



Cairngorms Connect

Jeremy Roberts - Cairngorms Connect Programme Manager



Cairngorms Connect is the biggest and most spectacular habitat restoration project in Britain.



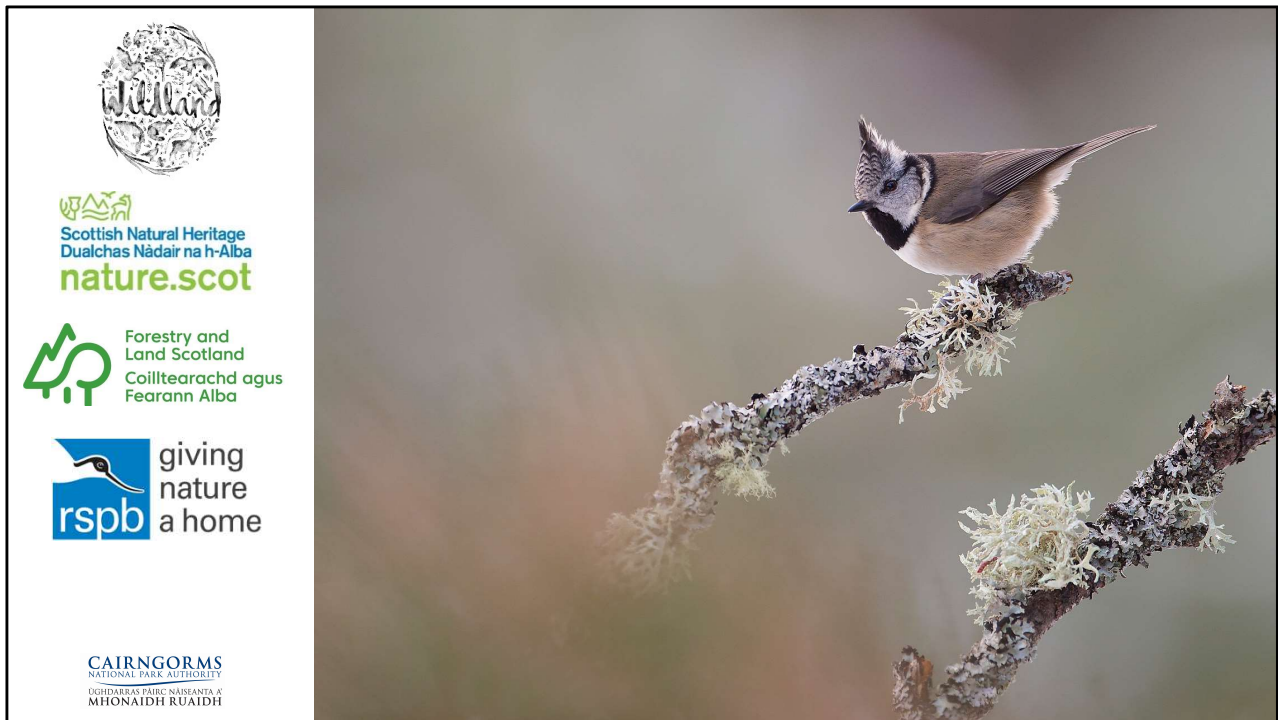
Cairngorms Connect – in a nutshell...



By any measure, the Cairngorms Connect area is a truly spectacular part of Scotland; it includes many locations that may be familiar to you: the summit of Cairngorm, the vast pinewoods of Strathspey, glorious Loch Morlich...



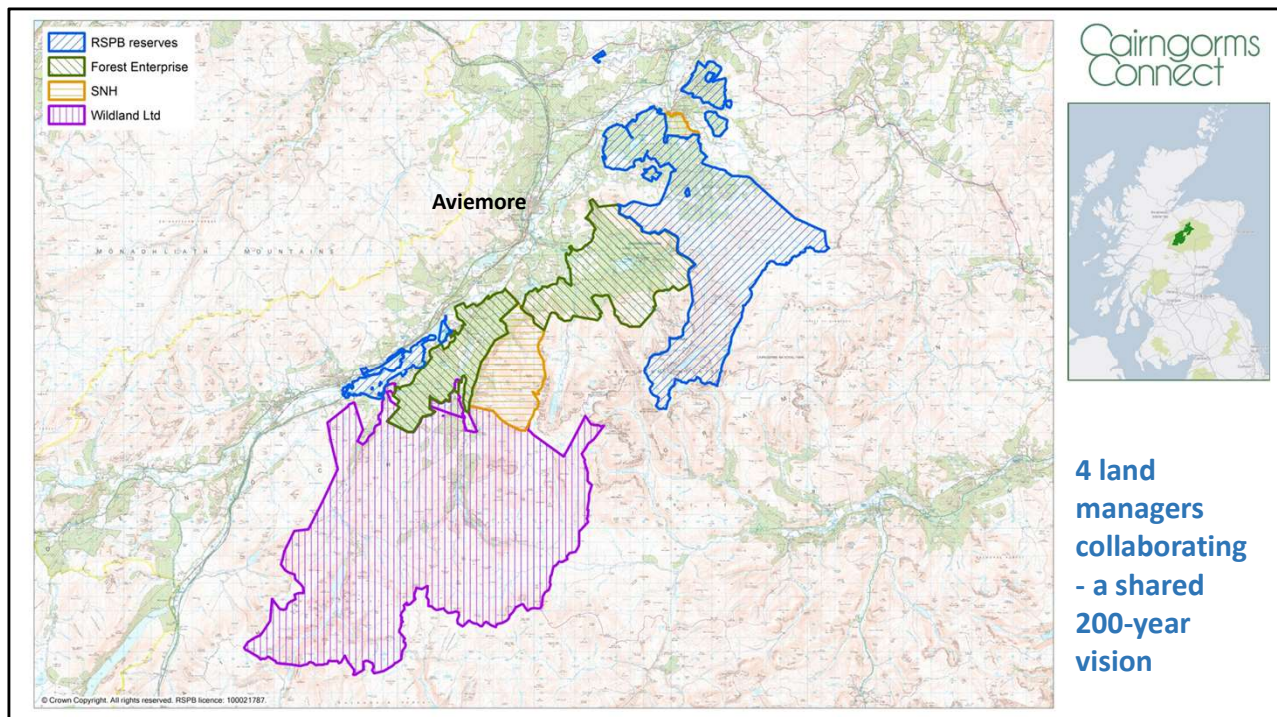
...and the extraordinarily beautiful Glen Feshie.



Cairngorms Connect is a partnership of four land managers – a private landowner, two Scottish Government land managers, and an NGO:

- Wildland Limited – privately owned by Anders Povlsen, and including Glen Feshie.
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- and the RSPB

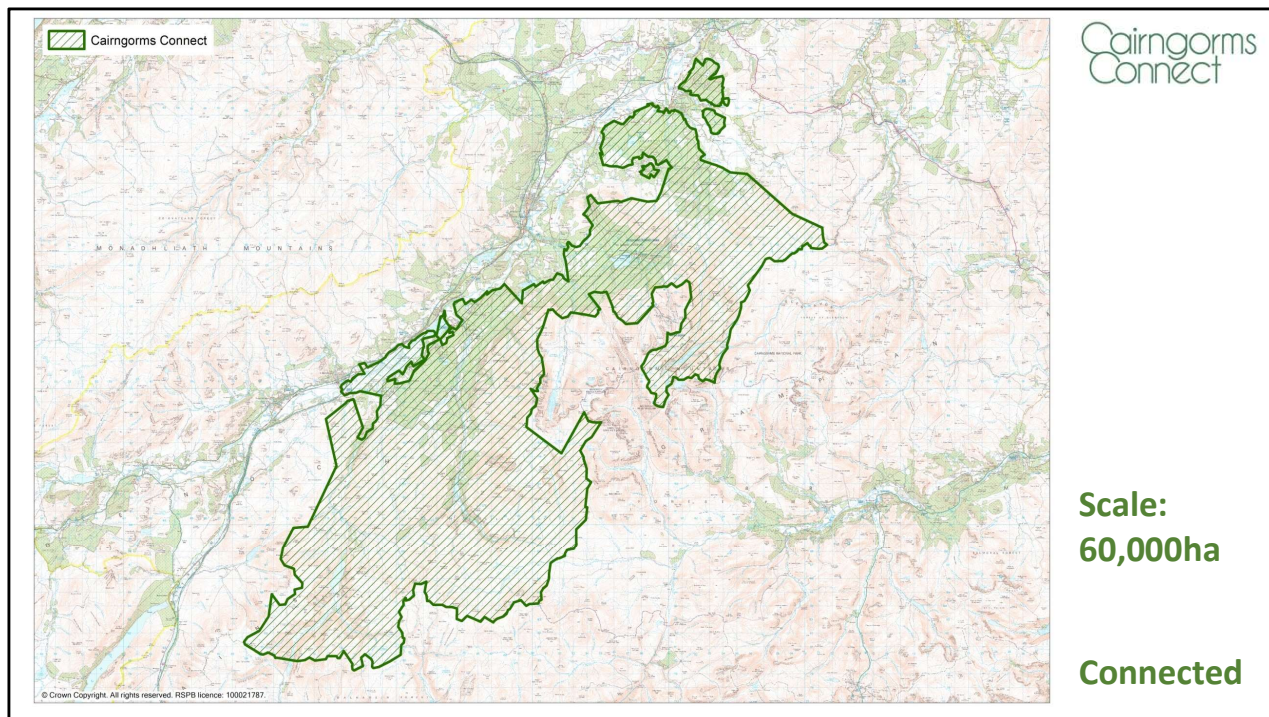
The project sits entirely within the Cairngorms National Park, and comprises around 13% of the Park area – so the CNPA is a supporting partner in the project.



Location in Scotland, and in the Cairngorms National Park
 The individual ownerships.
 Wildland Limited comprises around 45% of the project area.

There are important attributes of the CC habitat restoration project that make it particularly powerful

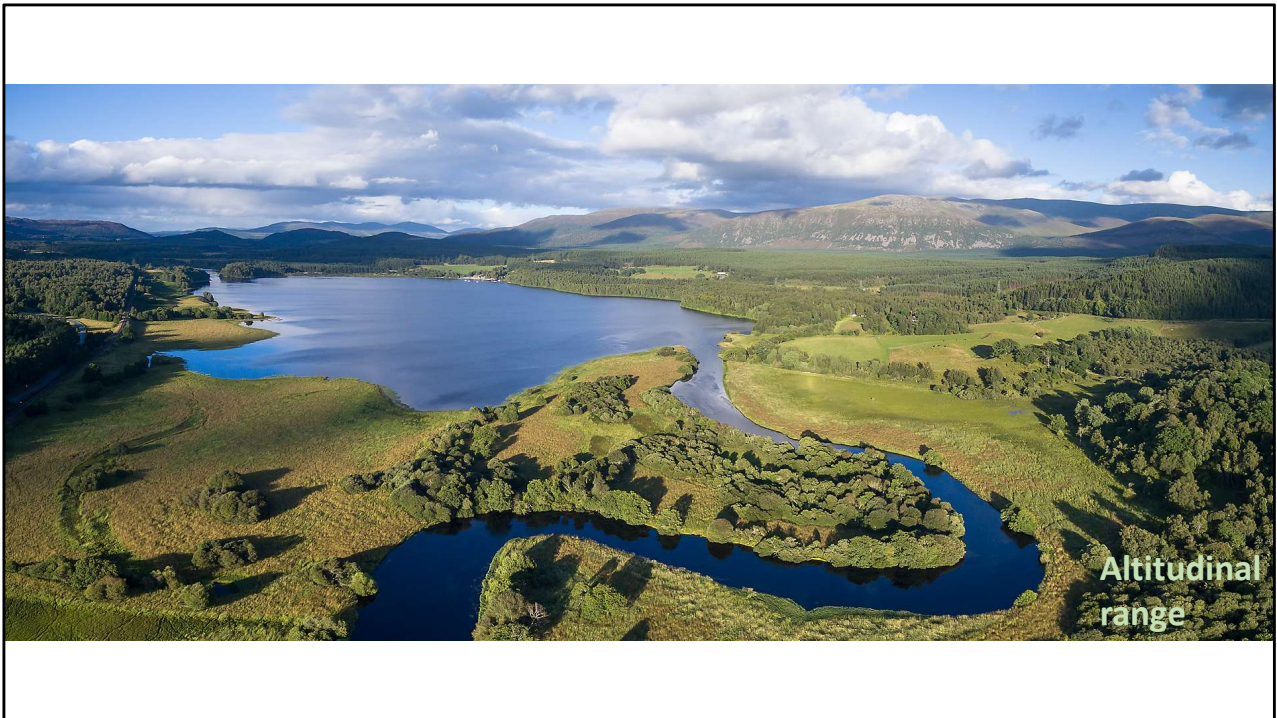
1. **Four land managers** making decisions about the whole project area – this makes collaborative management a great deal easier.
2. All of the partners have a **shared 200-year vision**, unparalleled in UK restoration projects



All the partners are considering ways in which we can ‘manage without boundaries’.

3. This management is a collective approach **across 60,000ha** (600 sq km, 232 sq miles).

4. Virtually all of this area is **connected**, creating a seamless landscape for nature.



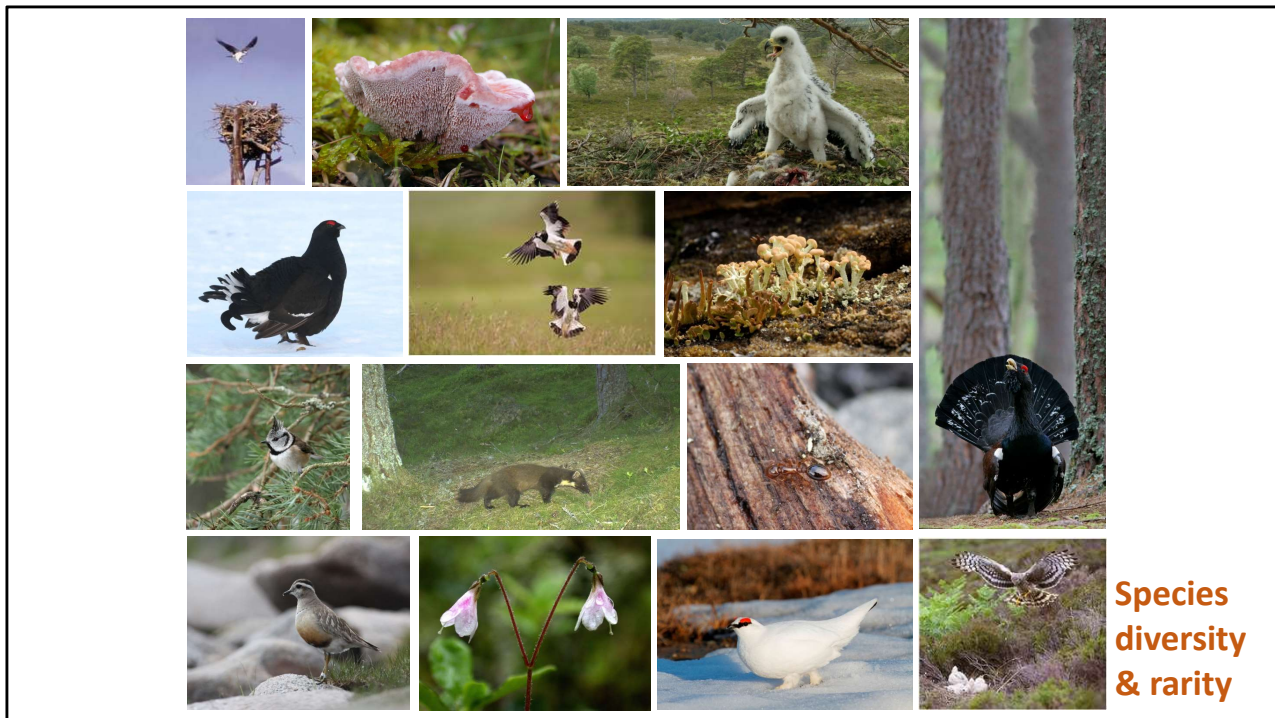
5. **Huge altitudinal range:** from the floodplain of the river Spey at 200m ASL – to the 2nd HIGHEST SUMMIT in Britain at 1,309m ASL (Ben MacDui)



6. With that range comes **an amazing diversity of habitats**, from fast flowing rivers, through the biggest remnants of Ancient Caledonian pinewood, with tranquil lochs and ancient bog woodlands, to open tracts of moorland with developing tree cover...



...and ultimately to the most extensive sub-Alpine plateau habitats in Britain. A harsh environment for wildlife and people.



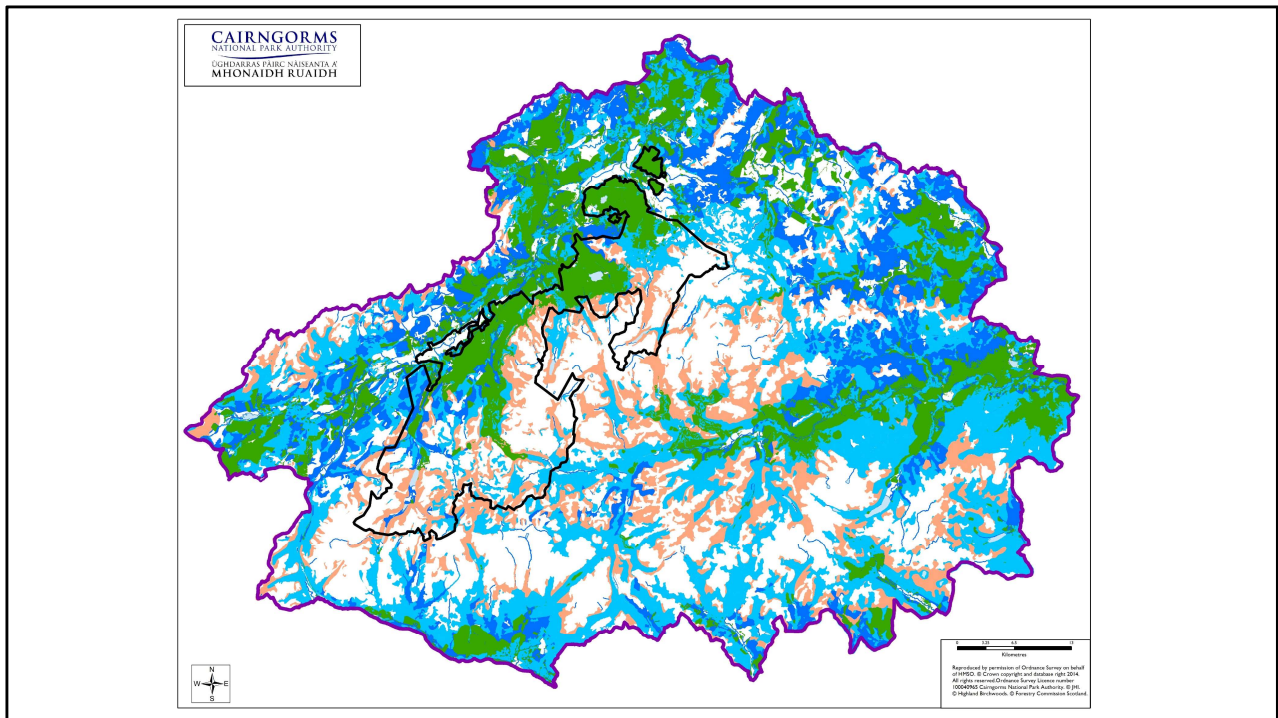
7... and with that habitat diversity comes enormous species diversity and rarity – with over 5,000 recorded species 20% are Nationally Rare or Scarce. Around 50,000ha of the project area is *Natura* designated.

The woods here are home to half of Scotland's National capercaillie population.

We have 10 species of regularly breeding raptors – in these forests, moors and mountains, they are safe from persecution.



We are interested in the inter-relationships between predators and prey, which across much of Scotland have been corrupted beyond recognition – and we are interested in exploring and re-establishing those connections. This has given rise to the CAIRNGORMS CONNECT PREDATOR PROJECT – the biggest project of its kind.



So, the CC area is already very special. What are we doing to make it even better?

Map of Cairngorms National Park; black boundary is the CC area. Already some good expanses of woodland (green); good potential for expansion (shades of blue), plus high altitude montane woodland (pink colour). At higher altitudes ground or climate will prevent any notable tree growth (white).



Though spectacular, these habitats have been altered significantly, in terms of their condition and extent.

...e.g. non-native conifers within and adjacent to some of our finest native woodlands.

Significant project to remove these invasive non-native conifers.



We aim to expand the forest to its natural limit – meaning 13,300 ha of potential new forest; effectively doubling the area of forested landscape



Importance of COLLABORATIVE DEER CONTROL, across 60,000 ha – partners working together. New funding has enabled us to appoint two new deer stalkers for the project



EXPANDING THE FOREST TO ITS NATURAL LIMIT 13,300 ha of potential new forest
To achieve the Scottish Government's net zero carbon emissions by 2045 will involve both the reduction of emissions and large-scale land management that removes carbon from the atmosphere – landscape scale woodland expansion will help us to achieve that.



From observations in comparator sites (soils, geology, climate, latitude, altitude) in Norway, we know that we can have woody habitats at much higher altitudes than we currently have in the CC area.



At these altitudes (here at 1,000m ASL) we have literally a handful of remaining plants, from which we have just begun an ambitious recovery programme, raising planting stock from these montane willows so we can grow future planting stock.



Wooded catchments give us many benefits-

...cleaner rivers...

...cooler rivers – and we know that climate change is warming our burns and rivers, affecting salmon populations... Woodlands help us to mitigate for some of the climate change effects.

...slowing water-flow through the catchment, reducing downstream flood-risk.



Ecosystem
services

Bogs, too, can slow the movement of water, acting like a sponge...

They also lock in huge quantities of carbon – We have 10,000ha of peatlands – blanket bog and bog woodland.

Blanket bog restoration is a key element of the CC project, for which the Peatland Action Fund is a crucial source of support. Great to see Scottish Govt's pledge to add a further £11m to the budget for restoration.

Deer management is also a crucial part of peatland restoration.



Through the catchment – from high altitude peat bogs, through the wooded catchments to the floodplain of the Spey.

1. Restoring natural hydrological processes, to slow movement of water through the catchment.
2. Cleaner water.
3. Cooler water – important in the face of climate change.



Opportunities for:

1. Building understanding and awareness.
2. Activities in the outdoors – improving physical & mental health and wellbeing
3. Local economy – through direct employment, including Nature-based businesses
4. Contractor opportunities
5. Apprenticeships for young people breaking into conservation and land management.



ENDANGERED
LANDSCAPES
PROGRAMME

FUNDED BY



ARCADIA

A charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin



Danube Delta
Ukraine, Romania & Moldova



Iori River Valley
Georgia



Greater Côa Valley
Portugal



**Gökova Bay to Cape
Gelidonya**
Turkey



Carpathian Mountains
Romania



Polesia
Belarus & Ukraine



Cairngorms Connect
Scotland



Summit to Sea
Cambrian Mountains, Wales

The importance of funding

- Scottish Government
- Spend by a private landowner
- NGO funds
- Philanthropy – the CC project has been awarded \$5mUSD – over 5 years – by the Endangered Landscapes Programme – a charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin. This fund will enable us to do a huge range of restoration and community engagement work that we would otherwise be unable to do. CC is one of only 8 projects in Europe to have benefited from the ELP - we are in the top-flight of restoration projects in Europe.



The CC area is an extraordinary and spectacular place - of huge importance to the people of Scotland. Our 200 year vision will build on that value, making it an even better place for wildlife, for people and for the ecosystems services from which we all benefit. We hope that it inspires you - we want it to be a place that Scotland can be proud of.