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Scotland has the potential to be a world leader in biodiversity recovery, but as things stand, our ecosystems are degraded, and an alarming number of our species populations are in decline. The new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy offers the opportunity to develop and implement targeted action to turn this around and put Scotland on the path to nature recovery. Scotland's eNGOs, with our expertise, land holdings and strong links to communities, will be an integral part of delivering this recovery. This paper sets out the key elements which LINK believes are essential for success. We look forward to working openly and collaboratively with the Scottish Government to develop and deliver a truly world-leading biodiversity strategy.

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- The next Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) should be framed around the **principal global direct drivers of biodiversity loss**:
    - habitat degradation;
    - over-exploitation;
    - climate change;
    - pollution;
    - invasive non-native species.
  - **Ecosystem Restoration** should be a key framing concept, articulating the step change required in **scale and ambition** of conservation action. **Explicit Nature and Ecosystem Restoration Targets** should be incorporated in the Strategy and/or Delivery Plan.
  - An explicit strategic objective should be to **reverse current declines** in species abundance and species occupancy, as recorded in the **State of Nature Report** and **Scotland's Marine Assessment**, and to **improve Scotland's Biodiversity Intactness Index** scoring in both absolute and relative terms.
  - The scope of the SBS should be defined as Scotland's contribution towards meeting **CBD 2030 Action Targets 1-9** – i.e. those global targets **directly aimed at Reducing Threats to Biodiversity** (Annex 1).
  - Developing **Nature and Ecosystem-based approaches to the Climate Emergency**, alongside **strengthening resilience in species and habitats to the Climate Emergency**, should both be central themes. For example, island habitat restoration has the potential to improve the capacity of seabirds to withstand climate change food-web impacts; rewetting peatlands to benefit the ecological community alongside reducing carbon emissions.
  - The imperative to **better integrate biodiversity action** across land and sea-use sectors should be articulated, with **Scotland's Nature Network**, **the Marine Strategy** and **Land-use Frameworks** specified as key integration mechanisms.

- **Priority ecosystems must be specified for active restoration**, with mechanisms and approaches specified in the Delivery Plan. These should include:
  - Peatlands
  - Rainforest
  - Islands
  - Caledonian pinewoods
  - Other Ancient and semi-natural woodlands
  - Kelp beds and other benthic communities
  - Rivers and lochs
  - Grasslands and High Nature Value farmland
  - Mountains/arctic-alpine habitats
  - Estuaries and Saltmarsh
  - Coastal seabed and Seagrass
  - Deep water marine communities
- **Indirect drivers, such as human disconnect from nature**, should not replace or dominate the direct drivers in terms of action priority – but should be articulated in the Delivery Plan.
- Species that should be prioritised for direct action should be derived from a **reviewed and revised Scottish Biodiversity List: Conservation Need** should become a key listing criterion across taxa (as in the NatureScot-led Species at Risk initiative). Species action must not be targeted at charismatic fauna alone, but must reflect the nation’s wider taxonomic complement of priority species.
- The scale of the challenge faced by Scotland and the wider world to reverse biodiversity decline and restore it for future generations can only be achieved by **working together**: neither the public nor private sector can achieve this alone. Environmental charities and civic society offer a key to success through their sustained action on the ground, working together at scale and over time.

**Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 40 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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**Scottish Environment LINK** the voice for Scotland’s environment

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## **Annex 1:**

### **FIRST DRAFT OF THE POST-2020 GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY FRAMEWORK**

#### **2030 Action Targets – Reducing Threats to Biodiversity**

Target 1. Ensure that all land and sea areas globally are under integrated biodiversity-inclusive spatial planning addressing land- and sea-use change, retaining existing intact and wilderness areas.

Target 2. Ensure that at least 20 per cent of degraded freshwater, marine and terrestrial ecosystems are under restoration, ensuring connectivity among them and focusing on priority ecosystems.

Target 3. Ensure that at least 30 per cent globally of land areas and of sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Target 4. Ensure active management actions to enable the recovery and conservation of species and the genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species, including through ex situ conservation, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to avoid or reduce human-wildlife conflict.

Target 5. Ensure that the harvesting, trade and use of wild species is sustainable, legal, and safe for human health.

Target 6. Manage pathways for the introduction of invasive alien species, preventing, or reducing their rate of introduction and establishment by at least 50 per cent, and control or eradicate invasive alien species to eliminate or reduce their impacts, focusing on priority species and priority sites.

Target 7. Reduce pollution from all sources to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and human health, including by reducing nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, and pesticides by at least two thirds and eliminating the discharge of plastic waste.

Target 8. Minimize the impact of climate change on biodiversity, contribute to mitigation and adaptation through ecosystem-based approaches, contributing at least 10 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per year to global mitigation efforts, and ensure that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.