

## **A Programme for Nature: How the Programme for Government can tackle the nature emergency**

Scotland's nature is in crisis: 1 in 9 species are at risk of national extinction and our natural environment is one of the most ecologically degraded in the world. Despite this, nature remains central to our national identity, our collective wellbeing and our global reputation.

The nature crisis and the climate crisis are inextricably linked. Climate change is driving nature loss, while nature loss increases emissions further. Nature restoration is not just important in its own right but is crucial in tackling climate change by restoring iconic habitats that can remove carbon from the air. Restored and functioning ecosystems provide wider benefits including supporting the nation's physical and mental health. The First Minister has said that "The climate crisis is inseparable from the nature and biodiversity crisis. Scotland has a duty to show leadership on both."

We have the opportunity to take a world-leading approach to restoring nature. Through the Edinburgh Declaration on global biodiversity, the Scottish Government has provided international leadership, and the COP15 process and 30x30 targets set a clear framework for action. It is now time to deliver.

As the home of iconic species and globally important habitats, including our own temperate rainforest, peatlands and machair for example, Scotland owes it to the world to protect and restore our natural environment.

## Restore nature

Policy area	Objective	Actions
Nature Networks	Establish national Nature Networks using a strategic, long-term approach to managing, restoring and enhancing Scotland's landscapes by joining up and expanding areas for nature while delivering wider benefits for the public, and to help deliver the Scottish Government's 30x30 target.	Require and/or enable all local authorities and Regional Land Use Partnerships to use opportunity mapping to map out and deliver projects that would contribute towards the creation and protection of a strategic national Nature Network, with defined timescales and reporting mechanisms.
		Require robust, long-term management plans for National Scenic Areas and SSSIs to protect and restore the natural environment. Currently only 3 of Scotland's 40 National Scenic Areas have active management plans in place.
		Require effective monitoring of important species and habitats in protected areas, with management plans prepared and implemented for all sites, including actions to restore and recover degraded ecosystems.

Scotland's native habitats and species	Protect and restore Scotland's natural heritage.	<p>Commit to long-term significant action and funding via the Nature Restoration Fund funding threatened habitat restoration at scale.</p> <p>This should include a commitment to restore and expand Scotland's rainforest – ensuring it is bigger, in better condition, and better connected – through a dedicated Rainforest Restoration Fund.</p>
		<p>Set robust new targets for improving the condition of protected areas.</p>
Woodlands	Scale up the contribution made to biodiversity recovery from our woodlands.	<p>Commit to a target to double current native woodland cover by 2030.</p> <p>Support the recovery of ecological health in our existing native woodlands by implementing the Deer Working Group recommendations and through enhanced grant support aimed increasing native woodland in good condition from 3% to 9% by 2030.</p>
		<p>Commit to introducing a premium grants incentive for planting high value timber species and providing greater support to diversify forest management approaches that deliver high quality timber and ensure that our productive forests and woods make an enhanced contribution to biodiversity recovery.</p>

		Strengthen biodiversity standards required in all grant-aided forestry and woodlands. Also ensure that all publicly-funded forestry and woodlands properly engage with communities of interest and place to create accessible woodlands for people to enjoy.
		Commit to starting work on the Ancient Woodland Register commitment in 2022 and complete the Register by the end of this Parliament session.
Freshwater	Increase the number of free-flowing rivers in Scotland	Establish a funded programme of river restoration aimed at delivering barrier removal and floodplain restoration to increase the number of free-flowing rivers across Scotland. See <a href="#">LINK briefing</a>
Invasive species	Reduce the impact, and prevent new establishment of, invasive non-native species.	Establish a Scottish Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Inspectorate.
		Commit to develop a strategy for rhododendron ponticum with a clear aim and targets to eradicate rhododendron ponticum across Scotland.

Planning	Better control the impact of damaging vehicle tracks through planning control.	Remove permitted development rights for hilltracks.
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### Tackle the climate and nature emergencies

Policy area	Objective	Actions
Peatlands	Protect our peatlands – a vital carbon store and source of biodiversity.	<p>Complete ban on sale of peat for horticultural uses.</p> <p>Ban burning on peatlands. Licence all muirburn.</p> <p>Establish a presumption against development on peatlands of a defined depth, in line with existing regulations for forestry.</p>
Grouse moors and illegal raptor killing.	Stamp out raptor crime and ensure grouse moors are managed more sustainably and in the public interest	Implement the recommendations of the independent Grouse Moor Management Review Group, and Scottish Government formal response, as a matter of urgency. These measures include the licensing of grouse moors.
Chemical regulation	Ensure an effective chemical regulatory system.	Encourage the UK Government to ban the use of lead ammunition toxic to wildlife.

		Outline strategy for identifying and tackling all contaminants of concern at sea, including chemicals, nanomaterials, plastics and microplastics; commit to an action plan to end non-essential use of all chemicals of concern; and ensure new REACH chemical regulations match ambition and timeline of EU REACH.
Deer	Reduce and manage deer numbers sustainably to prevent overgrazing, encouraging natural woodland regeneration, protecting peatlands, and to improve biodiversity.	Fully implement the recommendations of the 2020 independent Deer Working Group report accepted by the Scottish Government in its formal response, as a priority, with timeline for action and legislation outlined in PfG. Ensure that non-legislative recommendations of the independent Deer Working Group Report are implemented as soon as possible using existing regulation, enforcement powers, or revised incentives.
		Phase out public support for deer fencing in favour of support for deer management to ecosystem carrying capacity.
Enforcement		Commission a review of the use of existing environmental powers in order to encourage higher levels of enforcement and identify any legislative gaps ahead of the Natural Environment Act.
Governance		Indicate timescale for the required consultation on the establishment of a specialist Environmental Court, and commit the

		Government to support the principle, with a full and genuine appraisal of the options.
		Include an enforceable human right to a healthy environment in the Human Rights Bill, including both substantive and procedural elements.
Marine	Protect Scotland's seas, including strengthening Scotland's MPA network to ensure at least 30% are <i>highly</i> protected, with at least one-third of that area (10% of Scotland's seas) <i>fully</i> protected in HPMA	<p>Urgently progress consultations on proposed HPMA policy framework, management measures for remaining inshore MPAs and SACs, offshore MPAs and SACs, and delayed protection of PMFs outside MPAs;</p> <p>Publish the Dolphin and Porpoise Conservation Strategy, with actions and timescales for each pressure identified in the Strategy, with adequate funding to make meaningful outcomes to ensure cetaceans meet GES</p> <p>Publish a comprehensive management plan for the HP SAC as well as for the 3 NC MPAs for Risso's dolphins and minke whales that include a monitoring strategy and a management strategy, to deal with Acoustic Deterrent Devices, other noise impacts, chemical pollution, as well as bycatch;</p> <p>Develop and implement robust cetacean (and other sensitive species) bycatch monitoring in relevant parts of the fleet, such as pelagic trawls, gillnets and longlines, particularly in West Scotland where population impacts are reported for harbour porpoise from gillnets, trammel nets and trawls (ICES, WKMOMA, 2021);</p>

		<p>Strategy/plans to prevent creel entanglements for marine mammals (particularly those not included in the DPCS), seabirds and basking sharks, using technical measures (such as sinking groundlines) and spatial measures, as required.</p>
	<p>Transform national, regional marine spatial and sectoral planning with ocean recovery at their core, and ensure integration of the Blue Economy Vision with the goal of ocean recovery</p>	<p>Commit to a refreshed National Marine Plan that has ocean recovery at its core</p> <p>Publish Scottish Government plans for taking forward/responding to recommendations of the former ECCLR Committee's inquiry on Regional Marine Plans;</p> <p>Development of draft Blue Economy Action Plan is undertaken with extensive stakeholder participation and undergoes public consultation</p> <p>Publish a strong vision for aquaculture and commit to an action plan and resources to implement it</p> <p>Publish outcomes of marine wildlife tourism review and an action plan/consultation on measures to regulate and adequately manage marine wildlife watching (commercial and recreational)</p>



	<p>Reform fisheries for climate and nature resilience</p>	<p>Publish/consult on ecosystem-based proposals for a cap on inshore fishing across a large part of the inshore area, outlining conditions and preferential access to suitable areas of seabed for lower impact fishing gears; include proposals for supporting a just transition to climate and nature friendly fishing fleet</p> <p>Take forward proposals for roll out of REM for all fishing vessels and for a Future Catching Policy that eliminates discards and requires spatial management of all fleet segments.</p> <p>Circular design of fishing gear as well as implementation and enforcement of an Extended Producer Responsibility on fishing gear should be a priority. This goes hand in hand with infrastructure development to recycle fishing gear in the country, rather than shipping it abroad for recycling. An extra focus on preventing gear being lost or discarded in the first place and implementation of incentives to report, retrieve, and recycle lost gear is also required.</p>
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**A whole government approach to the nature emergency**

Policy area	Objective	Actions
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Farming	Ensure public support for land management rewards nature and climate friendly farming, with public support for ecosystems services.	Redesign Scotland's agricultural support mechanisms to deliver for nature, climate and people.
		Require all farms to manage at least 10% of their land for nature.
Regional Land Use Partnerships and Frameworks	Ensure that land use is integrated in our efforts to protect nature and tackle climate change.	<p>Provide the current five pilot RLUPs with increased guidance and resources required for success.</p> <p>Building on the lessons learned from the current pilots, establish RLUPs across Scotland to deliver the Land Use Strategy, with a stronger role in identifying and developing regional and local priorities and input into the allocation of public funding.</p>
Cross-portfolio	Ensure that nature is embedded across the work of government.	<p>Expand the scope of the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Climate Emergency to become the Cabinet Sub-Committee on the Climate and Nature Emergencies.</p> <p>Facilitate better cohesion across policy areas and integration of policy implementation to support more ecosystem-based approach to management of both terrestrial and marine activities.</p>

Economics	Ensure that all economic policies are aligned with the need to be nature positive by 2030 and ending Scotland's contribution to climate change.	Ensure that the delivery plans for the National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) are framed by the aims to deliver wellbeing for all within environmental limits and the criteria against which progress is assessed reflect this.
		Ensure that government and public sector spending aligns with these goals, including SG budget, infrastructure investment plan, capital and revenue spending reviews; and all public procurement.
		<p>Bring forward an ambitious circular economy bill to deliver a reduction in the consumption of raw materials and waste - see <a href="#">paper</a></p> <p>Fully implement article 4 of the single-use plastic directive focussing on achieving overall reduction in raw material use; promoting re-use and preventing switches to other single-use products.</p> <p>Use all powers available to keep pace with Europe and implement the EU Circular Economy Action Plan 2020.</p> <p>Bring forward and start to deliver against the Waste Targets Routemap such that waste management is compatible with net zero and circular economy principles.</p>