



Scottish  
Environment  
LINK

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1 October 2020

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

At this pivotal global moment, when the imperative for collective action for nature and climate is clearer than ever, and when governments, sub-national and local authorities, non-governmental organisations and communities around the world are planning a transformative decade for biodiversity, green recovery from Covid, and nature-based solutions to the climate emergency, we are writing to offer our collaboration in developing and delivering the next biodiversity strategy for Scotland.

With the Edinburgh Declaration standing as a welcome and clear articulation of both the challenge that we face together, and the cooperative and aligned approach we must all adopt to tackle it, we believe the moment is right to begin a process of progressive codesign.

We appreciate that, in this challenging period, the Scottish Government and public bodies have needed time to develop internal structures and governance arrangements for biodiversity going forwards from 2020. We were pleased therefore to hear from your officials at the first Scottish Biodiversity Stakeholder Group meeting earlier this month, that these arrangements are approaching a settled structure, and that seven Biodiversity Projects are being developed to drive action and delivery. We are keen to contribute our expertise, experience, research and outreach capacity to these developing initiatives.

We were also pleased to hear that Scotland's next biodiversity strategy will be a new entity, as opposed to an update or extension of the current one. It will need to articulate a clear vision that sets Scotland's biodiversity on track to recovery and full resilience to future and ongoing change and must achieve the full buy in across Scotland that will be needed for successful delivery. Our shared evidence base in the State of Nature Report tells us that Scottish nature is in continuing decline, and so new approaches and progressive thinking will clearly be essential. Scotland's voluntary environment sector, one of the most vibrant and diverse anywhere, is able to play a positive creative role in developing these. Our track record as agents of change and delivery partners speaks for itself, first collated in [Delivering the Goods](#) (2008) report. Our sector has brought historic innovation and progress, including the origins of peatland restoration; reversing species declines; accessing international funding sources; developing landscape-scale conservation initiatives like Cairngorms Connect; championing successful reintroductions of lost species; advocating legislative change for effective environmental, site, habitat and species protection; island restoration and red squirrel conservation to tackle invasive non-native species issues; collaborating in progressive initiatives like the Pollinator Strategy; building strong and lasting partnerships under the Scottish Environment LINK umbrella. And of course, environmental NGOs pioneered in development of the shared State of Nature evidence base itself.

Moreover, key external funding bodies such as NLHF have made it clear to officials, NatureScot and environmental NGOs that the environment sector compares poorly with, for example, the culture sector in coordination across government and voluntary organisations in funding applications. They have stressed the need for us to come together strategically, to align organisational priorities and goals, and to agree pipelines of projects in collaboration. We believe that the most effective way to secure that alignment will be to develop our national Biodiversity Strategy to 2030 under clear co-design principles.

We make this offer of input and support in a spirit of openness and ambition to build a shared green recovery to the pandemic, and to reverse the loss of biodiversity in Scotland. We would warmly welcome a round-table discussion to develop shared thinking further.

Yours sincerely



Charles Dundas  
LINK Chair



Gus Jones, Convener Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group



Kit Stoner, CEO Bat Conservation Trust



Craig Macadam, Conservation Director Buglife



Gill Perkins, CEO Bumblebee Conservation Trust



Julie Williams, CEO Butterfly Conservation



Kathy Wormald, CEO Froglife



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Alison Lomax, Director Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust



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Barry Fisher, CEO Keep Scotland Beautiful



David Balharry, CEO John Muir Trust



Calum Duncan, Head of Conservation Scotland, Marine Conservation Society



Philip Long, CEO The National Trust for Scotland



Alistair Whyte, Head of Plantlife Scotland



giving  
nature  
a home

Anne McCall, Director RSPB Scotland



David Field, CEO Royal Zoological Society of Scotland



Allan Bantick, Scottish Badgers



Beryl Leatherland, Convener Scottish Wild Land Group



Jo Pike, CEO Scottish Wildlife Trust



Steve Micklewright, CEO Trees for Life



Carol Evans, Director Woodland Trust Scotland



**Scottish Environment LINK** the voice for Scotland's environment



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