



**NatureScot**  
**NàdarAlba**

Scotland's  
Nature Agency  
Buidheann  
Nàdair na h-Alba



## What is Biodiversity?

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### The variety of life

Biological diversity – or biodiversity – is simply the variety of life. It includes all living things all around us: the soaring eagle, the leaping salmon, the tiny ladybird, the burrowing earthworm. It is all life in our forests and mountains, our rivers and seas, our gardens and parks.

Biodiversity supports our lives and is vital for our survival; it is our living bank balance and provides us with many of the things that sustain our lives. It is therefore essential for our health and well-being that we protect our biodiversity and the services that it provides.

But the term 'biodiversity' also covers other aspects of life on Earth:

- the genetic variation within species
  - all the planet's habitats and ecosystems – from forests and mountains to rivers and seas
  - the different ways that living things interact with each other and their habitats.
- Find more information and definitions in this [glossary of biodiversity terms](#)

## Our biodiversity in Scotland

In Scotland, we are is renowned for our:

- the sheer number of [species](#) – approximately 90,000 animal, plant and microbe species
- a complex mosaic of habitats that make up our [rich and varied landscapes](#). Scotland is home to internationally important [habitats](#) many of which are [protected areas](#), as well as many [protected species](#). There are also a few species unique to Scotland, such as the [Scottish crossbill](#) and [Scottish primrose](#)

## Geodiversity

Closely related to biodiversity, geodiversity refers to the variety of rocks, minerals, fossils, soils, landforms and natural processes that are fundamental to supporting life on Earth. Biodiversity and geodiversity together make up [ecosystems](#)

Find out why [geodiversity is important](#) and how it affects all our lives.

Discover the [pressures on geodiversity](#) and what we can do to [protect our geodiversity](#)

Find out more about biodiversity and geodiversity:

- [Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
- [ecosystems, landscapes and habitats](#)

## Find out more

[Benefits of Biodiversity](#)

[Biodiversity - what can you do?](#)

[Biodiversity - where to find data](#)

[Key pressures on biodiversity](#)

[Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and COP 15](#)