

Press Release

For immediate release

Invite and Alert to Species Champion Bat Walk

Celebrate the Year of Natural Scotland with a sunset saunter to meet some of Scotland's wonderful bats... and some wonderful MSPs who are championing threatened species across Scotland.

Members of Scottish Parliament have been invited by Scottish Environment LINK's Wildlife Forum Species Champion initiative on a Bat Walk this evening along with bat experts and enthusiasts. The walk will be led by Anne Youngman, Scottish Officer for the Bat Conservation Trust with assistance from local bat group members, bat experts and enthusiasts. MSPs will learn to get to grips with bat detectors so they will be able to hear the bats as they socialise and feed.

The walk will start at the Parliament building and continue to Dunsapie Loch where the group hopes to encounter pipistrelle and Daubenton's bats. MSPs have a unique chance to come along and eavesdrop into the normally secret world of bat sounds, chat to some bat experts, meet other species champions and have a memorable night out.

The Species Champion initiative is coordinated by Scottish Environment LINK's Wildlife forum and has invited all MSPs to choose from a list of 93 species that are currently facing significant threats to their future. At present there are 52 Species Champions, across all parties, who are championing a total of 63 species, from fauna, insects, marine and of course bats.

Species on the list include the beautiful Brown Longeared bat and the little known Leisler's and Nathusius pipistrelle bats. Other animals and plants are included such as the critically endangered freshwater pearl and the twin flower. Each of the listed species is currently affected by a range of human impacts such as development-driven habitat loss, climate change and pollution. Anne Youngman, Scottish Officer for the Bat Conservation Trust said *"I'm thrilled to have six MSPs championing our Scottish Bat species. Bats here face particular challenges due to our harsher climate and short summer nights. They are such tiny creatures they can be out of sight and out of mind or worse still misunderstood and feared. Having six well known voices speak up for bats in a positive and well informed way is a great boost to bat conservation and to the work of the Bat Conservation Trust in Scotland."*

With this initiative LINK hopes to push Scotland's nature up the political agenda during the Year of Natural Scotland and ensure that Scotland's environment is respected and protected for the benefits it brings to society: from tourist-attracting landscapes and clean water to crop pollination and food production.

Contact details

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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. 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

(2) Journalist are cordially invited to the BAT WALK with MSPs on Tuesday 24th September meeting at 7:00pm. Meet outside the visitor's entrance to Parliament. Wear suitable outdoor clothes for the Scottish weather.

(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/>

LINK's Wildlife Forum is running the Species Champion initiative to increase awareness of the value of Scotland's Nature. Asking MSPs to adopt a species to champion in Parliament helps build stronger relationships between Scotland's iconic wildlife and our Parliamentarians.

MSPs who have signed up to become a Species Champion are listed below.

Rhoda Grant MSP for Highlands and Islands (Scottish Labour): **Golden Eagle**

Rob Gibson MSP for Caithness, Sutherland and Ross (Scottish National Party): **Rusty Bog Moss**

Dave Thompson MSP for Skye Lochaber and Badenoch (Scottish National Party): **Sandeel**

Liam McArthur MSP for Orkney Islands (Scottish Liberal Democrats): **Scottish Primrose**

Dennis Robertson MSP for Aberdeen West (SNP) **Capercaillie; Corn Bunting**

Aileen McLeod MSP for South Scotland (Scottish National Party): **Red Squirrel**

Graeme Dey MSP for Angus South (Scottish National Party): **Woolly Willow**

Dave Stewart MSP for Highlands and Islands (Scottish Labour): **Great Yellow**

Bumblebee

Angus MacDonald MSP for Falkirk East (Scottish National Party) **Bog Sun Jumper**

Spider; Eelgrass

Alison Johnstone MSP for Lothian (Scottish Green Party): **Brown Hare**

John Wilson MSP for Central Scotland (Scottish National Party): **Great Crested Newt**

Drew Smith MSP for Glasgow (Scottish Labour): **Common Toad**

Elaine Murray MSP for Dumfriesshire (Scottish Labour): **Tadpole Shrimp; Natterjack**

Toad

Claudia Beamish MSP for South Scotland (Scottish Labour): **Sea Trout**

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Parliamentary office: 3rd Floor, Gladstone's Land, 483 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2NT tel 0131 225 4345 email parliamentary@scotlink.org

Claire Baker MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife (Scottish Labour): **Puffin; Lesser Butterfly Orchid**

Fiona McLeod MSP for Strathkelvin and Bearsden (Scottish National Party): **Pond Mud Snail**

Mary Scanlon MSP for Highlands and Islands (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): **Freshwater Pearl Mussel**

Jamie McGrigor MSP for Highlands and Islands (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): **Narrow-Headed Ant**

Nanette Milne MSP for North East Scotland (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): **Twin flower**

Christine Graham MSP for Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale (Scottish National Party): **House sparrow**

Bill Kidd MSP for Glasgow Anniesland (Scottish National Party): **Red Kite; Common pipistrelle**

Richard Simpson MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife (Scottish Labour Party): **Small Blue**

Alex Fergusson MSP for Galloway and West Dumfries (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): **Native Oyster**

John Lamont MSP for Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): **Northern Brown Argus**

Chic Brodie MSP for South Scotland (Scottish National Party): **Chequered Skipper**

Jayne Baxter MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife (Scottish Labour): **Brown Long-eared bat**

Jim Hume MSP for South Scotland (Scottish Liberal Democrats): **Noctule Bat and Leatherback Turtle**

Murdo Fraser MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): **Natterer's Bat and Juniper**

Stewart Stevenson MSP for Banffshire and Buchan Coast (Scottish National Party): **Spiny Lobster**

Alison McInnes MSP for North East Scotland (Scottish Liberal Democrats): **Bottle Nose Dolphin**

Aileen Campbell MSP for Clydesdale (Scottish National Party): **Large Heath Butterfly**

Joan McAlpine MSP for South Scotland (Scottish National Party): **Adder**

Graeme Pearson MSP for South Scotland (Scottish Labour): **Leisler's Bat**

Richard Baker MSP for North East Scotland (Scottish Labour): **Common Frog**

Patrick Harvie MSP for Glasgow (Scottish Green Party): **Minke Whale**

David Torrance MSP for Kirkcaldy (Scottish National Party): **Common Lizard**

Willie Coffey MSP for Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley (Scottish National Party): **Cranberry**

Stuart McMilan MSP for West Scotland (Scottish National Party): **Basking Shark**

Gordon MacDonald MSP for Edinburgh Pentlands (Scottish National Party): **Bordered Brown Lacewing**

Kenneth Gibson MSP for Cunninghame North (Scottish National Party): **Pearl Bordered Fritillary and Blue Whale**

Christina McKelvie MSP for Hamilton, Larkhall and Stonehouse (Scottish National Party): **White Beaked Dolphin**

Annabelle Ewing MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife (Scottish National Party): **Mountain Sibbaldia**

Maureen Watt MSP for Aberdeen South and North Kincardine (Scottish National Party): **Harbour Porpoise**

Patricia Ferguson MSP for Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn (Scottish Labour): **Manx Shearwater and Fin Whale**

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Willie Rennie MSP for Mid Scotland and Fife (Scottish Liberal Democrats): **Nathusius Pipistrelle**

Linda Fabiani MSP for East Kilbride (Scottish National Party): **Frog Orchid**

Bruce Crawford MSP for Stirling (Scottish National Party): **Slow Worm**

John Scott MSP for Ayr (Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party): **Grayling**

Nigel Don MSP for Angus North and Mearns (Scottish National Party): **Kittiwake**

Michael Russell MSP for Argyll and Bute (Scottish National Party): **Corncrake**

Richard Lyle MSP for Central Scotland (Scottish National Party): **Andrena ruficrus**

Clare Adamson MSP for Central Scotland (Scottish National Party): **Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary**

An updated list can be found here: <http://www.scotlink.org/public/work/species-champions.php>