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# Species Champions

Members of the Scottish Parliament lending political support to the protection of Scotland's threatened wildlife by becoming Species Champions

News Update: Autumn 2019



## Meet Our Newest Species Champions



A warm welcome to **Annabelle Ewing MSP** (left) and **Beatrice Wishart MSP** (right) who have both recently become Species Champions! Annabelle is Species Champion for **Daubenton's bat**, hosted by LINK member **Bat Conservation Trust** while Beatrice is Species Champion for **orca**, hosted by LINK member **Whale and Dolphin Conservation**.



## 44 Species Champions pledge to Stand up for Nature

Our natural world needs allies like never before. Members of Scottish Environment LINK are **calling on MSPs to show their support** for a healthy environment by pledging to stand up for nature.

**44 Species Champions** have already signed the pledge. We urge all MSPs to show their support by adding their name!



**The Pledge:**

“The joint emergencies of rapid biodiversity loss and climate breakdown require transformative action. **As a member of the Scottish Parliament, I pledge to stand up for nature.**”

“I will do everything in my power to ensure Scotland’s natural environment has strong and effective protection, alongside ambitious targets for its recovery and enhancement. When 1 in 11 species in Scotland is at risk of extinction, these measures are vital, whatever our future relationship with the European Union.”

MSPs can add their names to the pledge by emailing Miriam Ross, LINK Campaigns Coordinator at [miriam@scotlink.org](mailto:miriam@scotlink.org)

Find out more about the pledge, and see who is signed up [here](#)



## Species Champions Out and About



### Loch Carron MPA

Maree Todd MSP, Species Champion for flame shell with Marine Conservation Society joined campaigners, divers, scientists and fishermen on a group snorkel to celebrate Loch Carron becoming a permanent Marine Protected Area.



### Curlew Summit

Lewis Macdonald MSP, Species Champion for curlew with RSPB Scotland attended a Curlew Summit at 10 Downing Street, also attended by fellow UK curlew Species Champions Mark Isherwood AM from Wales and Jake Berry MP from England.

### Beaver and Aspen

John Finnie MSP, Species Champion for beaver with Scottish Wildlife Trust, RZSS and Scottish Wild Beaver Group visited a site in



Perthshire, looking at some simple measures that can be used to help people and beavers coexist, including those to protect his other species, aspen.



## Peregrine

Bob Doris MSP, Species Champion for peregrine with Scottish Raptor Study Group was introduced to his species in North Lanarkshire and managed to see six peregrines on the wing.



## Hen Harrier Spotting

Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and the Natural Environment and Species Champion for hen harrier with RSPB Scotland, visited Mar Lodge Estate to meet Scottish Raptor Study Group volunteers and to visit a hen harrier nest.



## Corncrakes on Tiree

Michael Russell MSP, Species Champion for corncrake with RSPB Scotland visited Tiree and met with RSPB staff to find his species. While they didn't see any corncrakes, they heard several calls and managed to spot ringed plovers and pyramid orchids.



## Cherry Trees in Dundee

Shona Robison MSP, Species Champion for Wild cherry with Woodland Trust Scotland joined staff from Dundee City Council, the Dundee City Council Tree Champion and Arina from Woodland Trust Scotland at Dawson Park.



## Bats in Gartcosh

Fulton MacGregor MSP, Species Champion for Natterer's bat with Bat Conservation Trust, ran a bat walk at Gartcosh Local Nature Reserve for International Bat Night, attended by local constituents, Bat Conservation Trust staff and volunteers.



## Lang Craigs Woodlands

Graham Simpson MSP, Species Champion for holly with Woodland Trust Scotland visited Lang Craigs where staff showed him around the site including recovering woodlands, new tree planting and they made a contribution towards the Ancient Tree Inventory.



# Species Champions In Parliament



## World Environment Day 2019

Gillian Martin, MSP Species Champion for yew tree and grey seal with Woodland Trust Scotland and Whale and Dolphin Conservation, led a Members' debate on World Environment Day 2019, to highlight the importance of biodiversity to our environment and give all Species Champions the chance to highlight their species. She highlighted her own experience in trying to free up a grey seal entangled in fishing net.

All 13 MSPs who participated in the debate were Species Champions, taking the opportunity to discuss their species, and the conservation challenges facing them.

### Grey Seal

Gillian Martin MSP, Species Champion for Grey seal with Whale and Dolphin Conservation met with Scottish Environment LINK staff and LINK Marine Group representatives to discuss her role as grey seal Species Champion, wildlife disturbance issues, MPA and SAC management, marine tourism and wildlife entanglement from marine litter.

### Raptor Persecution

Andy Wightman, MSP Species Champion for Golden eagle with RSPB Scotland wrote a letter to the First Minister urging her to take action against the ongoing issue of illegal raptor persecution. This follows on from the news that two Golden eagle chicks that Andy helped satellite tag, named Adam and Charlie, had disappeared under suspicious circumstances.

### Planning Bill

Graham Simpson, MSP Species Champion for holly with Woodland Trust Scotland spoke during the Planning (Scotland) Bill: Stage 3 proceedings as species champion, in support of amendment 207. As Species Champion he agrees that the planning system should not make it easy to chop down trees and that he wants to see woods and trees protected.

### Freshwater Pearl Mussel

Alexander Burnett, MSP Species Champion for freshwater pearl mussel with Buglife asked a Parliamentary Question on the statutory protection status of freshwater pearl mussels in an unnamed Scottish river.

### Butterfly Conservation

Ross Greer, MSP Species Champion for small blue with Butterfly Conservation Scotland, met with Butterfly Conservation staff in Parliament to discuss his species and actions needed in its conservation.

### Oak Processionary Moth

Monica Lennon, MSP Species Champion for oak tree with Woodland Trust Scotland, asked a Parliamentary Question on what measures are being taken to prevent outbreaks of oak processionary moth.

### Mountain Hares

### Scotland's Puffarazzi

Alison Johnstone, MSP Species Champion for hare with Scottish Wildlife Trust asked a Parliamentary Question on the downgrading of the conservation status of mountain hares by the EU and what consideration it has given to increasing protection, given it's a native species.

Claire Baker, MSP Species Champion for Puffin with RSPB Wildlife Trust asked a Scotland lodged a motion which welcomed the latest phase of the RSPB Puffarazzi project, which asks the public for submissions of puffins carrying fish, to analyse the changing diet of Scotland's seabirds over time.



## LINK Species Champions Coordinator

After 2 years, our Species Champions coordinator Calum Langdale will be moving on from his post at LINK. Calum would like to thank all MSP Species Champions he's worked with over this time, and hopes that MSPs, Species Champion host organisations and all others involved in the initiative can continue to stand up for Scotland's amazing biodiversity!

Please continue to direct all Species Champions related queries [specieschampion@scotlink.org](mailto:specieschampion@scotlink.org)



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Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

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