

Scottish Parliament election: what the party manifestos say on the environment



Scotland will vote for its next parliament on 6 May and the five main political parties have released their manifestos in the lead up to the election day. To help LINK members and supporters we have produced this guide to help you compare each party's pledges with the 12 asks in [LINK's Manifesto for Nature and Climate](#).

This table is a snapshot of commitments that have been made to improve Scotland's environment in the face of the nature and climate emergency and each party manifesto contains further detail. We have included quotes that go some way to meeting our 12 asks although not all fulfil them completely.

LINK members called on political parties to commit to:	What the 5 main parties have said:				
	SNP (read here)	Scottish Conservatives (read here)	Scottish Labour (read here)	Scottish Greens (read here)	Scottish Liberal Democrats (read here)
A Nature Network for Scotland delivering bigger, better, more joined up sites for nature.	"We will ensure that every Local Authority area will have a Nature Network of new, locally driven projects which aim to improve ecological connectivity across Scotland."	"We would establish Nature Networks across Scotland to better safeguard protected areas, allow species to move between habitats and ensure that our natural assets are treated as part of our national infrastructure. We will work with the UK Government to ensure Nature Networks are seamless where they cross between Scotland and England."	"Scottish Labour supports... a Nature Network for Scotland through the National Planning Framework."	"We will... create a Nature Network for Scotland, connecting habitats across the country to ensure they are robust, coherent and proofed against climate change. The Nature Network will be given statutory weight in national planning documents and government policy, and will include areas for rewilding."	"Our intentions for the new national planning framework are to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure access to green, open spaces, wildlife corridors and woodland is available to every community."

<p>An ambitious Environment Act that includes legally-binding targets for nature's recovery.</p>	<p>"We will publish a new biodiversity strategy within 12 months of the biodiversity COP, and remain committed to protecting at least 30% of Scotland's land by 2030. We want to go further still and will review our current targets when we publish our new strategy."</p>	<p>"One in nine species in Scotland are threatened by extinction. To prevent this, the Scottish Conservatives would bring forward an ambitious Nature Bill to strengthen environmental protections on land and sea for Scottish species and their habitats."</p>	<p>"Scottish Labour supports an ambitious Environment Act that includes legally binding targets for nature's recovery"</p>	<p>We will...Introduce legally binding nature recovery targets.</p>	<p>"We will propose a Nature Recovery Law to set legal targets across government to clean up our air, soils, seas and rivers. We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set legally binding nature recovery targets, with an action plan and financial support for delivery."
<p>A plan for ocean recovery where at least 30% of Scotland's seas are highly protected from extractive activities by 2030.</p>	<p>"Through the blue economy action plan, we will seek to reduce harmful practices and consequences such as marine littering, marine plastics, pollution and reduce carbon emissions from marine activity – in particular, we will explore the potential for low carbon fishing vessels to be deployed on inshore waters."</p>	<p>"We will review the current Marine Protected Areas in Scottish waters, with a view to expanding their extent, and pilot the introduction of Highly Protected Marine Areas."</p>	<p>"We will also support a plan for ocean recovery with at least one tenth of Scotland's Seas fully protected, and a further 20% highly protected, from destructive and extractive activities by 2030."</p>	<p>"The Scottish Greens will ensure at least 30% of our seas are protected, and a third of this area will be highly protected, which means fishing and other industries would be excluded. This will protect Scotland's unique marine environment and wildlife, and support our economy and that of coastal communities in particular as it will deliver net benefits to fish stocks and support the growth of sustainable fishing and seafood businesses, creating more green jobs."</p>	<p>"We will start a Marine Recovery Plan to restore more of our seas, encourage marine biodiversity and boost ecotourism businesses alongside traditional maritime industries.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designate new marine protected areas where this is backed by scientific evidence. • Support research to demonstrate how Scotland's marine area acts to capture carbon in the seabed and marine ecosystems."

<p>Sufficient funding to address the climate and nature emergency. <i>*Note LINK’s specific call for increased funding for Scotland’s public environment agencies.</i></p>	<p>“Invest an additional £500 million in our natural economy to help tackle the biodiversity crisis.”</p>		<p>“We will develop a Biodiversity Action Plan for land, air and sea, with adequate funding, which the whole country can coalesce around before it is too late. We also need greater investment in climate adaption, which recognises the risks of flooding with coastal protection, river basin management and flood prevention schemes. We must ensure that the opportunity to sequester carbon in our marine environment is adequately funded.”</p>	<p>“As part of our plans for a green economic recovery, the Scottish Greens will invest in the restoration and protection of Scotland’s parks, green spaces and natural environment. This will create green jobs across Scotland, particularly in rural areas. We will invest at least £895m over the next five years in restoring nature whilst investing in rural communities, creating over 6,000 green jobs.”</p>	<p>“We will initiate a full spending review at the conclusion of the pandemic period to guide the recovery in public services and the economy. The spending review, in particular, will align the capital programme with our climate change priorities, not least ending fuel poverty.”</p>
<p>Legislation and policies to decarbonise and build a Circular Economy.</p>	<p>“We will bring forward a Circular Economy Bill to advance Scotland’s ambitions for the circular economy through measures which will encourage reuse of products and reduce waste. The bill will tackle our reliance on single-use items and include measures to tackle textile pollution/fast fashion.”</p>	<p>“To deliver this, we would bring forward a Circular Economy Bill early in the next Parliament. This will set new targets for reducing our raw material usage, especially those that are single use or difficult to recycle. Alongside this, we will invest in our recycling capacity and fund the</p>	<p>“Scottish Labour will support reduction targets for the circular economy, which adopts similar models to those used in the Climate Change Act.”</p> <p>“Scottish Labour supports measures that deliver a circular economy, including introducing a Circular Economy Bill and</p>	<p>“We will: Introduce a Circular Economy Bill with targets to reduce our overall consumption of raw materials, our carbon footprint, and a duty to produce Resource Reduction Plans.”</p> <p>“We will....Move towards a circular economy whereby all packaging and products</p>	<p>“We will introduce a Circular Economy Law including targets that reduce the emissions produced in creating everything we consume, and use other parts of our programme, to achieve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comprehensive assessment, monitoring and reporting of Scotland’s

		<p>creation of a Centre for Circular Economy Excellence to drive the rollout of best practice in business, public sector, the third sector and communities. We will establish a Circular Economy Awards Scheme to recognise innovation in reuse and waste reduction. We will ensure that public procurement is used to incentivise the delivery of our environmental targets and enhance our circular economy.”</p>	<p>obligations on the producers of waste and annual material flow accounts. This includes the introduction of deposit return schemes and regulatory action to eliminate plastic cigarette filters, as well as supporting global campaigns to tackle abuses in the global fashion supply chain.”</p>	<p>sold in Scotland must be readily able to be reused, repaired, or recycled, with producers responsible for the costs of managing their products throughout their lifecycle.”</p>	<p>material, land, carbon and water footprints. A duty to produce a Resource Reduction Plan, updated every five years.”</p>
<p>Support future farming with nature at its heart.</p>	<p>“We will support farmers to produce more of our own food needs sustainably and to farm and croft with nature, including through enhanced animal welfare and health approaches and better adoption and deployment of technology and innovation, as recommended by the recent work of farmer-led groups set up in the last parliament. A single</p>	<p>“Scottish Conservatives would reverse cuts to the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme and agree a multi-year extension until the new agricultural policy is implemented.”</p>	<p>“Farmers and crofters need clarity as a new agriculture support system is developed to help tackle the climate crisis. We will maintain current levels of funding until 2024 and from then we will put in place a new scheme that gives farmers and crofters certainty. The new financial support must recognise farmers’ knowledge, recognising their experience in reducing emissions and</p>	<p>“We will... Deliver a new Agriculture Bill that enshrines the principles of climate and nature recovery into a new agricultural support scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make emission reductions and climate mitigation measures a compulsory requirement for all subsidies, delivering significant change at no extra cost. • Replace current grants with Land Management 	<p>We will use the recent conclusions of the expert working groups on agriculture support as a starting point in driving the transition to a more sustainable food production system.”</p> <p>“We will expand and diversify the Farm Advisory Service to provide new jobs, training and skills, that support sustainable land use.”</p>

	<p>implementation board with representation from all farming sectors and types will be established to drive this work forward.”</p> <p>“We remain committed to supporting active farming and food production with direct payments. By 2025, however, we will shift half of all funding for farming and crofting from unconditional to conditional support and there will be targeted outcomes for biodiversity gain and a drive towards low carbon approaches which improve resilience, efficiency and profitability.”</p>		<p>protecting Scotland’s landscape and work towards sustainable farming practices. We believe that the new agricultural support package offers a valuable opportunity to deliver on baseline environmental commitments, and incentivise actions that deliver food production, climate and biodiversity outcomes in a complementary fashion.”</p>	<p>Contracts, which will support farmers to deliver a range of public benefits including organic farmland conversion, agroforestry, agroecology, soil conservation and peatland restoration, flood management, wetland creation, landscape restoration and public access, renewable energy, rewilding and species reintroductions.”</p>	
<p>Protections for our peatlands including implementing a ban on peat extraction and sale for horticultural use as well as a ban on burning of peatlands.</p>	<p>“We will ban the sale of peat related gardening products.”</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>“We ... remain committed to implementing the licensing of driven grouse shooting.”</p>	<p>“Peatland covers more than a fifth of Scotland, yet around 80 per cent of Scotland’s natural peatland is degraded. To prevent further damage, we would end peat extraction for use in compost and we would aim to increase peatland restoration</p>	<p>“Scottish Labour would...increase peatland restoration to 20,000 hectares each year, alongside measures to end commercial peat extraction.”</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>“Going further than the</p>	<p>“Ban peat extraction and sale for horticultural use.”</p> <p><i>AND</i></p> <p>“Ban the burning of peatlands and license any other proposed burning.”</p>	<p>“License of the practice of muirburn in the uplands.”</p>

		to 20,000 hectares annually by 2024-25.”	Werritty report, Scottish Labour will support the comprehensive licensing of grouse moors as soon as possible, with robust criteria to end the unsustainable practices of driven grouse moors and to promote the sustainable development of our uplands, in the interests of everyone.”		
Establish Regional Land Use Frameworks by 2023.		“We would ensure Regional Land Use Partnerships sufficiently represent the agricultural sector and support the delivery of new agricultural policy.”	“We will develop Regional Land Use Frameworks by 2023, with input from a wide range of stakeholders to set out regional land use priorities and funding requirements.”	“We will... Establish Regional land use partnerships in every part of Scotland by 2023 to help deliver nature networks and restore our environment.”	
A new Deer (Scotland) Act to bring deer management into the 21st century.	“We will implement the recommendations of the Deer Working Group and modernise deer management legislation.”	“We will support land managers in controlling our deer population to reduce damage to our natural environment.”	“Overgrazing by deer can damage our native woodlands, and we support modernising deer legislation and the implementation of the Deer Working Group recommendations.”	“Address grazing pressure in the uplands by increasing the deer management grant, implementing the recommendations of the Deer Management Working Group, and encouraging a reduction in sheep numbers via existing agricultural support schemes.”	“Implement the recommendations of the Deer Management Review to control numbers and restore biodiverse landscapes.”

<p>At least 50% of all woodland expansion to be with native species and at least 10% through natural regeneration.</p>	<p>“We will increase our targets for new woodland creation by 50%, from 12,000 hectares up to 18,000 hectares per year by 2025.”</p>	<p>“We would increase new tree planting in Scotland to 18,000 hectares annually by 2024-25. However, quality and biodiversity are also important, so we would increase the proportion of new planting that is of native species, while ensuring that Scotland’s forests are productive.”</p>	<p>“At least 50% of all woodland expansion should be with native species and at least 10% delivered through natural regeneration.”</p>	<p>“Just 18% of Scotland is currently forested, but our vision is to increase this to 40%, and for at least 60% of this to be native woodland. We will: Target the Scottish Forestry Grant programme at native woodland creation, including productive mixed and broadleaf woodland as well as woodland where nature and recreation is prioritised.”</p>	<p>“Expand woodland using at least 50 per cent native species, increasing Scotland’s forest cover by an additional 36 million trees every year.”</p>
<p>An end to wildlife crime by fully resourcing a full-time Wildlife Crime Unit within Police Scotland.</p>	<p>“We will legislate to close loopholes in the law protecting foxes and other wild mammals.”</p>	<p></p>	<p>“Scottish Labour will carry out a full review of Scotland’s outdated animal welfare legislation, with a view to strengthening wildlife protection law and animal welfare.”</p>	<p>“We will: Deliver a fully resourced a Wildlife Crime Investigation Unit to investigate wildlife persecution and enforce protection, and ensure there are adequate wildlife crime officers in all regions.”</p>	<p>“We will guarantee sufficient resources for the police’s Wildlife Crime Investigation Unit”</p>
<p>Protections for our freshwater species and habitats, including by limiting development on floodplains to give more space for our rivers and coasts to naturally regenerate.</p>	<p>“We will ensure that trees, woodlands and natural resources play a key role in flood prevention schemes, in riparian repair activity and to address air pollution.”</p>	<p>“We would also protect Scotland’s iconic salmon rivers.”</p>	<p></p>	<p>“Establish Land Management Contracts to reward farmers and land managers financially for delivering natural flood management solutions.”</p> <p>“Deliver a Scottish Water investment</p>	<p></p>

				programme that protects and enhances the environmental status of rivers and beaches..."	
Other: to enshrine a Human Right to a Healthy Environment	<p>"we will incorporate four more United Nations Human Rights treaties into Scots Law:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women - The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities <p>This world-leading human rights legislation will reduce inequality and advance the rights of everyone and ensure human rights are embedded in every aspect of life in Scotland."</p>		"The Scottish Parliament agrees that now is the time to fully enshrine in law a human right to a healthy environment. Scottish Labour has a plan to deliver this."	"Introduce a Human Rights (Scotland) Act to enshrine fundamental rights, including the right to a healthy and safe environment."	"We will also aim to fully incorporate the Right to a Healthy and Safe Environment into Scots Law in line with the UN framework principles, and the Aarhus Convention."

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899), core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from NatureScot, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.
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