

Press Release

No need to Grouse!

The iconic Scottish Black Grouse is the latest species to have been adopted under the hugely successful and popular Species Champion initiative which invites Members of the Scottish Parliament to lend their political weight to helping safeguard Scotland's endangered creepy, crawlies, cuddly, fluffy and sea frolicking species.

With the Black Grouse being championed by Ken Macintosh MSP, the initiative has now hit a record 70 MSPs Species Champions, well over the half way mark and still gathering support with more Champions on the way. The initiative now has **70 MSP Species Champions**, looking after **85 unique species**.

The Species Champion initiative is coordinated by Scottish Environment LINK's Wildlife Forum. Since 2012, they have invited MSPs champion species that are currently facing significant threats and the initiative has been recognised by the environment sector by being short listed for the upcoming Nature of Scotland Awards.

MSPs have been 'beavering away' at their work as species champions, including:

- **Rob Gibson MSP**, now affectionately known to LINK as the 'Moss Boss', working with IUCN UK Peatland Programme to secure conservation efforts for the Rusty Bog Moss;
- **Mary Scanlon MSP**, who was the first Champion to secure a Member's Debate on her species, the Freshwater Pearl Mussel and it also short-listed for Politician of the Year Award at the Nature of Scotland Awards for all her dedicated work on her species;
- **Claudia Beamish MSP**, who is often seen wearing her Species Champion Foster moth scarf, whose pattern was inspired by the species and created by Art and Design pupil from Braes High School Falkirk; and
- **Graeme Dey MSP**, champion for the Woolly Willow and who signed-up well over 10 of his MSP colleagues to the scheme and advocates youth involvement.

LINK is currently looking for resources to extend the scheme from the political field to new audiences including youth groups and businesses. All Champions are asked to learn about their species, work closely with a designated environmental organisation, and raise the threats to their species wherever it is required.

Craig Macadam, Director of Buglife Scotland said: "*From the tiny Bog Sun Jumper spider to the mighty Killer Whale, Species Champion MSPs are recognising the importance of Scotland's unique wildlife. Through their efforts, these species now have a voice in the Scottish Parliament, but others are still waiting for a champion*".

Ken Macintosh MSP says:

"I was delighted to add my support to Scottish Environment LINK and that of so many Parliamentary colleagues in becoming Species Champion for the Black Grouse. I am conscious that despite being born and brought up in the highlands, I have become a townie at least one step removed from our fantastic natural environment and wonderful wildlife. Here is an initiative which can help develop understanding, improve our relationship with the land and highlight threats to such iconic species as the Black Grouse. Who would not wish to support it."

ENDS



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(Pictures available on request)

Editors' Notes

- 1) Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 30 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.
- 2) 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. www.scotlink.org
- 3) Scotland failed to meet its biodiversity target in 2010. The Scottish Government is now aiming to halt biodiversity loss by 2020, as per the Aichi Biodiversity Targets. <http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>
- 4) LIST of Species Champions

Rhoda Grant MSP	Golden Eagle and Wild Cat
Rob Gibson MSP	Rusty Bog-moss
Dave Thompson MSP	Sandeel
Liam McArthur MSP	Scottish Primrose
Dennis Robertson MSP	Capercaillie and Corn Bunting
Aileen McLeod MSP	Red Squirrel
Graeme Dey MSP	Wooly Willow
Dave Stewart MSP	Great Yellow Bumblebee
Angus MacDonald MSP	Bog Sun Jumper Spider and Eelgrass
Alison Johnstone MSP	Brown Hare
John Wilson MSP	Great Crested Newt
Drew Smith MSP	Common Toad
Elaine Murray MSP	Tadpole Shrimp and Natterjack Toad
Claudia Beamish MSP	Sea Trout and Forester Moth
Claire Baker MSP	Puffin and Lesser Butterfly Orchid
Fiona McLeod MSP	Pond Mud Snail
Mary Scanlon MSP	Freshwater Pearl Mussel
Jamie McGrigor MSP	Narrow-Headed Ant and Marsh Fritillary
Nanette Milne MSP	Twin Flower
Christine Grahame MSP	House Sparrow
Bill Kidd MSP	Red Kite and Common Pipistrelle
Richard Simpson MSP	Small Blue
Alex Fergusson MSP	Native Oyster
John Lamont MSP	Northern Brown Argus
Chic Brodie MSP	Chequered Skipper
Jayne Baxter MSP	Brown Long-eared Bat
Jim Hume MSP	Noctule Bat and Leatherback Turtle
Murdo Fraser MSP	Natterer's Bat and Juniper
Stewart Stevenson MSP	Spiny Lobster
Alison McInnes MSP	Bottle Nose Dolphin
Aileen Campbell MSP	Large Heath Butterfly
Joan McAlpine MSP	Adder
Graeme Pearson MSP	Leisler's Bat
Richard Baker MSP	Common Frog
Patrick Harvie MSP	Minke Whale
David Torrance MSP	Common Lizard
Willie Coffey MSP	Cranberry
Stuart McMillan MSP	Basking Shark
Gordon MacDonald MSP	Bordered Brown Lacewing
Kenneth Gibson MSP	Pearl Bordered Fritillary and Blue Whale
Christina McKelvie MSP	White Beaked Dolphin
Annabelle Ewing MSP	Mountain Sibbaldia

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Richard Lyle MSP
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Sandra White MSP
George Adam MSP
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James Dornan MSP
Kevin Stewart MSP
Stewart Maxwell MSP
Annabel Goldie MSP
Cara Hilton MSP
Jean Urquhart MSP
Cameron Buchanan MSP
Malcolm Chisholm MSP
Johann Lamont MSP
Mark McDonald MSP
Ken Macintosh MSP

Harbour Porpoise
Manx Shearwater and Fin Whale
Nathusius Pipistrelle
Frog Orchid
Slow Worm
Grayling
Kittiwake
Corncrake
Andrena ruficrus
Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary
Curlew
Common Skate
Firework Anemone
Violet Oil Beetle
Flame Shell
Water Vole
Killer Whale
Harbour Seal
Risso's Dolphin
Sei Whale
Sea Fan
Arran Whitebean
Ash
Aspen
Common Blue
Common Tern
Lapwing
Kentish Glory Moth
Black Grouse

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