



NatureScot
NàdarAlba

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba



Nature thrives, people flourish

NatureScot Corporate Plan 2026-2030



Your NatureScot

NatureScot is Scotland's nature agency. We work with communities, partners and businesses across land, freshwaters, seas, coasts, towns and cities so that nature thrives and people flourish.

In our urgent response to the biodiversity and climate emergencies, we will work at pace and scale to build resilient nature so that we secure the many benefits it provides to people and the economy.

We have a wide range of legal duties and responsibilities. These include providing advice to Scottish Ministers, leading on delivery of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, licensing species control and enabling reintroductions, designating and overseeing the management of important nature sites, managing 29 National Nature Reserves, promoting responsible access to the countryside and supporting the planning system, among many others. All of these empower us to deliver a nature-rich, resilient Scotland to the benefit of people.





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Foreword

Nature provides a multitude of benefits to people. From clean air and water, healthy food, to supporting our economy, livelihoods, improved health, places to play, for solace and recovery. It invigorates our imagination and culture. To prosper, a healthy economy needs a healthy natural environment.

Nature also has a value of its own – a value I marvel at every day. We are on the brink of losing that beauty, value and the benefits it brings because our natural world is in a deepening crisis, and climate change shows little sign of slowing.

We have been monitoring nature for more than a century and have seen a steady decline in the range and numbers of many species. We already know what is causing this and the actions we need to take to reduce pressures on nature.

By embedding nature in much that we all do, we can turn this around and bring the benefits of nature into all our lives, wherever we live and whatever we do.





That is why the people of Scotland demand a nature-rich environment that is resilient to climate change, contributes to a low-carbon economy, meets our international nature commitments and helps grow our economy in a just and fair way. This plan for people, place and prosperity contributes to all these.

We have developed our Corporate Plan with our partners and colleagues. It clearly shows NatureScot leadership working towards our shared national endeavour of a flourishing Scotland. Looking beyond our shores, Scotland's focus on tackling the nature-climate emergency is proving an inspiration to many on the international stage. Our commitment to the United Nations-led Global Biodiversity Framework to halt and reverse nature loss is rock solid.

Securing resilient and thriving nature in Scotland will be at the heart of all that our passionate, dedicated experts at NatureScot will do. We are your NatureScot, and this is our commitment to the people of Scotland.



Professor Colin Galbraith FRSE
Chair, NatureScot

Taking action

Nature is under threat – and if nature is under threat, so are we.

That is why our purpose is to halt biodiversity loss by 2030 and to restore and regenerate biodiversity across our land, freshwaters and seas by 2045.

We have had our eye on this result for many years now and built momentum towards achieving it. We have a strong legacy and a bright future.



Taking action

Major progress during our previous Corporate Plan: A nature rich future for all



NatureScot was the lead partner in developing the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, launched in 2024. The Scottish Government strategy is a clear route map to Scotland being nature positive on land and seas by 2030. It was a major three-year exercise that identified over 130 actions to be taken forward to 2030. NatureScot is in the lead for around half the actions and is supporting many others.



The £65m Nature Restoration Fund is an unprecedented commitment from Scottish Government to nature recovery. It has supported over 240 projects since 2021, undertaking restoration activity over more than 114,000 hectares. The Scottish Marine Environment Enhancement Fund has distributed around £4m supporting 62 marine projects up to 2025. The Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland fund, managed in partnership with the National Lottery Heritage Fund, has invested £6.5m since 2023, supporting 44 innovative projects.



We have put over 30,000 hectares of degraded peatland on the road to recovery since 2022. Investing £60m on behalf of Scottish Government, this has reduced Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions and is providing valuable habitat, flood, drought and fire resilience as well as jobs and economic opportunities in fragile communities. The global importance of Scotland's peatland has also been recognised by UNESCO when it honoured the Flow Country's extensive peat bog with World Heritage Site status, the first in the world.

Taking action

In our new Corporate Plan, we are guided by four principles. We believe our focus on these principles make us ready for an uncertain future and to take the opportunities that thriving nature provides.

Guided by those four principles, we have prioritised five outcomes that we will pursue to 2030. We believe they will make a telling impact on Scotland being nature positive by 2030. Together, they recognise the value to people of natural environments across our seas and freshwaters, on land, and in our towns and cities. They also recognise that working in partnership is critical, because it will take us all to make a difference.

There is a strong connection between the five priority outcomes we set out in this plan, reflecting the international recognition that climate, biodiversity, food, water and human health are intertwined. We must therefore act across all these to provide the multiple benefits that planet and people require.

Scotland's wide range of habitat variety means it has the potential to be nature rich everywhere

Scotland's wide range of habitat variety means it has the potential to be nature rich everywhere. We can see examples of that in the places where nature is already flourishing, though these are too few. We need to go further across our landscapes, towns, cities and seas, especially if we are to strengthen our resilience against the impacts of climate change.

Recovery is happening in places like the Atlantic Rainforest, Loch Leven catchment and the Firth of Forth, across many farms and crofts and in our communities such as Hamiltonhill Claypits and South Lanarkshire Nature Schools. These and other initiatives are often led by communities and are making lives in those places better.

Many programmes for nature recovery are already up and running, more are ready to go. For these to be effective, we will need to work alongside many

partners, including communities, farmers, fishers, wind farm developers and local authorities, to restore nature and secure the benefits we need to build a resilient, sustainable and prosperous Scotland for us all.



We need to go further across our landscapes, towns, cities and seas to strengthen our resilience to climate change



A national call to action

Nature and climate emergency

The Scottish Government's biodiversity strategy is a bold long-term vision to restore nature in Scotland by 2045 and to halt biodiversity loss by 2030. Other strategies will play their part, including a renewed Climate Change Plan, the Scottish National Adaptation Plan, the Agricultural Reform Programme, the National Marine Plan and new environmental legislation. New energy projects – on- and offshore – will drive a low carbon economy and we will collaborate with developers through our advice and support. Nature recovery underpins the coordinated national endeavour to provide resilience and security for the economy. NatureScot will lead on advocacy for people and nature across all these and many other frameworks.

Nature recovery provides resilience and security for the economy

Economy and public service

We know that around 200,000 people directly owe their jobs to the natural environment. This represents 7.9% of the current workforce and is forecast to grow as economic interest in nature recovery increases. Food, drink, tourism, agriculture, fishing, nature restoration, forestry and many more sectors make their living from nature. Investment in this natural capital, as part of a coordinated economic plan, will build resilience and security to help Scotland's economy to grow and create new green jobs. Failure to do so has the opposite effect.

We recognise that the shift towards a nature-rich Scotland must be done with fairness at its heart. Nature offers a strong return on public investment and underpins Scotland's economy. Scottish Government evidence shows that, when we invest in nature, targeting social benefits, it saves money in other public sector services and high-cost measures to protect people from climate change. Typically, these investments are made through joined-up action partnerships that drive efficiency and prompt public service reform. We will also explore how we can fairly generate income from the services we provide. In doing so, we will be flexible and innovative, and determined to have a strong science and evidence-led, targeted impact.



Communities and social benefits

Nature-rich areas close to where people live, work, play and learn contribute to better health outcomes and improve educational attainment. There is growing evidence of the role nature plays in addressing many societal challenges. Green Health Partnerships, outdoor learning and community action centred around nature have demonstrated the efficient and effective benefits from investing in nature close to people. Doctors prescribing engagement with nature can save the NHS in Scotland considerable sums. We will ensure nature is central to the lives of people in Scotland to support our mental well-being, physical activity, learning experiences and to nurture a sense of pride in our communities and places.

Doctors prescribing engagement with nature can save the NHS in Scotland considerable sums



Principles

Our principles will shape what we do. They will help us deliver our priorities and direct our work with partners.

These four principles reflect the need for us to work at scale and pace, focus on people in our decisions, to use technology, think innovatively and deploy evidence from many sources. They recognise that everyone has a valuable contribution to make to improve outcomes for Scotland.



Urgency and scale

Move with urgency and at scale to achieve Scotland's biodiversity objectives, as we respond to the intergenerational demand to tackle the biodiversity and climate emergencies.



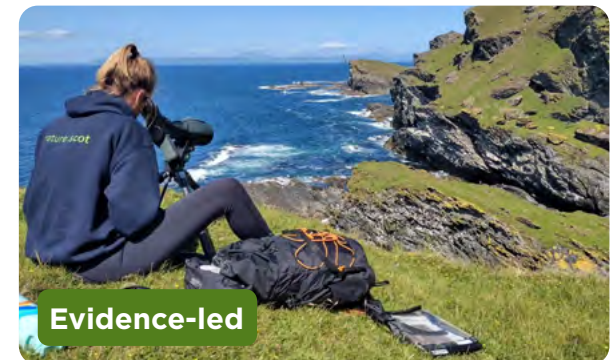
People-focused

Action that supports a just transition to ensure the benefits derived from nature are distributed fairly and the risks from climate impacts are dealt with equitably.



Embrace innovation

Through the competent and skilled deployment of flexible, adaptable, collaborative and digital ways of working, we will deliver place-based actions that maximise benefits from nature.



Evidence-led

Target intervention and investment where evidence and forecasting show nature and people need it most, to strengthen resilience, especially in relation to the impacts from the climate emergency.

Priorities

What follows are our priority outcomes – the results we are targeting for 2030. We take our responsibility to lead nature recovery in Scotland seriously and we have identified outcomes and actions that will make a major difference.



Restoring healthy nature



Lead species recovery, connect habitats and safeguard at least 30% of land, rivers and seas by 2030 on the way to good ecological health.

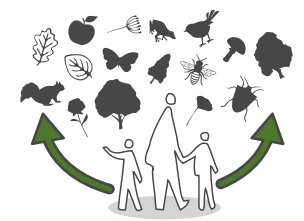
We will promote ecological health by leading and working at scale to build resilient interconnected nature networks, support species recovery, deliver resilient catchment scale restoration and safeguard at least 30% of land and seas for nature by 2030.

We will	This will
Safeguard at least 30% of land and seas as high-quality nature sites linked through nature networks by 2030.	Significantly increase space for nature and connect habitats, allowing species to move and recover across the many landscapes and seascapes of Scotland.
Drive action on species and habitat recovery, where evidence identifies the benefits of action.	Promote good ecological health by ensuring we focus recovery programmes on the right species in the right places.
Lead the acceleration of peatland restoration in Scotland.	Deliver substantial contributions to Scotland's carbon emissions reduction targets, provide flood and drought alleviation, water quality improvements and store more carbon in the future.

We will evaluate progress by assessing:

- the extent of land and seas safeguarded by 2030
- cumulative total of hectares of peatland restoration
- ecosystem health of safeguarded sites

Reconnecting people with nature



Increased support for nature-positive action through strengthened public connection, understanding and access to nature.

We aim to strengthen people's connection with nature by demonstrating the many benefits it provides in an inspiring and compelling way, so that we gain support and build confident advocacy for nature to be restored.

We will	This will
Celebrate and champion the benefits to people of being connected to nature.	Influence nature positive behaviour change.
Promote and support opportunities to experience nature particularly for young people, including on our nature reserves.	Strengthen partnership working in support of national education objectives and legislation on outdoor learning.
Develop nature-based activities, workforce and skills, including volunteering and citizen science.	Support economic growth by ensuring we have a wide range of skills needed to restore nature.

We will evaluate progress by assessing:

- people's connection with nature
- public understanding of biodiversity loss and climate change impacts

Working with nature



Embed nature-positive practice across agriculture and other land and marine uses.

We aim to embed nature-based management to support businesses by working with farmers, foresters, land and wildlife managers, fishers and developers to harness the benefits nature provides, live alongside wildlife and reduce climate risks and impacts.

We will	This will
Enable species, wildlife and nature-positive management in partnership with foresters, food producers and managers on land and seas.	Increase biodiversity on farms, in forests and in our seas leading to sustainable yield and profitability in line with national objectives.
Rapidly accelerate sustainable deer management across Scotland.	Allow the natural regeneration of habitats, especially in ecologically sensitive areas, decrease carbon emissions and increase carbon stores.
Provide a clear steer and support for developers to maximise opportunities for nature recovery.	Ensure developers create sustainable projects with positive impacts for biodiversity.

We will evaluate progress by assessing:

- the extent of farms and crofts advised by us and farming with nature
- the spatial reduction and maintenance of low deer populations at scale
- the number of marine plans with nature-positive policies

Growing nature investment



Achieve increased levels of public and private sector high integrity nature investment.

We aim for increased levels of high integrity public, private and philanthropic investment for nature restoration and resilience, through blended finance solutions across land management, marine and coastal, community and public sectors.

We will	This will
Stimulate nature investment through a series of investable projects and models for private sector and philanthropic funders.	Provide a secure path for nature restoration project funding, delivering high integrity nature and community outcomes.
Activate high integrity nature investments through implementation of guidance, standards, advice and digital tools.	Create the right framework to ensure additional biodiversity benefits and confidence in the nature investment market.

We will evaluate progress by assessing:

- the percentage growth in private funding for nature from 2025/26 baseline
- hectares of projects available for funding supporting high integrity frameworks

Resilient places



Strengthened climate, economic and social resilience in all our communities through nature recovery.

By accelerating nature recovery, we will support communities to adapt to climate risks while helping to improve the health and job benefits for people and businesses.

We will	This will
Support community-led nature recovery locally.	Improve local quality of life, economic value and strengthen resilience to climate risks.
Lead and expand actions to deliver health and nature benefits close to where people need it most.	Lower costs to NHS Scotland.
Demonstrate the value of coastal and catchment-scale nature recovery to critical infrastructure at risk from climate impacts.	Make the case for green infrastructure investment.

- We will evaluate progress by assessing:**
- the proportion of citizens who live within a five-minute walk of their nearest greenspace
 - public sector resource savings from nature investment
 - the growing value of critical infrastructure protected by green infrastructure

Conditions for success

To deliver the Corporate Plan, we will continue to evolve how we work, so we are set up and operating in ways that ensure our success.

We will prioritise three areas to enable us to deliver the full ambition of the Corporate Plan.





Conditions for success

Inspiring leadership from everyone

- We all lead with clarity, courage and purpose, effectively navigating complexity and uncertainty.
- We influence by earning trust, convening spaces, fostering engagement and managing differences respectfully, creating the conditions for effective dialogue.

Empowered people

- We work in partnership, creating the conditions where people collaborate effectively, feel engaged and take ownership to create impact.
- People are empowered, confident, skilled and trusted to use their judgement to make a difference.

Impactful ways of working

- We make impactful decisions that are timely, transparent and embrace managed risks and innovation.
- We have highly effective and efficient ways of working, supported by technology and proactive mindsets that enable everyone to be flexible, innovative and solution-focused.



© **Cover:** Working in peatland, Walking group, Red squirrel (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Bruce's Stone selfie (VisitScotland/Luigi Di Pasquale) Common starfish at St Kilda (Sue Scott / NatureScot) **Page 2:** Groups of people out in nature, Canoeing at Loch Morlich, Small group out walking in nature (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) **Page 3:** Blue Tit in winter, Butterfly at Forvie (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Walking in Mill Glen, Tillicoultry (VisitScotland / Discover Clackmannanshire / Damian Shields) **Page 4:** River Isla Flooding (Peter McPhail / NatureScot) Buachaille Etive Mor wild camping (VisitScotland / Kenny Lam) Grey seal pup (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) **Page 5:** Electric van (Simon Ritchie / NatureScot) Grey Mares Tail (VisitScotland / Kenny Lam) Harebell (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Professor Colin Galbraith portrait (Greg Macvean Photography) **Page 6:** Working in the Western Isles (Gillian Dunachie / NatureScot) Lichen, Common frog, Common blue butterfly, Long-horned beetle (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Forest planting (Milagros Saloma / NatureScot) National Nature reserve beach clean (Eleanor Meikle / NatureScot) **Page 7:** Coire Fee landscape (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Diver beneath the water (Peter Shucksmith / NatureScot) Digger from above (Peatland ACTION / Swift Films) **Page 8:** Young people learning about nature, Glasdrum Woods (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Fernbrae Meadows (Karen Smith / South Lanarkshire Council) **Page 9:** Offshore wind farm (Malcolm Fraser / NatureScot) Views across Uist (VisitScotland / Liam Anderstrem) **Page 10:** Flow Country, Setting up a camera trap (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Windy day in the Cairngorms (VisitScotland/Luigi Di Pasquale) Sea bird monitoring (Bethany Smith / NatureScot) **Page 11:** Bumblebee (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) **Page 12:** Damsel fly (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) **Page 13:** Beinn Eighe (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) **Page 14:** Loch Faskally (VisitScotland / Kenny Lam) **Page 15:** Group of young people planting plants (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) **Page 16:** Sustainable drainage pond at Glasgow housing development (James Murray / Glasgow City Council) **Page 17:** Cows, Soil, Digger in peatland, Garden birds, Forestry landscape, Isle of Skye (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Beavers (Libby Penman / NatureScot) **Page 18:** Great crested newt, Isle of May, Urban wildflowers, Wildflowers and hedges, Bottlenose dolphins (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Green roof garden (Abi Gardner / NatureScot) Scottish Wildcat (Laurie Campbell). **Inside back cover:** Machair grassland on Uist, Palmate Newt, Pine Marten, Peacock Butterfly, Wandering through Corrour landscape, Hebridean sheep, Twinflower, Dor Beetle, Mother and baby enjoying nature, Bracken at Beinn Eighe, Bullfinch (Lorne Gill / NatureScot) Liathach and Beinn Eighe with Loch Clair (NatureScot) Freshwater Pearl Mussels (Sue Scott / NatureScot) Flapper Skate (Fenella Wood / NatureScot)

ISBN: 978-1-78391-996-3

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