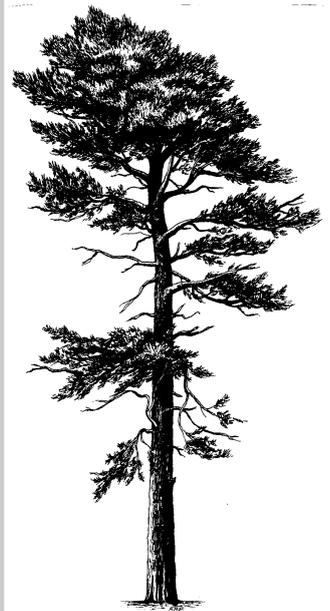
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Contact details

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.

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SCOTTISH
BIODIVERSITY
FORUM

2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity : A Strategy for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland

An ambitious strategy to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity was launched on 19th June by Environment Minister Paul Wheelhouse at the Jupiter Urban Wildlife Centre, Grange-mouth run and managed by Scottish Wildlife Trust and the Trust for Conservation Volunteers.

The '[2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity](#)' aims to

- Protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems.
- Connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing and to involve them more in decisions about their environment.
- Maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing a sustainable economic growth.



The Strategy was revised in light of [international agreements](#) signed in Nagoya, Japan in 2010 and the publication of the [European Union's Biodiversity Strategy](#) in May 2011. The *2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity* is a supplement to [Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands \(2004\)](#). Both documents constitute the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

The 2020 Challenge highlights the need to protect biodiversity for both its own sake but also because of the benefits the environment gives us such as:

- Contributing over £21.5 billion to the Scottish economy.
- Insect pollination services in Scotland valued at £43m per year.

The Strategy is clear that landscape scale (ecosystem approach) conservation is required, with many more organisations, government departments and businesses being involved. A focusing of effort on the drivers of biodiversity loss such as climate change, invasive non-native species, habitat fragmentation and diffuse pollution will enable Scotland to meet the 2020 challenge.



Butterfly Conservation Scotland—FOLLOW THE SPREAD OF A SCOTTISH SUCCESS



Butterfly Conservation needs the public to help track the expansion of one of Scotland's most rapidly spreading butterflies. The speckled wood is moving towards the centre of Scotland from the north, west, south west and south east.

The speckled wood is expanding its range south from warm 'refuges' around the Moray Firth and the west coast that were colonised centuries ago and have remained occupied, while the rest of Scotland became colder and unsuitable. The butterfly is also moving north from England and arriving in the Borders; some have even appeared in the Stranraer area and may have flown over from Northern Ireland.

Paul Kirkland, Director of Butterfly Conservation Scotland, said: "It is thought that the west coast and Moray speckled woods are a different subspecies to those from England - they have certainly been separated for a very long time - so it will be interesting to see what happens when they meet up in the Central Belt, perhaps in the next ten years or so."

The distinctive butterfly of sunny, open woodland can be seen in sunny glades in woodland, as its name suggests.

As part of the Year of Natural Scotland, Butterfly Conservation Scotland is asking the public to help it track the movement of this species. Much research has been done on the butterfly's behaviour and its reaction to climate warming. The records sent in by the public greatly help scientists carrying out their research.

Records can be submitted online at www.butterfly-conservation.org/scottishspeckledwood.



Featured Fungus — Yellow Brain (*Tremella mesenterica*)



Tremella mesenterica (yellow brain fungus or sometimes witches' butter)

This is a beautiful, easily spotted species and probably one of the few that most of us will look at and feel confident in identifying.

Members of the genus *Tremella* are called heterobasidiomycetes; their basidia (specialised cells from which spores drop) are septate and produce long and often sinuous sterigmata (spore-bearing extensions to the basidia).

T. mesenterica can be bright yellow or orange and is usually found in broadleaved woodland habitats and very often on gorse and hazel. It has been found in every month of the year. It could be confused with another species *T. aurantia*.

The genus *Tremella* lives parasitically either on other wood-rotting fungi, or on lichenised fungi. *T. mesenterica* parasitises the encrusting fungi of the genus *Peniophora*.

It is not always possible to see the host fungus as the interface between the two is often hidden between mycelia in the woody substrate. Thus when making a record of the species it is not technically correct to record the species it is growing on as 'gorse', 'hazel' or 'oak' for example, as it is actually growing on another fungus. However it is still useful to know which woody species it is found on.

If you see *Tremella mesenterica* or *Tremella aurantia* please submit your records to either your local recording group or the [Scottish Fungi online recording form](#).



Green Stimulus Peatland Restoration Project

Scottish Natural Heritage seeks new applications for an ambitious £1.7m peatland restoration project, set to run over the next two years.

1. Project background

The Green Stimulus Peatland Restoration Project is a Scottish Government initiative to reduce carbon released into the atmosphere. Restoring peat-forming habitats which have been drained or damaged helps to ensure that they remain as long-term sinks rather than sources of greenhouse gases. In addition, healthy and fully functional peatlands provide a fascinating habitat with unique and special wildlife.

The project will contribute to the objectives of Scotland's National Peatland Plan which is currently being developed by SNH, Scottish Government, its agencies and a wide group of stakeholders.

2. Project aims

The primary aim of the project is to facilitate 'on the ground' peatland restoration work.

In addition to restoration work, we also welcome applications for funding to:

- deliver demonstration events
- improve innovation (testing new techniques)
- raise awareness of peatland restoration.



Ditch blocking at Fannyside Muir.

3. How to apply

Given the extent of Scotland's peatlands (~2m ha) and the relatively poor condition of much of the resource, it is important that this funding is targeted at areas where it can make a significant difference in the timescales and budgets involved.

If you have any potential projects you would like to discuss with the project team, please get in touch via the project mailbox:

GSPRP@snh.gov.uk

For project grants running up until March 2015, we invite applications for funding as follows:

- Final closing date **4 October 2013**

Application forms, eligibility criteria and information about future application submission deadlines are available on the project webpage:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/climate-change/what-snh-is-doing/green-stimulus-peatland-restoration/>

Scotland's Nature Festival 2013

Scotland's Nature Festival took place this year between 18th to 26th May with almost 180 events making this the biggest year so far in the Festival's history. The Festival has been held every year since 2001 although it was previously called Scottish Biodiversity Week. The name was changed in order to better convey a sense of positivity, energy, excitement and fun.

In a change from normal practice, the events programme was promoted through [The List](#) rather than through the SNH website. The List carries programme details for organisers and promoters for free and covers the UK. The website currently receives around 1.1million unique users a month and already has search categories that include "walks", "nature", "wildlife", "agricultural shows" and "days out" making it a perfect carrier for the Festival's event programme.

For example Festival participants had the chance to wander: in the picturesque gardens and take part in craft activities for kids at the Redhall Walled Gardens in Edinburgh; go on a big bug hunt or pond dipping at Forvie National Nature Reserve; experience a night of camping, topped with breakfast, in the From Dusk to Dawn event run by the Glasgow Countryside Rangers; take a stunning cliff-top walk on the wild side with a Countryside Ranger on the Dunnet Head to Brough guided walk; take part in a Welly Walk Weekend at Bowhill House & Country Estate in Selkirk; or enjoy a 'Peregrine Breakfast' at the Falls of Clyde, starting with a ranger-led dawn chorus and topped off with a breakfast at the peregrine watch site.

Events were held by a range of organisations, including ranger services, countryside parks, non-governmental organisations, faith organisations, nature reserves, community groups, gardens and schools. .

We look forward to being even bigger and better next year!



Hooked on Fishing Event at the Falkirk Wheel



West coast whales, dolphins and sharks to be surveyed



Whales, dolphins and porpoises are to be photographed and their calls recorded during a new survey of marine life off Scotland's west coast. Scientists and volunteers will gather the data between May and September using the Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust's (HWDT) yacht, Silurian. The survey work will be carried out over seven to ten days.

HWDT said 24 species of cetaceans - whales, dolphins and porpoises - can be found off Scotland's west coast, including species designated as national and international conservation priorities. The survey will involve photographing dorsal fins for use in identifying individual animals and to improve understanding of species' movements and interactions.

During the survey work, an underwater microphone called a hydrophone will be used to record the high frequency sounds of harbour porpoises and white-beaked dolphins for analysis. Photo identification work has already catalogued 125 minke whales, some of which HWDT believe stay in Hebridean seas all year round.

The waters also support the UK's only resident population of killer whales and two feeding and breeding hotspots for basking sharks, the world's second biggest fish. The HWDT project will also seek to record behaviour and numbers of basking sharks.

Olivia Harries, HWDT Biodiversity Officer, said: "Given environmental and climate change, action to monitor and conserve Scotland's spectacular whales, dolphins and porpoises is more important than ever.

"With 2013 being the Year of Natural Scotland, we're keen for people to take part in our surveys."

Volunteers will have to pay a fee to join the survey trips.

Marine Survey

Earlier this year HWDT warned that [the UK's only known resident population of killer whales was at risk of becoming extinct](#). The group, of whales which ranges from the north and west coast of Scotland to Ireland's west coast, is thought to contain just nine older animals. The Trust said the group was at risk as a result of the "skewed" demographics and its studies suggested the animals had become isolated from other groups in the north east Atlantic.

In February, [a sighting of sperm whales off Scotland's north-west coast in winter](#) was described as "extraordinary" by research charity Sea Watch Foundation. Creel fishermen working between Loch Torridon and South Rona spotted the deep-diving whales. Sea Watch Foundation said groups of sperm whales had been seen off Scotland in the summer, but it was unusual for them to be spotted at this time of year. It said the change could be a sign of warming sea temperatures.

This year has also seen a [basking shark tagging and tracking project](#) extended. In 2012, eight sharks were satellite tagged off Scotland's west coast and their travels could be followed online. One of the sharks was tracked to the west coast of Portugal and another swam 1,864 miles (3,000km) to the Canary Islands off west Africa.

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the University of Exeter plan to tag 29 sharks this summer. The project aims to increase understanding of the behaviour of the fish which gather in large numbers around the islands of Coll, Tiree and Canna every summer.

The work is also part of a wider programme of marine research led by SNH and Scottish government agency Marine Scotland.



Trees For Life

Conservation charity Trees for Life ran a new 'Iconic Birds of the Highlands' Conservation Week from 25 May to 1 June 2013 – which offered people the chance to see and learn about the area's magnificent and rare bird species, and to take part in hands-on habitat restoration work.

Highlights included a day trip to the Isle of Skye to see white-tailed sea eagles, the UK's largest bird of prey, and to discover more about the programme that has successfully reintroduced these stunning birds to Scotland's west and east coasts.

World-famous ornithologist and raptor expert Roy Dennis of BBC Springwatch fame led a guided walk at the biodiversity hotspot of Dundreggan near Loch Ness, and discussed the pioneering osprey and sea eagle projects.



A trip to the world-famous viewing site at Loch Garten allowed fabulous close-up views of nesting ospreys, and a day's birding with a local expert to spot species such as [Scottish crossbills](#) and [crested tits](#). There was an early morning trip to the RSPB's Corrimony Nature Reserve near Glen Affric to see a spectacular black grouse lek, where a warden from RSPB Corrimony gave insights into capercaillie and [black grouse](#) management.

Alan Watson Featherstone, Trees for Life's Executive Director, said: "The week offered people the chance to see and learn more about the world-class birdlife that inhabits the Highlands, while taking direct conservation action to help restore the habitats of these remarkable species. It was an inspiring and positive way to spend a week during the Year of Natural Scotland."



TREES FOR LIFE
Restoring the Caledonian Forest

Iconic and rare Highland birds in spotlight for new Conservation Week



In September 2013, Trees for Life will also run two Conservation Weeks at the RSPB reserve at Corrimony, where the charity is working with the RSPB to restore Caledonian Forest and wetland to an area of former conifer plantation. This activity is benefiting a wide range of native birds and other wildlife, and provides an opportunity to observe rare birds in their natural setting.

Trees for Life, one of Scotland's leading conservation volunteering charities. Its award-winning Conservation Weeks allow people from varied backgrounds, abilities and experience to help restore the Caledonian Forest to a spectacular wilderness region of 1,000 square miles in the Highlands to the west of Loch Ness and Inverness.

Volunteers must be aged over 18 years old and have reasonable fitness. Conservation weeks in the charity's tree nursery offer a gentler option.

For more details,

Visit:

www.treesforlife.org.uk

or contact Becky on
01309 691444 or

becky@treesforlife.org.uk



Hyper hearing moth—no wax in these ears

The Wax moth is capable of hearing the highest recorded frequency of any animal in the natural world, researchers have discovered. A team at Strathclyde University in Glasgow found the moth can sense sound frequencies of up to 300kHz.

Humans can only manage up to 20kHz, while dolphins, which use ultrasound, have limitations around 160kHz. The university hopes that the discovery will lead to new technological innovations, such as miniature microphones. The findings, which have been published in the Royal Society journal, *Biology Letters*, were recorded at the university's centre for ultrasonic engineering.

Dr James Windmill, who led the research, said: "We are extremely surprised to find that the moth is capable of hearing sound frequencies at this level and we hope to use the findings to better understand air-coupled ultrasound. The use of ultrasound in air is extremely difficult as such high frequency signals are quickly weakened in air. Other animals such as bats are known to use ultrasound to communicate and now it is clear that moths are capable of even more advanced use of sound."

Dr Windmill also said it was not clear how the moths had developed this ability. He added: "It is possible that they have had to improve the communication between each other to avoid capture from their natural predator - the bat - which uses similar sounds."

Dr Windmill and his colleagues now want to develop their understanding of ultrasound and how to transmit and receive ultrasonic pulses travelling in air. His team is working to apply the study of the Wax moths and other insect ears to the design of micro-acoustic systems. It is hoped that by studying the unprecedented capabilities of the moth's ear, the team can produce new technological innovations, such as miniature microphones.



Pine marten numbers on the increase



One of Scotland's rarest carnivores is showing signs of recovery after years of declining populations, a new report has suggested. A joint survey by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT) has found that the number of pine marten appears to be growing.

The mammal is said to be "established" in Caithness, Moray, Perth and Kinross, Aberdeenshire, Angus and Fife and has now been spotted in southern Argyll and Stirlingshire. The pine marten was once found throughout Britain, but the species suffered heavily during the 19th century. By the turn of the 20th century, the animal was limited to North West Scotland, where the species survived in areas of remote forest and rocky moorland.

SNH estimates there are now about 2,600 to 3,500 adult martens in Scotland. Much of the growth has been attributed to pine martens being given full legal protection in 1988 and the expansion of plantation forest cover during the last century.

The latest survey of the animals was carried out during the summer of 2012. Surveyors collected possible pine marten droppings along survey areas on woodland tracks and paths. The droppings were given DNA tests to confirm their origin. Records of marten presence were also collected from other sources, including Local Biological Record Centres and other wildlife organisations.

Lizzie Croose, VWT's Survey Coordinator, said: "At a time when some native mammals are declining it is fantastic to see the pine marten population is recovering and expanding its range in Scotland. Pine martens are still absent from much of Britain so the recovery in Scotland is significant."

Rob Raynor, Mammals Advisor at SNH, said: "This is good news for one of Scotland's most iconic animals and it is reassuring that this formerly rare and persecuted mammal is now making a comeback in some of the more populated parts of the country."

Snapped—Wildcat camera got the Bird

A camera set up to capture images of Scottish wildcats in Sutherland has photographed a bird species rarely seen in Scotland. It was a White's thrush which breeds mainly in Siberia and Asia.

It was photographed by a camera trap set by the Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU), part of Oxford University's Zoology Department. The unit said it believed that it was the first recording of the species taken by a camera trap in Scotland.

The photographic equipment has been set up in the Woodland Trust Scotland's Ledmore and Migdale Woods, near Bonar Bridge, to monitor for wildcats. Camera traps are triggered by changes in heat and motion and take photographs of animals passing in front of them.

Project Manager Kerry Kilshaw, of Oxford University, said she was delighted an image of a rare visitor was captured.

She added: "Fortunately my field assistant Ruiradh Campbell has a keen eye and spotted it on one of the camera trap photos."

WildCRU director Prof David Macdonald said: "Camera traps are probably the greatest breakthrough for field research since the invention of binoculars.

"They give us the capacity to have eyes in the backs of our heads, and lots of them, and it's a wonderful bonus to secure this evidence of the rare White's thrush while we are making breakthroughs on monitoring the endangered Scottish wildcat.

Ledmore and Migdale Woods site manager Eleanor Garty said the area supported a wide range of wildlife.

She added: "They are a great place to see scarce summer visitors such as wood warbler, redstart and tree pipit, so it is pleasing to know that we are hosting a rare migrant like White's thrush too.



Pick your favourite



Royal
Botanic Garden
Edinburgh

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) has launched a survey to find the nation's favourite plants, trees and shrubs. So what might the winner be? The Scots pine? The Scottish primrose? The Scottish bluebell? The survey provides some suggestions for inspiration but also the chance for respondents to vote for any plant, tree and shrub of their choice.



Scotland's favourite plants, trees and shrubs will be revealed later in the year.

You can cast your vote by clicking on the link below:

www.rbge.org.uk/big5

The RBGE survey supports the recently launched Scotland's Big 5 wildlife survey by Scottish Natural Heritage (www.snh.gov.uk/big5). SNH has identified the Big 5 species as: The Golden eagle, Red deer, Red squirrel, Otter and Harbour Seal. Now, you can have your say by voting for your favourite.



As the Big 5 are animals and birds, the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh has decided to champion biodiversity and launch the search for Scotland's favourite flora.

Both surveys are part of VisitScotland's Year of Natural Scotland celebrations.

RSPB aims to tackle housing crisis with plans to build one million homes in the UK.

The RSPB has launched a campaign to help tackle the housing crisis facing the UK's threatened wildlife. *Giving Nature a Home* will urge the nation to provide a place for wildlife in their own gardens and outside spaces. The charity hopes to inspire people across the UK to create a million new homes for nature. The campaign comes a month after 25 wildlife organisations, including the RSPB, released the groundbreaking *State of Nature* report revealing 60 per cent of the wildlife species studied have declined over recent decades.

Many garden favourites were among the creatures shown to be in serious trouble including starlings, hedgehogs, bumblebees, toads and ladybirds. All are in danger of further declines unless more is done to provide better habitats. Getting individuals to act for nature in their own gardens is the first part of a package of actions that the RSPB will launch in response to the *State of Nature* report. Over the course of the next few months, the charity will be outlining what businesses, communities and politicians can do, as well as detailing the RSPB's own plans for saving nature.



© Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

Stuart Housden, Director of RSPB Scotland, says: “Nature across Scotland is in trouble and some of our more familiar garden species are amongst those suffering serious declines.



Gardens and local green spaces provide a valuable lifeline for species like starlings, toads, hedgehogs and bumblebees, which are struggling to find homes in the wider countryside. Although the overall problem is huge, the solution can start on a small scale, right on our doorsteps. It doesn't matter what sort of garden you have, what size it is, or even if you have no garden at all, we need everyone to help by turning their outside space into a wildlife haven.

“The more people that get involved in our *Giving Nature a Home* campaign the better. Our aim is to provide one million homes for nature across the UK, because if there's no home for nature, then there's no nature – it really is that serious.”

TV homes expert, Linda Barker, is one of the famous faces supporting the campaign. She said: “I’m getting behind the RSPB’s campaign because, to me, having wildlife in your garden is the perfect finishing touch to any home. Planting wild flowers, digging a pond or creating a log pile for bugs is not just a good way of getting creative and making your garden more attractive, but it will also benefit threatened garden wildlife at the same time. Individual actions *will* make a difference and start to help tackle the lack of habitats for some of our wild creatures. In my garden I’ve put up a nest box for birds and planted nectar-rich flowers to attract bees. If everyone can do just one thing and gave nature a home in their outside space it would be amazing - together we can make a big difference.”



© Eleanor Bentall (rspb-images.com)

To help spread the word, the RSPB has joined up with Rightmove, the UK's number one property website, to help promote the campaign to homeowners, renters and those looking to get onto the property ladder.

Matt James from Rightmove said: “Though we’re more used to helping people find a home than helping them build one, when the RSPB told us about the parlous position of some of the UK’s favourite species we felt compelled to throw our support behind the campaign. More than a million people visit Rightmove every single day looking for a new place to call home and we’ll be doing our bit to spread the word about just how easy it can be to make a difference.”



To spread the word and inspire individuals from across the country to build homes for nature in their own gardens and balconies, the RSPB is embarking on its first-ever primetime TV advertising campaign, beginning on 5 July.

The *Giving Nature a Home* website will give everyone access to expert advice about helping nature in any outside space— whether it’s a huge garden, an allotment or a small planting tub on a balcony – at www.rspb.org.uk/homes

By visiting this website people can get their free *Giving Nature a Home* 24 page colour guide, help populate a map by telling the charity when and where they’ve given nature a home, and share pictures, tips and ideas with others. You can also find out more about what the RSPB is doing to give nature a home in the wider countryside.

NTS goes Cuckoo with transmitters

This is the third year of the BTO's groundbreaking project to better understand the migration routes and African wintering grounds cuckoos use, with state-of-the-art light-weight technology now making this possible in a way that eliminates impediment to the birds.

Staff with the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) attached transmitter packs to two cuckoos caught on the National Trust for Scotland's Kintail Estate, and also to single birds caught at the Trust's nearby Balmacara Estate and Forestry Commission Scotland's Kinloch property on Skye. The Trust birds have been christened Livingstone, Karma and the catchy 128303 (official name pending).



The cuckoo, which produces one of the most familiar soundtracks to early summer in Britain, has undergone a steady long term decline in southern England. Further north in Scotland, however, numbers appear to have remained fairly stable and even increased. Five Cuckoos were fitted with transmitters in the Trossachs in 2012, two of which survived return journeys to Africa's Congo basin.

The Lochalsh and Skye birds are now the most northerly in Britain to be tracked to date. BTO staff John Calladine, Chris Hewson and Phil Atkinson, who caught the birds and attached the transmitters, were pleasantly surprised at the numbers of cuckoos attracted down to their decoy bird and recorder calls. Indeed, the two caught at Kintail were done so within only an hour of their start at dawn, which they considered to be amongst their quickest since starting the project in 2011.

John Calladine said: "Cuckoos are one of a number of bird species that used to be common and widespread across Britain but which have declined markedly, especially in the south and east. Being able to follow their individual movements to the Congo basin and back is inherently fascinating. An important part of this work will be in identifying areas and habitats used by the birds throughout the year, even across years. It will help towards identifying reasons as to why the north and west has become a refuge for these and other species and suggest ways to ensure that remains the case."

Rule Anderson, a ranger with the National Trust for Scotland at Kintail added: "People living locally will not dispute that numbers appear particularly healthy this year, with the cuckoo's distinctive call as noticeable as ever!"



First Glencoe sighting for chequered skipper

Ecologist Dan Watson, joined by volunteers Joss Ratcliffe and Callum Gilhooley at the National Trust for Scotland's Glencoe and Dalness property has spotted a species that is new to the area, the chequered skipper butterfly. The species is only known in the UK within a 30 mile radius of Fort William, but had never been recorded at Glencoe until now.

Dan said: "We targeted suitable habitat in Glen Etive, starting at a fenced off area in Dalness. This looked perfect for chequered skippers, having a south-east facing slope covered with scattered trees, purple moor-grass (the larval food plant) and bluebells, which the adults prefer to nectar on. "After a few false alarms caused by similarly-sized Common Heath moths, Joss caught something different in his net which turned out to be our target species. Once we'd got a better search image we started seeing them everywhere, counting at least thirteen individuals, four of which were metres from the road, seen while we were eating lunch.



"We continued a bit further up the glen to a smaller fenced off area and found another seven within a few minutes of crossing the fence. The records made will go to Butterfly Conservation, which is carrying out a survey of this butterfly as there is a suspicion that it is severely under-recorded at present. Our findings would seem to support this theory, but it is great to know that our habitat management is benefiting one of Scotland's rarest butterflies."



The find comes during the Year of Natural Scotland which aims to celebrate Scotland's outstanding natural beauty throughout 2013. From stunning natural and historic landscapes, art inspired by nature, surprising wildlife and delicious food and drink, enjoy the nature that's right on the doorstep.

Glencoe is arguably the most famous Scottish glen of all. It is also one of the most dramatic, with forbidding mountains, thundering waterfalls and sparkling lochs. The drama is also reflected in Glencoe's history, both real and imagined – myths, massacre and movies are all now part of the fabric of this magical, mysterious place.

Walkers and climbers are drawn from all over the world to tackle its many mountaineering routes, including eight Munros, while animal-lovers come to catch a glimpse of Scottish wildlife including red deer, golden eagles and pine martens.

Coronation Wildflower Meadows

For the launch of the project on 5th June 2013, 60 “Coronation Meadows” have been identified. Over the next few months more meadows will be selected. Ten sites have been identified in Scotland so far.

- [Argyll:Haunn, Treshnish Farm, Mull](#)
- [Ayrshire:Feoch Meadows, Barrhill](#)
- [Berwickshire:St Abb's Head, St Abbs](#)
- [Caithness:Burn of Midsands \(Greenland Links\), Thurso](#)
- [Fife:Fleecefaulds Meadow, Cupar](#)
- [Lanarkshire:Kittochside, East Kilbride](#)
- [Perthshire:Balchroich Meadow, Keltneyburn](#)
- [Ross-shire:Drumbuie & Duirnish Crofting Meadows, Kyle of Lochalsh](#)
- [Stirlingshire:Bonnyfield, Bonnybridge](#)
- [West Lothian:Bo'mains Meadow, Bo'ness](#)

For the Coronation Meadows project, a meadow is any grassland that is maintained by traditional farming practices and allowed to develop over many years, becoming richer and richer with wild flowers over with time.

The connection to traditional farming is vital, as without them such meadows quickly lose their species and character. Typically, this link means that an annual cycle will be followed. In late July or August, a hay-cut will be taken, following which livestock will be allowed to graze the grass short. In early spring, the livestock are removed and the plants allowed to grow and flower, setting seed in summer before a hay-cut is taken again. For a wealth of other



flower-rich grasslands, especially in western parts of England, Wales and Scotland, no hay-cut is taken. Instead, livestock graze the grassland to keep the grass down, either lightly year round or heavily during late summer and autumn.

In such situations, wild flowers thrive. The annual cycle of cutting and grazing keep coarse grasses, bracken and shrubs like bramble, hawthorn and gorse under control, allowing smaller, more delicate flowers and grasses the room they need to grow, set seed and spread.

[Balchroich Meadow, Keltneyburn](#)

60 Coronation Meadows to mark the launch

In 2012, Plantlife published "[*Our Vanishing Flora*](#)", a report highlighting the loss of wild flowers from individual counties across Great Britain since the Coronation. In his foreword for the report, Plantlife's Patron, HRH The Prince of Wales called for the creation of new wild flower meadows, at least one in every county, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Coronation. The Coronation Meadows Project, led by Plantlife and in partnership with the Wildlife Trusts and the Rare Breeds Survival Trust, is working to achieve this goal.

This exciting project has two distinct aims. The first is to identify one flagship wild flower meadow – a Coronation Meadow - in each county. These meadows will be celebrated as the surviving "jewels in the crown", places where people can enjoy a riot of colour and an abundance of wildlife in settings that have remained largely unchanged since the Coronation.

The second aim is to use these Coronation Meadows as source or 'donor' meadows to provide seed for the creation of new meadows at 'recipient' sites in the same county. In this way, new Coronation Meadows will be created, increasing the area of this valuable habitat, providing new homes for bees, butterflies and other pollinators and helping to secure our wild flower heritage for the next 60 years and beyond.

Over the next three years, each Coronation Meadow will be used to literally 'seed' new meadows within each county. This will usually be done by collecting "green hay" from the donor meadow which is then spread onto the receptor site. Green hay is ordinary hay that's cut just before it's normally ready. By harvesting in this way, more seed is retained within the hay bales and more is transferred to the new meadow, increasing the chances of success.

Green hay has many advantages over commercial seed. By using seed from the donor site, the local character of each meadow is retained – the mix and proportion of different flowers that make each meadow unique. So a Wiltshire meadow established with green hay will remain full of Wiltshire character, and a Yorkshire meadow will retain Yorkshire character. As well as being cheaper, the range of species is also greater and the seed is fresher. There is also evidence to suggest that green hay is a good way to encourage colonisation of new meadows by orchids and other rare species.



During 2013, we aim to get restoration underway using green hay from Coronation Meadows in five counties. Over the next few years, more and more new Coronation Meadows will be established as donor sites are found and work gets underway.





Children enjoying The Great Trossachs Forest- credit Forestry Commission Picture Library

THE GREAT TROSSACHS FOREST

Woodland Trust Scotland HLF Grant Award: £848,000

Situated in the heart of Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park, The Great Trossachs Forest is set to become a showcase for wildlife, tourism, outdoor leisure, learning and research. Covering an area of 16,650 hectares, close in size to the City of Glasgow, it is one of the most significant woodland regeneration projects to take place in a generation. Large scale restoration of native woodland will extend the woodland corridor from Loch Lomond to Kilmahog, allowing native woodland plants and animals to thrive. Gateway centres will be developed at RSPB Inversnaid nature reserve and Woodland Trust Scotland's Glen Finglas Estate to provide information points for visitors. Better path networks will improve access to the forest, and learning and play elements will be introduced to attract young families and primary school groups. Over 70 volunteers will take part in the project including wildlife surveying, an adopt-a-path scheme and internships. The Great Trossachs Forest is a partnership project between Forestry Commission Scotland, RSPB Scotland, and the Woodland Trust Scotland.

Lottery boost helps Scots get closer to nature

One of the most significant woodland regeneration projects to take place in a generation, The Great Trossachs Forest, was awarded a grant of £848,000 by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). It is one of five major natural heritage projects to benefit from HLF funding announced today, bringing HLF's total support for Scotland's natural environment to over £50million. The other projects to receive funding include the reconstruction of Botanic Cottage in the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, heritage skills training on the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals, the preservation of Castle Lachlan and interpretation of its wild landscape, and a new gallery at Dynamic Earth celebrating Scotland's central role in the development of modern geology.

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

“This year, the Year of Natural Scotland, brings into focus the natural beauty and biodiversity that surrounds us. It is one of our greatest national assets, attracting visitors from home and abroad and making a valuable contribution to our tourist economy.

“However it's not just visitors that benefit. With a bit of innovative thinking, we can protect our natural heritage in a way that helps people and communities. We want people to have the opportunity to get involved, to have a say in how the environment is managed, to learn new skills and apply new technologies. We want to help ignite a passion for our natural world and its long-term conservation.”

Since its inception, the Heritage Lottery Fund has invested £52.12 million in over 310 projects which conserve Scotland's landscape and biodiversity, from the flows of Caithness to the valleys of the Tweed.



Scotland Policy Group: Joint meeting with the Scottish Biodiversity Forum & Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

19–20 September 2013, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh

This is an exciting joint venture between the British Ecological Society, the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, and the Scottish Biodiversity Forum.



The refreshed *Scottish Biodiversity Strategy: 2020 Challenge* – updated to incorporate the new CBD 2020 ‘Aichi Targets’ - was launched on 19 June 2013. The challenge for the science community is to engage with the strategy and to help make a difference for nature and people.

This meeting provides an important forum for scientists, ecological practitioners, policymakers and managers working on biodiversity issues in Scotland. People can meet to discuss the new challenges and find ways of making science count.

The meeting will:

- Introduce the new strategy to the science community;
- Consider the existing and emerging research needs, and the new skills and expertise that we need to draw on;
- Provide opportunities for the science and practitioner communities to find out about the needs of policy-makers and to consider how knowledge exchange can work more effectively; and
- Enable people to network and tell us about their work.



This meeting offers a great chance for early-career researchers to begin engaging with the world of policy! We particularly welcome the participation of students, and shall award a prize for the best poster. Poster submissions can be on any topic associated with biodiversity in Scotland.

We encourage students to attend the meeting, to network with peers and policy-makers. A poster competition will provide opportunities for attendees to display information on their latest research.

A registration form is available [here](#). **Registration queries should be directed to Elizabeth Leith, Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh, biodiversity@snh.gov.uk Tel:0131 248 2957.**



NE Scotland Mammal Atlas – Online Map

There has been a recent campaign to raise awareness of the NE Scotland Mammal Atlas which is an initiative taking place throughout the North East of Scotland and Cairngorms National Park to produce an atlas in 2015. More details of this can be found on the NESBReC website at the [Mammal Atlas Home Page](#).

The [NE Scotland Mammal Atlas mapping](#) has found its way onto the web and primarily shows the current uptake of squares by the recording community (the blue squares). Presently this stands at just under the half way mark, so if you'd like to circle a square let NESBReC know and we can put your name against it.

Any records you provide will help us to build up a clearer picture of the current distribution of mammals and already there is an indication that pine martens are increasing their geographical range. Of course any casual sightings of any species (not just mammals) from any square can always be submitted to NESBReC through the online recording form or by other means. And remember the plan here is enjoyment as well as making a great contribution to an excellent collaborative effort from all the recording community here in the North East.

IT Support (NESBReC)

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Diary Dates

27th August 2013—Imagining Natural Scotland. One of Creative Scotland's key contributions to the year's activities will be "Imagining Natural Scotland". A partnership project between [Creative Scotland](#), [Scottish Natural Heritage](#) and the [University of St Andrews](#), it will explore how 'Natural Scotland' has been represented, misrepresented, imagined and re-imagined in literature, visual arts, architecture, film, TV, photography, music, theatre, design, advertising and popular culture – and how these representations inform and shape our understanding of and relationship to the natural world **Venue:** University of St Andrews . Further information: <http://imaginingnaturalscotland.org.uk/conference/>

9-12 September 2013:International Association for landscape Ecology (IALE): Landscape Ecology, Local to Global. Venue: Manchester. Further information: <http://www.iale2013.eu/>

10-12 September 2013:IUCN:Investing in Peatlands: Partnership for a New Era Venue:York. Further information: <http://www.iucn-uk-peatlandprogramme.org/>

19-20 September 2013: Scotland Policy Group: Joint meeting with the Scottish Biodiversity Forum & Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Focussing on the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy 2020 Challenge Venue: Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh. Further information at: <http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/public-policy/policy-events/forthcoming-meetings/scottish-biodiversity-strategy/>

Year of Natural
Scotland 2013

