

Meeting Notes- Wildlife Group meeting 19th April (14:00am-16:00pm) via Zoom

Attendees- Juliet Caldwell (LINK), Paul Walton (RSPB), Alistair Whyte (Plantlife), Amber Connett (CIEEM), Arina Russell (Woodland Trust), Rebecca Miller (NTS), Deborah Long (LINK), Juliette Camburn (KSB), Helen Taylor (RZSS)

Apologies – Bruce Wilson (SWT), Isobel Mercer (RSPB), Chris Corrigan (BCT), Craig Macadam (Buglife), Annie Robinson (CIEEM), Chris Charlton (SWBG), Beryl Leatherland (SWLG)

Chaired by – Alistair Whyte (Plantlife)

Summary of actions from previous 2nd March meeting

Action No.	Action	To be actioned by	Status
1.	Get update from Sarah McKain (BES) on their plans for 30x30 and feedback to group.	Andrea Hudspeth	Done
2.	Initiate meeting with Anna Brand (SPICe) for NBS briefing/workshop.	Bruce	February
3.	Article/blog on raising the profile on INNS via FoS	Paul Walton	24 th – 30 th May

1. General Updates

- **Acceptance of Previous Minutes & Review of Actions**

- Paul Walton agreed to publish blog for INNS week - 24th – 30th May. The GB INNS secretariat brings the UK, Scotland and Welsh governments together every year to promote INNS advocacy. Paul has drafted up an RSPB blog for INNS week on one of the 11 asks from the [Nature Recovery Plan](#) – to establish an INNS Inspectorate in Scotland. Paul has been working with WCL and the UK Government to establish a UK inspectorate for INNS, with the cooperation of officials from DEFRA. Calling for an inspectorate for INNS in Scotland.
- CBD, IPBES and agreement between international treaties have agreed that the way you address INNS is via prevention. The cost of INNS is in the trillions of £. Scotland have failed to tackle INNS, e.g., examples of rhododendron control. An inspectorate is about national biosecurity and would improve customs examining goods coming into the country (international trade).

- **Meetings Attended**

- Beaver Scottish Forum meeting - judicial review for management of beavers. [Ferret article](#) on how NFUS and Scottish Land and Estates are asking their members to contribute to the judicial review.
- RZSS and SWT acknowledge that as a last resort, lethal control may be appropriate if it is done within the bounds of good welfare and is proven to be a last resort. RZSS have asked questions on what transparency there is going to be on the process of issuing licenses.
- The beaver management regulations were brought in and RZSS have raised through the forum that there was a lack of transparency about what those regulations would be. The draft that the forum saw and agreed to was different to the final document.

- Biodiversity Stakeholder meeting at the end of March. Scot Gov are in the process of setting up a biodiversity unit within the environment and forestry directorate. They re-iterated the commitment to 30 by 30, or further for marine. There were 4 presentations on current delivery which included Cairngorms Nature, Species on the Edge and on challenging managing MPAs from NatureScot. Juliet gave a short presentation on the Still DtG report.

2. Introductory briefings for MSPs on LINK working groups – ‘5 things you need to know about X’

- Vhairi and Anne are preparing a series of introductory ‘5 things you need to know about X’ briefings as a way of engaging with new MSPs in May. They’re planning to do these briefings so that they cover all of LINK’s main working areas, making them roughly one per working group. The Wildlife Group briefing will be focused on nature loss and the biodiversity crisis.
 - The 5 things:
 1. Key stats on how nature is in crisis – using State of Nature report stats, the Aichi target reporting and the Global Biodiversity Outlook 5 report – to give some context on the nature emergency
 - Suggested nature-based solutions should be included in this point
 2. Legally binding nature recovery targets in Scotland in order to reach global targets such as halting the loss of biodiversity by 2030
 3. Nature Networks and the benefits to wildlife as well as tackling climate change
 - Suggested that 30x30, the remaining 70% and protected areas should be included in this point
 4. Bills and acts need to be nature positive - ensuring the Scot Gov puts nature at the centre of decision making etc.
 5. How we need the right resources to revert nature loss – e.g., adequate funding
- The briefing will be circulated to the Wildlife Group for feedback by mid-May

3. Update on biodiversity process

a. Post 2020 biodiversity delivery

- The new biodiversity structures: 1 – creating the next SBS which will be a brand new strategy. 2 – building the development plan to deliver that strategy. There will be steering groups for these and LINK is guaranteed some seats on the delivery plan development group and will probably be on the strategy writing group as well.
- The Strategic Project Alliance is about cooperative working for projects for biodiversity. LINK has 5 seats. The SPA is built along a model of the culture sector. For eNGOs, for e.g. working with Scotland’s rainforest which is a multi-faceted and complex challenge which requires multiple projects. This is the approach the Alliance for Scotland’s Rainforest is taking.
- The Greens got £10m into the Scottish Government budget. The Scottish Government need to spend this by end of financial year in totality. This could cause issues by going to be allocated to projects already running.
- This is the beginning of the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. This allows both large and small organisations to take part. We must convince the Scottish Government that our ecosystems need restoring. Paul Walton is working on a metric – the Biodiversity Intactness Index – showing Scotland’s ecosystems are in a poor state compared to the rest of the world.
- Discussion surrounding ecosystem restoration - what are we looking to restore to. A particular number of species, a biodiversity index or a window of time that we want to reverse it to. Different ideas of what restoration looks like – prehuman, pre-European settlement etc. Having clear language and targets around restoration is useful for working towards a clear goal.

- Target work with ELUK – a set of targets that are biologically meaningful and measurable. To have something tangible and measurable the group have agreed on species measures – abundance, occupancy (range). Those measures are using data from as many taxa as possible. The data only runs back to 1970 for species occupancy and early 1990s for species abundance. The IUCN red list data looks at threat level and a measure of habitat quality. The Biodiversity Intactness Index looks at species within a given habitat in a country and looks at an equivalent habitat elsewhere that has the minimum human impact on it and compares the two. The next step is looking at how to change the biodiversity intactness index.
- The State of Nature targets have been adopted into a new biodiversity indicator into the NPF4. RSPB science colleagues took the contract for this which was challenging as the Scottish Government wanted one line.
- Paul Walton had a meeting with Des Thompson on the events planned around Edinburgh Declaration and Process last spring at the Royal Botanic Gardens. NatureScot want to do something on the lead up to COP15. Organise a week of showcase events in September. Centered around RGBE, Inverness, Glasgow and around Scotland to raise awareness of the CBD COP15.
- Sue Campbell, an official who led on the Edinburgh Declaration, and Des will organise a meeting with Paul and Deborah to discuss these events.
- Bridget Campbell and Keith Connal from the Scottish Government are retiring and their replacements are Kevin Quinlan and Cate Turton OBE who will be appointed in May.
- 20th May – NatureScot want to organize a seminar around NBS, building on the stakeholder workshop discussion. They want a LINK rep to talk about NBS.
- NatureScot and RGBE are leading on the developing on the development of a plant conservation strategy, which was mentioned in the Statement of Intent. This will inform post-2020 biodiversity activity. This will feed into a new biodiversity strategy. They have taken an open approach. Plantlife are meeting NatureScot, RGBE and the plant link Scotland group on April 27th. Paul Walton to organise an RSPB rep to attend.

4. Update on targets work

- Confirmation of COP15 dates – they have announced they will be 11-24 October. This will be a hybrid COP – so both online and in person
- ELUK targets group met on the 7th April. The group have decided to update the [Global Goal for Nature and People](#) paper. The headline goal will be changed to 2030 for halting the decline of nature instead of the initial 2050 goal for reversing the decline – to reflect the CBD and global messaging. The targets in the report Stuart Housden wrote for LINK last year hasn't changed as it includes the 2030 target for halting the decline of nature but also includes 2045 as a target for reversing the decline – this is to reflect the climate targets in Scotland. This briefing will be updated on the website this week.

ELUK group have been discussing putting together a joint briefing on monitoring, reporting, verification, and enforcement (MERV) with regards to domestic targets.

- Suggested that the briefing could include an overview of what successful implementation of the post-2020 framework looks like, the principles around the targets and indicators, funding as well as the reporting structures that need to be in place.
- The global framework will be updated into national biodiversity strategies and action plans – this is a role for ELUK to play in how that is done. Advocating for transparency, accountability and making sure they line up across the four countries. What do we want for an accountability framework across the four countries across the next decade and how can we use the CBD to help improve these processes.
- The UK target officers will develop this briefing – no set deadline for this yet.

Parliamentary Roadshow

- This is a series of Zoom sessions for parliamentarians about global nature and climate action in 2021, and how that's linked to domestic action – organised by RSPB, WWF and the ELUK group.
- WCL, RSPB & WWF held an online session for MPs on the importance of CBD & COP15 in March which went well - 8 MPs or representatives from MP offices were there, plus reps from Peers for the Planet and the Conservative Environment Network
- The Scotland steering group met at the end of March to discuss ideas for the MSP event and agree a date – 17th June.
- Speakers:
 - Georgina Chandler from the global team at RSPB will give an overview of the global events of 2021 (COP15/COP26/G7) and what is at stake
 - There will be a presentation on why Scotland needs legally binding nature targets to tackle biodiversity loss – to illustrate linking the global to local and back again – still waiting on confirmation from speaker
 - Des Thompson from NatureScot will present on the importance of the Edinburgh Declaration as a key example of demonstrating leadership and how Scotland can lead from the front on that
 - Ariel Brunner from Birdlife will be presenting the EU context, as the Scottish Government are working closely to this. He'll be discussing EU restoration targets and the UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration etc.
- Invites will be sent to MSPs in May

LINK 30x30 paper update

- Isobel and Juliet held a workshop at the start of March with members to discuss what position is to be taken as LINK. They are currently in discussion with members and are incorporating feedback from these members before a draft is circulated to the wider group.
- LINK are developing a position on whether we want to call for the Scottish Government to commit to the extra 10% strict protection. However, this has to have a primary focus of protecting and restoring biodiversity, whilst respecting the rights of local communities in biodiversity conservation.
- Isobel and Juliet have been working with the Marine group to make sure the position for 30x30 on land and at seas is complementary.
- Juliet and Isobel will report back on the BES 30x30 event. Will be helpful to hear NatureScot's presentation as well as hear what other organisations are thinking on this.

5. Species Champions/Nature Champions

Nature Champion pledge

- The pledge asks candidates, if elected, to do everything in their power to support policies and strategies which will deliver a nature recovery – it also asks candidates to support the need to implement long-term ambitious measures for nature recovery (e.g. targets). This be running until the election.
- 49 sign ups across the 5 main parties – only 1 Tory - trying to contact Tory candidates via Twitter to get their attention and also researchers.
- The online map is still receiving support from the public with just under 1800 sign ups across Scotland.

Species Champions film

- Funding from DPF to commission a film maker to produce a short film (3 mins) which will showcase the highlights and successes from the Species Champion initiative over the last 5 years
- The film will be used as an advocacy tool to encourage newly elected MSPs in the next parliamentary term to sign up to the new Nature Champions initiative which has been developed to encourage MSPs to champion priority habitats as well as endangered species.
- The film will also be shown at the online event launch on June 3rd for the Nature Champions initiative, whereby all MSPs will be invited.
- The film will include:
 - Photos and videos from MSP Champions on site visits meeting their species/visiting habitats
 - Sound bites and snippets of videos from when MSPs have stood up in Parliament and talked about their species in debates
 - Quotes/short videos from host organisations on their experiences of being involved with the initiative – as well as talking about why biodiversity is important
 - Snippets of video from the previous MSP Champions on what they enjoyed most about being a Species Champion – I'm going to contact Claudia Beamish, Colin Smyth, Alison Johnstone etc.
- Juliet looking together a small steering group to get some feedback along the way.

Nature Champions

- The idea is that Nature Champions will give MSPs the opportunity to champion priority habitats as well as priority species. Hoping that this approach will enable LINK members haven't been involved with Species Champions before to work in urban areas, or on specific habitat issues to engage and host an MSP on key policy issues for them.
- Nature Champions will take on a similar format to Species Champions. MSPs would be supported by a LINK member organisation to get to know their habitats or species and the key issues affecting them – as well as getting them to carry out direct actions such as lodging motions, asking PQs or briefing them for key debates.
- There was a meeting at the start of May with members to get an idea of which organisations will be interested in hosting which habitat/and or species. Discussed the [live list](#) where members are noting down their interest and if it links in with any species on the current list. Aiming to have the first initial list ready for Champions by the end of May.
- Juliet is drafting up the next fact sheets for each species and habitat and will be in contact with host members to check/gather info.

World Environment Day – Nature Champions launch

- Nature Champions official launch is on the 3rd June – World Environment Day is on the 5th June but it's a Saturday so it's in celebration of this. This will be an online Zoom event where all MSPs will be invited to attend.
- Hoping to get an MSP who has been a Species Champion to host. It was suggested to ask a retiring MSP such as John Finnie.
- There will be a presentation from Deborah on an overview of Nature Champions and some background to LINK work. Hoping to get some presentations organised from members who hosted Species Champions to highlight key species and how the initiative is important. There will be a focus on what the MSPs gets out of it and what direct actions can be taken. The Species Champion film will be shown followed by a Q&A.

6. AOB

- CIEEM published a briefing on biodiversity net gain implementing in Scotland. Aimed at local authorities as a tool for implementing positive enhancements for biodiversity - <https://cieem.net/resource/biodiversity-net-gain-in-scotland-briefing-note-for-local-planning-authorities/>
- Delivering the Goods update – there has been lots of request for the data in the report. Used in funding advocacy via promoting it and behind it sits the live projects list that the Green Recovery Group maintain. DtG includes 15 projects. In relation to the Strategic Project Alliance meeting – we need to ensure the live list is kept updated.

7. Date for the next meeting TBC.

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1.	Initiate meeting with Anna Brand (SPICe) for NBS briefing/workshop.	Bruce	May
2.	Article/blog on raising the profile on INNS via FoS	Paul Walton	24 th – 30 th May
3.	Circulate Nature INNS paper	Paul Walton	April
4.	Ask Anna Brand and Alexa Morrison from SPICe to write a briefing on CBD COP15 for MSPs following the Parliamentary Roadshow event.	Paul and Isobel	April/May
5.	Update the Green Recovery live projects list	Wildlife Group members	Ongoing