

## **Public attitudes to Scotland's environment, and to protecting it if the UK leaves the EU**

### **Introduction**

Scottish Environment LINK's members are calling for a Scottish Environment Act to ensure that Brexit does not unravel crucial environmental protections. To inform this work, LINK commissioned research on public attitudes to Scotland's environment and to how we should ensure our environment is protected in the event of a UK departure from the EU.

### **About the research**

The research was carried out by Survation. People aged 16+ and living in Scotland were interviewed via online panel. Data was weighted to the profile of all Scottish people aged 16+. Data was weighted by age, sex, region and 2016 Scottish Parliamentary constituency vote. Targets for the weighted data were derived from Office of National Statistics data and the results of the 2016 Scottish Parliamentary election.

### **KEY FINDINGS**

#### **Attitudes to Scotland's environment**

- 86 per cent of the Scottish public are concerned about potential threats to wildlife from climate change, habitat loss and pollution.
- 81 per cent are concerned about climate change and its impact on Scotland.
- There is a huge strength of feeling among Scots for the country's nature and wildlife, with 94 per cent seeing these as 'very important' or 'quite important' to both Scotland's economy and its national identity. 92 per cent believe nature and wildlife are important in making Scotland a good place to raise a family, while 92 per cent believe they are important to the health and wellbeing of people in Scotland.

#### **Attitudes to protecting Scotland's environment if the UK leaves the EU**

- 84 per cent of Scots believe the Scottish Parliament should pass laws requiring the same or higher levels of environmental protection than current EU laws if the UK leaves the EU.
- 59 per cent believe the Scottish Government should face legal penalties if it misses certain targets for environmental protections.

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

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- 56 per cent believe that either the Scottish Parliament or a new independent watchdog should have the power to issue instructions and enforce penalties against the Scottish Government if it fails to meet environmental standards.
- 52 per cent believe EU environmental principles should be passed into law by the Scottish Parliament.

### **A Scottish Environment Act**

Members of Scottish Environment LINK are calling for a Scottish Environment Act that:

- embeds EU environmental law principles in Scots law
- creates an independent and well-resourced watchdog to enforce environmental protections
- sets clear targets for environmental protection alongside adequate financial resources

#### **More information:**

Full survey results are available at <https://www.fightforscotlandsnature.scot/wp/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Scot-Link-final-tables-pdf.pdf>

LINK's press release on the results of the Survation research is available at <http://www.scotlink.org/public-documents/more-than-80-of-scots-say-they-are-concerned-about-the-environment/>

LINK's briefing 'Why Scotland needs and Environment Act' is available at [http://www.scotlink.org/wp/files/documents/LINK-Parliamentary-Briefing-Scottish-Environment-Act\\_July-2019.pdf](http://www.scotlink.org/wp/files/documents/LINK-Parliamentary-Briefing-Scottish-Environment-Act_July-2019.pdf)

More information about LINK's campaign for a Scottish Environment Act, *Fight for Scotland's Nature*, is at <https://www.fightforscotlandsnature.scot/>

#### **For more information contact:**

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