



## Fantastic Progress For Partnership

The Partnership has excelled in carrying out the first year of implementation targets

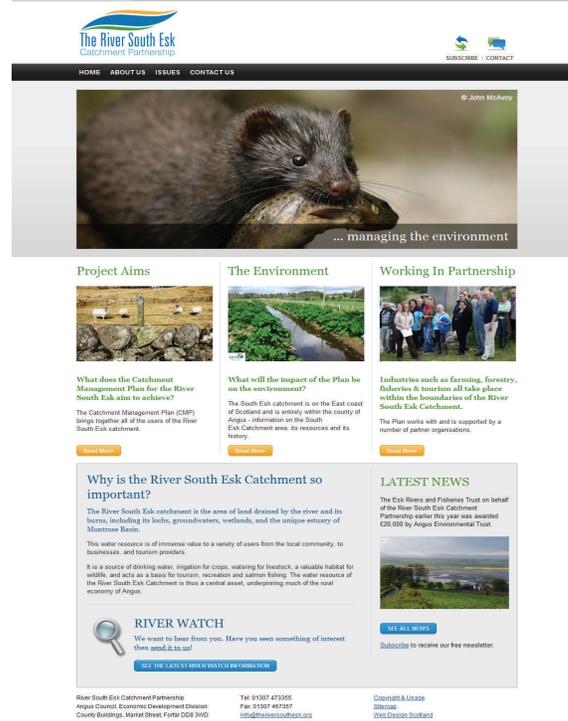
THE River South Esk Catchment Partnership officially launched its new website this May. The launch also marked the end of the first year of implementation of actions outlined in the catchment management plan launched in December 2009.

The many actions, carried out since June 2010, were achieved due to the generous support of funders including the Angus Environmental Trust, Angus Council, Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust, Esk District Salmon Fisheries Board, Scottish Natural Heritage, Cairngorms National Park Authority, and Rural Tayside LEADER. Major achievements have included the creation of the interactive website and undertaking a catchment wide invasive weed eradication project. Large swathes of the catchment were treated by late October 2010. The project led by the Esk Rivers & Fisheries Trust began again in March/April this year.

Scottish Biodiversity Week which ran from 21 to 29 May was chosen as an appropriate time to launch the website as one of the main objectives of the partnership is to protect and enhance biodiversity within the catchment. Invasive species are one of the biggest threats to native biodiversity and in 2011 the catchment will also see the implementation of a second large scale invasive species project - the Scottish Mink Initiative.

A river watch scheme has also been developed by the partnership allowing the public to report invasive species, fresh water pearl mussel poaching, species sightings and many other topics. River watch can be found on the partnership's new site [www.theriversouthesk.org](http://www.theriversouthesk.org) along with copies of the partnership's newsletter, an educational zone and links to other useful sites.

Phase two of the partnership's catchment management plan is due to begin in June 2011 where river restoration, GIS technologies and green corridor enhancement will be focused on.



The screenshot shows the website's homepage with a navigation menu (HOME, ABOUT US, ISSUES, CONTACT US), a main banner image of a mink with the text "... managing the environment", and several content sections including "Project Aims", "The Environment", "Working In Partnership", "Why is the River South Esk Catchment so important?", "LATEST NEWS", and "RIVER WATCH".

The new interactive South Esk website  
[www.riversouthesk.org](http://www.riversouthesk.org)

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*“The River South Esk has the highest wildlife accolade as it is designated as a SAC and is part of the Natura 2000 network – a series of internationally important wildlife sites throughout the European Union”.*

## Montrose Basin Wildlife Centre

### Remote cameras bring wildlife into the visitors centre

The project to install three new cameras in the visitors centre has now come to a close. There are now HD camera on the tern raft, SD cameras for the saltmarsh and also for the Visitor Centre. Staff are have been working on the recording capability side of the operation to enable the provision of footage suitable for use by the media. There have been some great recording images captured so far. You can access the webcam cameras online via [www.swt.org.uk](http://www.swt.org.uk), click wildlife, live webcams, Montrose Basin webcam. If you have sound on your pc, you can sit at home enjoying the delights of the sound of the summer visi-

tors the terns....one of the many spectacles to be viewed from the visitors centre.

To launch the camera project to the public, a launch evening was held on 23rd May and funders, local hoteliers and Tourist Information staff came along to see the

cameras in action. The reserve has also launched a new blog which includes recent sightings, stories and useful information about this fantastic reserve. You can find it by visiting [blogs.swt.org.uk/montrosebasin](http://blogs.swt.org.uk/montrosebasin)



Eider duck  
©SNH



Atlantic salmon & freshwater pearl mussels ©SNH

New planning guidance has been produced by Scottish Natural Heritage for the River South Esk SAC. It aims to assist you when you are considering submitting a planning application for a development which may

## River South Esk Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

### New advice to planning applicants available

affect SAC. It provides advice on the types of appropriate information and safeguards to provide in support of your planning application so that it can be properly and timeously assessed, and includes:

An explanation of planning authorities' obligations when evaluating planning applications including permitted development

Information on the qualifying interests of the designation which may be affected;

Advice on the nature of developments that may affect the River South Esk SAC; and

Examples of information which you need to submit with your planning application.

#### Why is the River South Esk so important?

The River South Esk has the highest wildlife accolade as it is designated as a SAC and is part of the Natural 2000 network – a series of internationally important wildlife sites throughout the European Union. The qualifying interests for which the site is designated are Atlantic salmon and freshwater pearl mussel. To download copy of the publication visit <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/designatedareas/River%20South%20Esk%20SAC.pdf>

# Scottish Mink Initiative

## New Mink initiative asks for help from local volunteers

The Scottish Mink Initiative is a volunteer based project which builds upon the success of the Cairngorm Water Vole Conservation Project, the North East of Scotland Water Vole Project and the North West Highlands Mink Control Project. The Initiative aims to protect native wildlife, such as water voles, ground nesting birds and economically important populations of salmon and game birds by removing breeding mink from north Scotland.

Heritage through the Species Action Framework, Tubney Charitable Trust, Cairngorms National Park Authority and the Scottish Government and the European Community Cairngorms, Highland, Moray, Rural Aberdeenshire and Rural Tayside Local Action Groups LEADER 2007-2013 Programme.

American mink were brought to the UK for fur farming in the early 1900s. Some mink escaped into the wild, however many more

prey species and once they have exhausted one food source, they can simply switch to another. American mink are also prolific breeders and can have up to 9 kits a year and furthermore they have no natural predators in the UK.

Ann-Marie MacMaster, Mink Control Officer for north Tayside, is looking for keen volunteers to take part in the removal of breeding mink. For the purposes of this Initiative, the southern boundary of 'north Tayside' runs approximately from Lunan Bay – Forfar – Coupar Angus – Dunkeld – Aberfeldy. Volunteers can report sightings, monitor a mink raft to record mink signs and/or check traps daily. Only those who have been trained will be involved in the dispatch of mink.

Any local people interested in helping with mink control in north Tayside can contact Ann-Marie at [ann-marie@rafts.org.uk](mailto:ann-marie@rafts.org.uk) or on 07825 186043.

*“American mink are an ‘invasive non-native species’ which have a detrimental impact on our native wildlife. Today American mink are found across much of the UK.”*



American mink  
©SWT

Covering 20,000 km<sup>2</sup>, from rural north Tayside across Aberdeenshire, Moray, the Cairngorms and the Highlands, the Scottish Mink Initiative is a new partnership project between Rivers and Fisheries Trusts of Scotland (RAFTS), Scottish Wildlife Trust, the University of Aberdeen and Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH).

The Initiative signals a £920,000 investment in native wildlife conservation, thanks to support from Scottish Natural

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were released by animal rights activists and as a consequence American mink were first recorded breeding in the wild in the mid 1900s. Today American mink are found across much of the UK.

American mink are an ‘invasive non-native species’ which have a detrimental impact on our native wildlife. As a ‘generalist’ predator, mink can adapt their feeding behaviour according to available



Mink raft

©Jamie Urquhart

## About The River South Esk Catchment Partnership .....



Scottish Natural Heritage  
All of nature for all of Scotland



To address the many issues which affect the South Esk catchment, representatives of some organisations have been meeting regularly since 2004 with the development of an integrated Catchment Management Plan at the forefront of their aims. Gradually an informal Steering Group was formed\*. The process of developing a Catchment Management Plan began in earnest in 2008 with the employment of a part-time Project Officer to oversee an intensive two year consultation phase which would capture people's views on what they considered the key environmental, social and economic issues to be within the catchment. These views were used to form the basis of the plan's strategic aims, catchment objectives and actions. Phase one of the plans implementation is now well under way and development of the next phase of implementation is at the forefront of the Partnership's mind.

The River South Esk Catchment Partnership would like to thank all its funders and supporters. Without them it would be impossible to carry out the work we are undertaking in this first year of the management plans implementation and indeed in future years.

The logos on display denote the funders of the 2010/11 phase. Their funding has allowed us to work towards enhancing and promoting many facets of the catchment .

The Esk District Salmon Fishery Board, Angus Council, Scottish Natural Heritage, Esk Rivers and Fisheries Trust, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Atlantic Salmon Trust, Scottish Agricultural College, Forestry Commission Scotland, Littlewood Land Care, Cairngorms National Park Authority, Macaulay Institute, Scottish Water, National Farmers Union Scotland, Scottish Rural Property and Business Association Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspections Directorate.

### Brown hare *Lepus europaeus*

The South Esk catchment has large areas of arable farmland on which you may often see this fantastic species.

Rabbits and hares belong to the Order Lagomorphs

The mountain hare (*Lepus timidus*) is Britain's only native member of the group, as rabbits and brown hares are thought to have been introduced by the Normans and the Romans

During the late 1800s there were about four million brown hares in Britain. But recent surveys show the brown hare has declined by more than 80% during the past 100 years

The brown hare can reach speeds of up to 45 mph

Brown hares normally weigh about 3-4 kilograms, although big males can weight up to 5 or 6 kilos



Brown hare  
©SNH

Normally comparatively solitary, Brown hares have the capacity to adjust their behaviour such that they can benefit when foraging in groups

Brown hares have a prolonged breeding season which lasts from January to August

Foxes, changes in agriculture and poaching are the main threats to brown hares in Scotland.

Visit [www.snh.gov.uk](http://www.snh.gov.uk) for more info

[www.riversouthesk.org](http://www.riversouthesk.org)

For any comments or to join our mailing list, please contact:

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