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Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
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Dear First Minister,

**Appoint a Cabinet Secretary for Nature and Biodiversity.**

Congratulations on your re-election and return to government. Over the next five years, significant progress must be made to meet Scotland's ambitious climate targets. It will also be crucial to start to reverse biodiversity declines at a time when the *State of Nature Scotland* report puts 1 in 9 species at risk of extinction in Scotland and Scotland's Marine Assessment 2020 underlines continued declines at sea. In the previous parliamentary session, you said that addressing this biodiversity crisis is as important as addressing climate change. We took your government's Statement of Intent on Biodiversity and leadership on the Edinburgh Declaration as evidence of commitment to this. We also noted your party's recent manifesto commitment to additional investment in nature to help tackle the biodiversity crisis.

In this UN Decade for Ecosystem Restoration, addressing the biodiversity crisis, on land and at sea, must have equal weight to the climate emergency – indeed, they are two sides of the same coin. The role of Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform in your last cabinet was crucial for driving progress on the Environment Strategy, investment in peatland restoration and the expansion of Scotland's Marine Protected Area network.

To continue to build on this success, LINK members believe biodiversity on land and at sea must continue to be a Cabinet Secretary level responsibility. We ask you therefore to signal your government's dual focus on nature and climate by appointing a Cabinet Secretary for Nature and Biodiversity to complement your manifesto commitment to appoint a Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Transport. Ultimately all cabinet portfolios must be fully committed to, aligned with, tackling the nature *and* climate crises.

In a year that will see both the COP15 biodiversity summit in China as well as Glasgow's COP26 climate talks take place, we believe this would signal your government's intention to truly be a world leader on environmental matters – both for Scotland's nature and the climate.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Dundas, Chair of Scottish Environment LINK



Scottish Environment LINK the voice for Scotland's environment

