Scottish Biodiversity Delivery Plan 2024–2030

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

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Introduction: From Strategy to Delivery

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy to 2045: tackling the nature emergency is the first part of the Strategic Framework for Biodiversity and sets out the compelling evidence of long-standing global and Scottish biodiversity loss. The Strategy sets our high-level goal: to halt biodiversity loss and be Nature Positive by 2030 and to have restored and regenerated biodiversity by 2045.

This is embodied in the Strategic Vision:

By 2045, Scotland will have restored and regenerated biodiversity across our land, freshwater and seas.

Our natural environment, our habitats, ecosystems and species, will be diverse, thriving, resilient and adapting to climate change.

Regenerated biodiversity will drive a sustainable economy and support thriving communities, and people.

The Strategy identifies a series of outcomes which capture what success looks like across our landscapes and marine environments.

A series of rolling Delivery Plans form the second part of the Strategic Framework and will ensure our approach is agile and dynamic, responding to conditions on the ground and at sea. This Delivery Plan is the first in the series and should be considered in conjunction with the Strategy. It covers the period 2024-2030.

Identifying Delivery Plan Actions

Within this first Delivery Plan, care has been taken to draw out priority actions needed to achieve the 2030 aim of a Nature Positive Scotland. These actions are essential to ensure we are on the right trajectory to restore nature at pace and scale.

In this Delivery Plan priority actions are described under the six objectives set out in the strategy. These objectives are aligned to, and consider, the IPBES drivers of biodiversity loss, within the Scottish context:

1. Accelerate ecosystem restoration and regeneration
2. Protect nature on land and at sea, across and beyond protected areas
3. Embed Nature Positive farming, fishing and forestry
4. Protect and support the recovery of vulnerable and important species and habitats
5. Invest in nature
6. Take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss

A wider range of supporting actions were developed through a logic modelling process with input from our Programme Advisory Group experts, scientists and key stakeholders. The actions identified were then refined through discussion with policy experts and delivery partners based on an assessment of deliverability and impact. Two public consultations were undertaken, the first on the draft strategy in 2022 and a further consultation on the overall strategic framework which included the final draft strategy, delivery plan and proposals for statutory targets for nature restoration. More information on the logic modelling approach can be found here **Prioritising Actions for the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan – Methodology**. Consultation analysis reports and Scottish Government's response can be found here **Biodiversity - strategic framework: consultation analysis**.

Consultation responses alongside further discussion with Scottish Government policy teams, as well as agency, local authority and other delivery partners has helped to further refine the actions that are set out in this Delivery Plan, and to make them as SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound) as is possible at the time of publication. It is important to note that this Delivery Plan is not a static document – actions will continue to be reviewed and refined on a rolling basis.

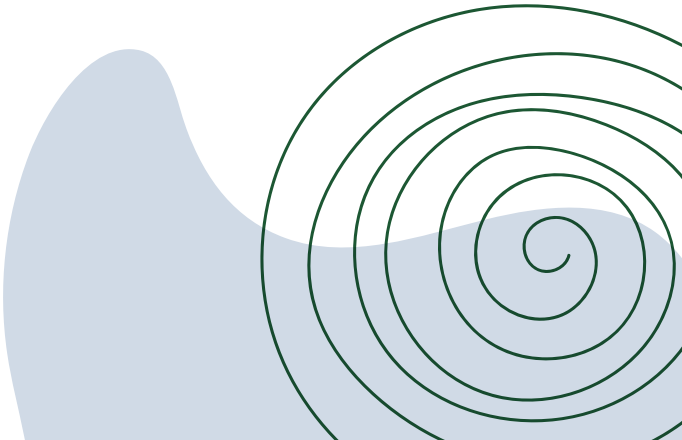
The tables in Annex 1 include the priority actions as well as supporting actions needed to deliver each of the objectives. The lead responsible organisation is also identified, alongside any delivery partners. We recognise that some of the actions identified are already under way, and that others need further developed and resourced. For actions that are yet to be fully developed we will continue to work with our wide range of stakeholders including our nature agencies (e.g. NatureScot, SEPA), delivery partners, local government (recognising existing and potential future financial challenges), and directorates across Scottish Government.

Governance, monitoring and evaluation

A governance, monitoring and evaluation document sits alongside the Strategy and Delivery Plan. Our approach is designed around Scotland's particular needs and circumstances including assessment of progress towards achieving the outcomes in the Strategy, determining whether the actions in the Delivery Plan are being delivered and identifying any additional or different actions needed to achieve the outcomes in the strategy and inform future delivery plans. Our approach will also allow us to meet our international and statutory reporting obligations.

Delivery mechanisms

The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy sets the direction for a 'whole of government' and 'whole of society' approach as advocated for by the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) within their Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) – no one organisation or sector can work alone to solve this most pressing of issues. This Delivery Plan includes the wide range of actions that government and public bodies are doing to achieve the vision and the outcomes in the strategy. Government recognises that across Scotland NGOs, land managers, farmers and fisheries play a central role in addressing the nature crisis. Government are committed to driving change working across the full range of levers including our ability to lead and convene, to legislate, regulate, deliver and invest. Our approach to governance, monitoring and evaluation alongside statutory nature restoration targets will ensure that the collective effort is delivering the transformational change needed to be a Nature Positive nation.



Spatial Considerations

There are many pressures on our land and seas across Scotland, so it is right to take a place-based approach toward identifying local and regional priorities, including nature restoration and conservation.

However, the Strategic Framework set out here is not the right place to specify the spatial delivery of the work that needs to be undertaken across Scotland. The identification of local and regional work will mostly take place through the further development of the individual actions within the Delivery Plan and supported through our terrestrial and marine planning processes. Tools and Initiatives such as the **Big Biodiversity Layer** (BBL) and the **Landscape Scale Natural Capital Tool** and, the development of Landscape Scale Nature Restoration projects will inform this process helping to build a national overview and identify spatial priorities for nature restoration, addressing the demand for clarity on where and at what scales the aims of the SBS will be delivered.

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Objective 1: Accelerate Restoration and Regeneration

Large-scale ecosystem restoration across our land, freshwater and seas is at the heart of our efforts to tackle the nature-climate crisis in Scotland. Healthy and restored ecosystems will significantly contribute to the reduction of carbon emissions and help us adapt to the climate change which is already happening. The restoration of ecosystems in urban areas is as important as that in rural areas. We need to allow the flow of species that enhance ecosystem health and resilience across different habitats and landscapes. Ecosystems need to be ecologically connected across and between rural, urban and peri-urban landscapes, and this will require changes to the way we plan and manage the green and blue spaces of our towns and cities.

Work is already in progress across Scotland to restore, regenerate and connect ecosystems and habitats including, for example, ambitious woodland creation and peatland restoration programmes, but we urgently need to accelerate and expand the scale of our efforts.

Priority Actions

The most significant actions to realise Objective 1 are set out below.[1] More detail on supporting actions is set out in Annex 1 . We will:

- **Introduce Statutory Nature Restoration Targets.** Through the Natural Environment Bill we will put in place a framework for statutory nature targets to help drive action.
- **Introduce a programme of Ecosystem restoration** including:
  - Using spatial evidence identify and facilitate six exemplar large scale landscape restoration partnership projects with significant woodland components by 2025 and establish management structures, with restoration work progressing by 2030.
  - Implement Scotland's **strategic approach** for Scotland's rainforest which aims to improve its condition and health so that it can regenerate and expand whilst providing benefits to communities.
  - Continue our Peatland ACTION programme investing £250 million over 10 years to restore 250,000 hectares of degraded peat by 2030.
- **Develop and implement the Scottish Plan for Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS) Surveillance, Prevention and Control,** and secure wider support measures to enable long-term effective **INNS removal at scale.** INNS management and damage costs increase rapidly over time as new species arrive and established ones continue to spread due to many factors, including as a consequence of climate change. Investing in prevention provides economic returns up to fifty times higher than trying to manage an INNS after it arrives.

1 The actions needed to achieve Objective 1 align with Goal A and Targets 2, 6 and 9 of the Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), agreed at the UN CBD COP15 in December 2022.

- **Increase resilience in coastal and marine systems by reducing key pressures and safeguard space for coastal habitat change.** Actions that provide naturally functioning coastal habitats and landforms will reduce key pressures on the coast and allow for natural change and adaptation to sea level rise and coastal erosion. Tackling marine litter and plastics, noise, other marine contaminants and seabed disturbance will provide healthier marine ecosystems that can maximise support for biodiversity.

  Some Local Authorities are developing Coastal Change Adaptation Plans (CCAPs), and where these are produced these should promote national, regional, and local partnerships which deliver adaptive coastal management with benefits for flood and coastal change management and wider benefits to biodiversity. Where conditions are appropriate, CCAPs should also include naturally functioning coastal landforms and habitats to reduce pressures, allow recovery and improve their health and resilience to enable natural functioning and associated biodiversity benefits.

- **Substantially reduce deer densities across our landscapes in parallel with ensuring sustainable management of grazing by sheep to improve overall ecosystem health.** Reducing herbivore impacts is one of the biggest levers we have in Scotland for reducing terrestrial biodiversity loss and enabling regeneration at scale. It is a prerequisite for many of our nature restoration activities including peatland and woodland restoration.

  We will work with:

  - the deer management sector, to secure average densities of 2 deer per km^2 in priority woodland, 5-8 deer per km^2 in each of the Deer Management Groups (DMGs) in the Cairngorms National Park, and more widely a maximum of 10 deer per km^2 nationally by 2030. This will require a minimum increase of 25-30% on current cull levels sustained over several years. Careful alignment of incentives and regulatory levers will be needed to achieve optimal herbivore densities and reduced grazing and browsing impacts to support biodiversity outcomes.
  - the agriculture sector, under the Agriculture Reform Programme, to co-design rural support schemes to support optimal herbivore densities and reduced grazing and browsing impacts (deer and sheep) to enhance biodiversity outcomes in the uplands whilst sustaining income streams for farmers.

- **Enhance water and air quality and undertake water management measures to enhance biodiversity and reduce negative impacts.** We will address pollution, water and air quality, and extremes of water availability, through a range of mechanisms to support the restoration of ecosystems and provide wider societal benefits. There are many current practices that farmers are undertaking to manage water quality including: establishing cover crops, maintaining water margins, sustainable drainage systems. Key actions include: protecting soils and enhancing soil health; reducing and targeting the use of inputs; and protecting water courses from run off. Building soil organic carbon helps retain moisture in the soils, maintaining a good diversity of living roots in the soil improves soil structure and water infiltration. Peatland restoration also makes a significant contribution.

- **Ensure grouse moor management sustains healthy biodiversity.** We will implement the remaining provisions in the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024 which includes provisions to address raptor persecution and ensure that the management of grouse moors and related activities are undertaken in an environmentally sustainable and welfare conscious manner, by trained individuals.

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Objective 2:
Protect Nature on Land and at Sea, across and beyond Protected Areas

Halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and adapting to climate change requires a step change in action to protect and restore habitats for the long-term and ensure they are well connected. Areas that are protected for nature through legal designation and other mechanisms, and the nature networks which span across and between those areas, form a vital backbone for nature recovery across the wider land and seascapes. Protected areas provide benefits for society through capture and storage of carbon, provision of local employment opportunities, and support to health and wellbeing. They provide a wide range of environmental services including pollinator services, water quality and flood management.

Priority Actions

The most significant actions to realise Objective 2 are set out below.[2] More detail on supporting actions is set out Annex 1.

- **Ensure that at least 30% of land and sea is protected and effectively managed to support nature in good health by 2030 (30 by 30).** Areas that are protected for nature through legal designation and other mechanisms contribute to protecting the most important areas for biodiversity, ecosystem functions and services.

  On land, currently 18.2% is formally designated, meaning we need to protect approximately 990,000 additional hectares for nature, through a combination of **Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures** (OECMs) and formal designations.

  This does not mean limiting economic opportunities or enjoyment of Scotland's wildlife and habitats rather it is about developing an approach to sharing our land to create positive outcomes for biodiversity. We have engaged extensively with stakeholders to develop a **policy framework for '30 by 30'** which sets out the vision and principles underpinning its implementation. We will continue to engage with stakeholders to build an implementation road map which will include guidance on how we will operationalise OECMs in the Scottish context.

  Scotland's Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) network already covers around 37% of our seas. We will put in place fisheries management measures for those sites in the MPA network that require them to support the recovery and resilience of Scotland's seas.

- Scotland currently has two National Parks with an investigation now underway on the proposal to designate a new National Park in Galloway in 2026. We will also **strengthen the role of National Parks and ensure they act as exemplars of biodiversity protection and recovery whilst continuing to support local communities.** In 2023 we consulted on a refreshed purpose and aims for our National Park authorities to emphasise their role in addressing the climate and nature emergencies. New Partnership Plans for both Cairngorms and Loch Lomond and the Trossachs set out ambitious visions and targets with respect to nature restoration and climate change mitigation and adaptation and place an increased emphasis on the role of the Parks' communities, third sector organisations and the public and private sectors in the implementation of those Partnership Plans.

2 The actions needed to meet this objective align with Goal A and Targets 1, 2, and 3 within the GBF.

- **Fulfil the potential of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) for nature recovery.** As well as providing places for nature to flourish, Scotland's 43 NNRs are important gateways to nature, providing opportunities for all of Scotland's people to experience and enjoy the best of Scotland's habitats and wildlife. We will identify opportunities for expansion or the designation of new NNRs. Working with the NNR partnership, we will ensure these sites are managed as key building blocks for Nature Networks across Scotland.
- **Expand and enhance Nature Networks and ecological connectivity.** By 2030 each Local Authority in Scotland will have a spatially defined Nature Network. Nationally important areas for biodiversity (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and other sites of local importance for biodiversity (e.g. Local Nature Reserves) – as well as areas being restored for nature – will contribute to Nature Networks. They will provide a range of opportunities for people, especially those in urban areas, to experience and connect with nature. We have engaged extensively with stakeholders to develop a policy framework for nature networks which sets out the vision and principles underpinning its implementation; and are developing an implementation toolbox to build guidance, expertise and advice to aid in the delivery of projects that contribute to a **Nature Network**.
- **Champion new planning and development measures for protecting and enhancing biodiversity.** NPF4 is Scotland's national spatial strategy and has the climate and nature crises at its heart. It sets out our spatial principles, regional priorities, national developments and national planning policy. Policies to address both climate change and biodiversity loss are central to NPF4 and various guidance has been published to aid developers and local authorities in their consideration of requirements for blue-green infrastructure, biodiversity soil health and other wider nature and climate aspects (e.g. **Developing with Nature; Local development planning guidance; draft biodiversity guidance**).
- **Enhance biodiversity in Scotland's green and blue spaces.** The green and blue spaces within and around our buildings and settlements – particularly in our urban areas – provide important places for both people and nature, many of which can be enhanced for biodiversity. We recently consulted on proposals to to inform a legislative framework for managing rain and surface water, particularly in urban settings. The framework will support our Flood Resilience Strategy, which sets out a role for nature-based solutions (NbS) in helping to create flood-resilient places across Scotland. Where NbS are implemented it is with the intention of providing multiple benefits, including to biodiversity, e.g. providing the potential for urban habitat creation/ restoration and connectivity, and contribution to green and blue spaces, and Nature Networks. The role of nature-based solutions, delivered through green, blue and nature networks in providing climate resilience is further set out in the third **Scottish National Adaptation Plan** (SNAP3), which was published in September 2024.

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Objective 3:
Embed Nature Positive Farming, Fishing and Forestry

70% of Scotland's land is classified as agricultural land and woodlands and forestry cover 19%. By adopting nature positive farming and forestry practices these land uses will play a significant role in halting biodiversity

Similarly, we must carefully manage our marine environment, to ensure the protection of important habitats, whilst allowing for sustainable harvesting of the resource which our seas and waterways provide.

Farming and crofting

We recognise that many farmers and crofters are taking positive action to support biodiversity, through nature positive actions and system level approaches such as organic farming. Over 3,000 farms for example are tackling the nature-climate emergency with the support of funding from the Agri-Environment Climate Scheme (AECS).

The **Vision for Scottish Agriculture** puts biodiversity up front alongside other key outcomes The Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act will be used to deliver the Vision and will transform how we support farming and food production in Scotland to become a global leader in sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The Scottish Government can help farmers and crofters to produce food more sustainably, supporting their essential role in climate mitigation and nature restoration. It will allow for a framework of payments that is responsive to the sector's needs putting biodiversity alongside other key outcomes.

This Delivery Plan includes actions which will be incorporated into the new agricultural support system to help farmers and crofters transition to practices generating substantial regeneration in biodiversity, ecosystem and soil health and significantly reduce carbon emissions while sustaining high-quality food production.

The actions align with the **Agricultural Reform route map** and build on existing support, for example, through AECS, actions such as soil testing under Preparing for Sustainable Farming, our partnership work with NatureScot through Farming With Nature and the advice and support available under the Farm Advisory Service. In addition, we will continue to support and recognise the benefits of organic farming practices, including collaborating with industry and stakeholders on the forthcoming Organic Action Plan.

Forestry

Scotland is leading the way on forestry. Forest and woodland cover in Scotland has increased from a post-industrial low of around 5% to 19%. While our productive plantations provide carbon and biodiversity benefits as well as helping to meet our growing demand for timber and wood fibre, the urgency of the climate and nature crisis demands this is increasingly matched by an improvement in the quality of nature in forests and an expansion of natural regeneration. In order to fully utilise the potential of forests to help adaptation to climate change large-scale action is now needed to reduce the negative impacts from grazing, invasive species, climate change and novel pests and pathogens. A specific focus is needed on our most valued and protected natural woodlands, with only 59% of woodland features classed as being in favourable condition.

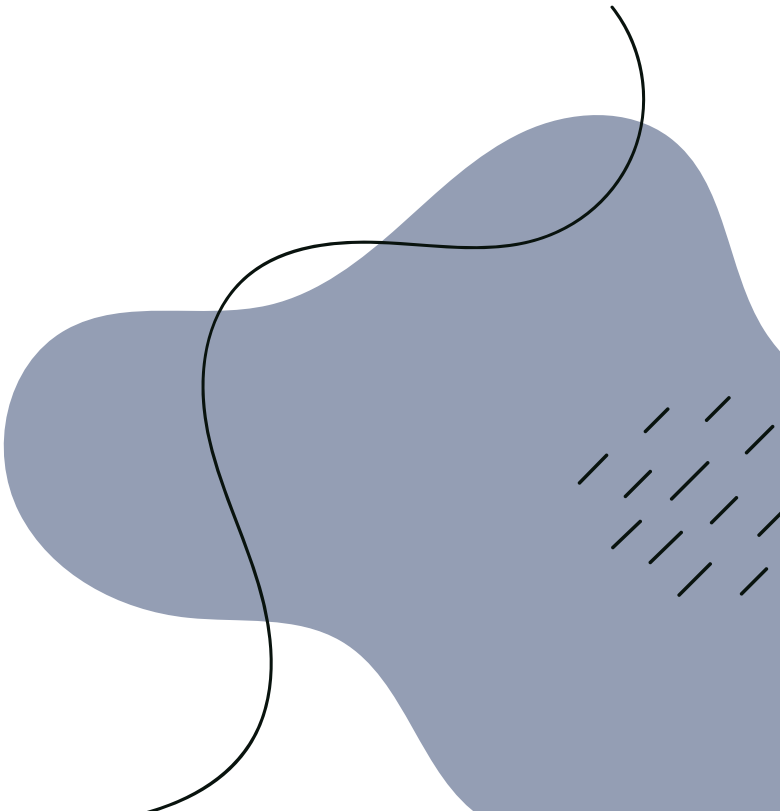
Fishing

Scotland's Marine Assessment 2020 identified direct pressures on the condition of the marine environment in Scotland's seas associated with bottom contacting and other fishing across the majority of marine regions around Scotland. The actions in this Delivery Plan reflect and build on Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy's vision for delivering responsible and sustainable fisheries management. Collectively, delivery of these actions will support the implementation of an ecosystem-based approach to fisheries management that minimises adverse impacts on non-target habitats and species, and contributes to achieving and maintaining good environmental status.

Priority actions

The most significant actions to realise Objective 3 are set out below.[3] More detail on supporting actions is set out in Annex 1. We will:

- **Ensure increased uptake of high diversity, nature-rich, high-soil carbon, low-intensity farming methods while sustaining high-quality food production.** Soils provide a wide range of services for the environment, ecosystems and human activity. They are one of the most diverse and important habitats on earth and underpin the production of the vast majority of Scotland's food. Actions will help to ensure healthy soils that regulate key biogeochemical cycles, including nitrogen and carbon cycles and so can limit both the causes and impacts of climate change (for example, by capturing greenhouse gases and reducing flooding and vulnerability to drought).
- **Introduce an agricultural support framework which delivers for nature restoration and biodiversity alongside climate and food production outcomes.** The Agriculture and Rural Communities Act 2024 will be used to realise the Vision for Scottish Agriculture, delivering on our commitment to support agriculture and rural communities. The Act establishes a Code of Practice on Sustainable and Regenerative Agriculture, which will identify the activities and methods which constitute best practice for sustainable and regenerative agriculture. The Agriculture Route Map sets out the process for changing to a new agricultural support framework with information on important dates, the measures being considered now, when current schemes will transition or end, the support available, and how to prepare for these first changes from 2025. These include the foundations of the Whole Farm Plan, new protections for peatlands and wetland and conditions attached to Voluntary Coupled Support.
- **Ensure that forests and woodlands deliver increased biodiversity and habitat connectivity alongside timber and carbon outcomes.** We will continue our programme of woodland creation as set in the Scottish Government Climate Change Plans currently 18,000 hectares of new woodland annually (4,000 hectares of native woodland). In doing so we will increase biodiversity across all woodlands initially by developing a tool to allow Woodland Ecological Condition (WEC) assessments and encouraging more owners to actively management their woodland to improve resilience
- **Implement further fisheries measures in vulnerable marine ecosystems and Priority Marine Features outside of MPAs.** We will implement additional protection for Priority Marine Features (PMFs) to complement the MPA network. On the basis of evidence gathered we will implement measures to protect the 11 PMFs most vulnerable to bottom contacting fishing gear outside of MPAs. These 11 PMFs play a key role in the marine ecosystem that provides natural benefits to the fishing industry and wider society. Fisheries closures to protect Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems (VMEs) in offshore waters, outside of marine protected areas (MPAs), between 400-800m depth aims to improve the status of marine biodiversity features and will fulfil the requirement to protect VMEs under assimilated EU law.



3 Actions taken to meet Objective 3 align with Goal A and Targets 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 of the GBF.

- **Implement the policies in Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy to deliver sustainable fisheries, using best available scientific advice, and minimising adverse impacts on non-target species and habitats.** We will continue to deliver Scotland's fisheries management strategy, which adopts an ecosystems-based approach to minimise and, where possible reverse, the negative impacts of fishing on marine species, habitats and ecosystems. This includes using best available scientific advice to restore or maintain fish stocks at sustainable levels, putting in place appropriate spatial management, and minimising and where possible eliminating the risk of accidental capture of sensitive species. The development of our Future Catching Policy (FCP), the successful roll-out of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) to parts of the Scottish fleet and the introduction of new management measures for inshore fisheries are amongst our flagship policies to deliver on the objectives of the Fisheries Act 2020, as well as contributing to the achievement of good environmental status.

- **Implement Scotland's vision for sustainable aquaculture to minimise negative impacts on biodiversity.** The Vision for Sustainable Aquaculture sets out our long-term aspirations for the finfish, shellfish and seaweed farming sectors, and the wider aquaculture supply chain. Our Vision is for the development of a sustainable aquaculture sector that continually works to minimise negative environmental impacts and collaborates with other stakeholders to protect and restore Scotland's biodiversity in the freshwater and marine environment. This includes managing sea lice through adaptive regulation and innovation; and minimising the escape of farmed fish, with demonstrable progress towards the goal of 100% containment in production facilities to help protect Scotland's wild salmonid populations.

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Objective 4: Protect and Support the Recovery of Vulnerable and Important Species and Habitats

Scotland has approximately 90,000 species, which are often of international importance. These include many species of mosses, liverworts and lichens, seabirds, raptors, waders, marine mammals, the elasmobranchs (more commonly known as sharks, skates and rays) and wild Atlantic salmon.

We recognise that our climate is changing irreversibly, which is leading to the loss and degradation of key habitats, which leaves many species vulnerable. We also recognise the impact that outbreaks of disease can have. A recent example was the outbreak of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) which first hit Scotland in 2021 causing unprecedented mortality across wild bird populations. Since the start of the outbreak in excess of 30,000 dead seabirds have been reported from locations across Scotland, with this reported number likely to be but a small fraction of actual mortalities. The highest levels of mortality in seabird species were seen in gannets, great skuas, common guillemots, kittiwakes, terns and large gulls. Important wintering populations of wildfowl were also severely affected, in particular barnacle goose, with over 18,000 birds estimated to have died across the Svalbard and Greenland migratory populations.

Restoring and regenerating ecosystems and habitats (Objective 1) is the foundation for regenerating and strengthening the resilience of biodiversity at scale. But this will take time – time which many vulnerable species do not have. We will therefore complement our actions to regenerate our seas and landscapes with actions targeted at specific species. This will build on recent success in this area with the recovery of sea eagles, golden eagles and the recent translocations of beavers.

Priority Actions

The most significant actions to realise Objective 4 are set out below.[4] More detail on supporting actions is set out in Annex 1. We will:

- **Revise the Scottish Biodiversity List of species and habitats that Ministers consider to be of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland.** By identifying the species and habitats that are of the highest priority for biodiversity conservation, the Scottish Biodiversity List helps public bodies apply their **biodiversity duty**. NatureScot and eNGOs have collated data on species vulnerability in Scotland into the Species at Risk database. This work provides an evidence-based link between vulnerable species, known pressures driving decline and their ecosystems, and is a strong foundation for prioritising species based on risk of extirpation or extinction of endemics. Revision of the Priority Marine Feature (PMF) list is a separate process. Inclusion of habitats and species on the PMF list helps to focus marine conservation action, with policy to protect PMFs provided through Scotland's National Marine Plan 2015.

4 These actions align with Goal A and Target 4 of the GBF.

- **Develop effective species recovery, reintroduction and reinforcement programmes.** The Species at Risk database will support an evaluation of actions to deliver biodiversity recovery through ecosystem management or targeted species action. This includes an assessment of likelihood of success and level of investment required. This work will inform the development of a prioritised list of species conservation, recovery, reintroduction and reinforcement programmes including support for surveillance and monitoring to manage pathogens and disease, for example as identified by the **Avian Flu Task Force**. The **Species on the Edge programme** is an outstanding example of partnership working to restore biodiversity.

- **Manage existing and emerging pressures to improve the conservation status of seabirds, marine mammals, elasmobranchs and wild salmon.** Work is ongoing to complete the Scottish Seabird Conservation Strategy. The Strategy will set out the actions required to address the key pressures on seabird populations, including those related to climate change. The UK dolphin and porpoise conservation strategy is being revised following public consultation and once published it will provide the framework for taking forward key actions. Alongside seabirds and marine mammals, elasmobranchs (sharks, skates and rays) make up the top three globally threatened marine species groups. Targeted research and management actions will be developed to help improve the status of elasmobranchs in Scotland's seas. We will also continue to work on implementing measures to protect and recover Scotland's wild Atlantic salmon and migratory fish populations. The **Scottish Wild Salmon Strategy** sets out the vision, objectives and priority themes for action to ensure the protection and recovery of wild Atlantic salmon populations in Scotland. It is supported by an **Implementation Plan**.

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Objective 5: Invest in Nature

The main sources of finance for nature restoration and biodiversity in Scotland are public grant funding programmes, the Nature Restoration Fund, PeatlandACTION and woodland grants, philanthropic investment and private finance. Private finance comes from the sale of credits through the Woodland Carbon Code and Peatland Code, compliance with planning regulations and environmental social governance commitments from businesses and industries for example energy companies as they carry out works to decarbonise our energy infrastructure.

The SBS provides a framework to mobilise private, public, NGO and philanthropic investment in a strategic and coordinated way to deliver the commitments set out in our Delivery Plan. This offers opportunities in rural and urban areas for social revival and economic growth.

Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation (NSET) includes a commitment to establish a values-led, high-integrity market for responsible private investment in natural capital. This means that we want to grow private investment in Scotland's nature where it is responsible, benefits communities and has environmental and financial integrity. The foundations of this market already exist in the form of the trade in carbon credits secured through the **Woodland Carbon Code** and the **Peatland Code**.

The **Principles for Responsible Investment in Natural Capital** and Natural Capital Market Framework set out the Scottish Government's ambitions for, and expectations of, responsible private investment. These will deliver for economic transformation, climate change and biodiversity, provide community benefits, and support a **Just Transition**.

The Scottish Government, NatureScot and the National Heritage Lottery Fund launched the '**Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland**' (FIRNS) fund in 2022. FIRNS is supporting projects that shape and grow private investment and market-based mechanisms to finance the restoration of Scotland's nature on land and in our waterways and seas. Grants of up to £240,000 are offered to help develop a viable business case and financial model, to attract investment in suitable projects.

The Flow Country Green Finance Initiative is a locally led partnership seeking to raise public and private funds to restore peatlands at scale. It aims to achieve a multi-use landscape where healthy and restored peatlands support globally significant biodiversity and climate protection, and a lively and prosperous region with high-quality jobs. In recognition of its unique landscape, habitats and cultural significance, the Flow Country was awarded UNESCO **world heritage status in July 2024**.

The Scottish Government is making considerable large-scale public investments in nature with the ambitious **Nature Restoration Fund** and **PeatlandACTION**, and in implementation of nature-based solutions. Future support for agriculture and the rural economy will increasingly be designed to deliver nature recovery, and to mitigate and adapt Scotland to climate change.

Priority Actions

The most significant actions to realise Objective 5 are set out below.[5] More detail on supporting actions is set out in Annex 1 We will:

- **Promote our natural capital market framework to** foster responsible, values-led private investment in nature while delivering benefits to local communities. It will do this by providing guidance to investors, land managers, and other stakeholders, offering tools and resources to develop sustainable projects.
- **Publish a Biodiversity Investment Plan for Scotland by the end of 2024** that contains actions to: support a range of finance mechanisms; promote value for money; and develop biodiversity markets in Scotland.
- **Public funding streams that contribute to nature restoration will be designed in a way that they can be matched or blended with private finance or investment.**

  Build on the experience of **CivTech Challenge 8.6** with Credit Nature to explore development of new voluntary codes for nature restoration.
- Explore options for attracting private finance to support the restoration of Scotland's iconic Rainforest.
- **Increase investment in Scotland's coastal and marine environments.** We will seek to increase investment in **Scotland's Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund** (SMEEF) and investment in activities that help restore Scotland's coast and seas.
- **Provide direction on, and investment in, green skills and local economic opportunities supporting nature-based education, nature restoration skills and volunteering.** Financial investment alone will not deliver the transformational change needed to halt biodiversity loss. We will invest in Scotland's workforce, support the development of nature restoration skills as part of a Just Transition.

5 The actions we are taking within Scotland, with regards investment in nature, align with Goal D and Target 19 as set out in the GBF.

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Objective 6:
Take Action on the Indirect Drivers of Biodiversity Loss

The **IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services** sets out the drivers of biodiversity loss. These include the five '**direct drivers**' – which are prominently addressed through Objectives 1 to 5 – and the equally important '**indirect drivers**' of biodiversity loss, which include aspects of our culture and behaviour, demography, economy and governance, institutions, and technology. Identified in the IPBES report is **people's disconnect with nature** and the consequent **lack of recognition for the value and importance of nature**. This manifests itself in unsustainable production and consumption patterns. The relationship between the direct and underlying drivers is important. Attempts to fix the direct drivers without addressing the underlying indirect causes will likely result in a failure to bend the curve on biodiversity loss and reach a nature positive status.

The indirect drivers transcend a wide range of policy areas. The Scottish Government's **Environment Strategy** provides the overarching framework for tackling many of the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss. It aims for a just transition to a net zero, Nature Positive Scotland with a circular economy. Of primary importance are Scotland's Climate Change Plan and **Scotland's National Adaptation Plan** (SNAP3), with nature and nature-based solutions (NbS) at their heart. The majority of climate change policy commitments and actions tackle the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss specifically unsustainable production and consumption patterns. For example, of the 61 specific climate change risks set out in the Climate Change Risk Assessment, to which the recently published SNAP responds to, at least a third of risks need a nature-based response.

New commitments and legislation on the circular economy will be key to addressing unsustainable production and consumption patterns. Across all of what we do – we need a new approach for building society's awareness of the importance of nature, strengthening the systems and mechanisms we have for valuing nature and engaging communities and society in the identification and implementation of solutions – all fundamental for a Just Transition. Actions on the indirect drivers require influencing 'levers of change' (e.g. strategies, plans, policies, legislation, guidance, standards, and regulations) across all sectors, and at all levels of government.

Priority Actions

The priority actions which underpin Objective 6 are set out below,[6] with further detail shown in Annex 1. Most significantly we will:

- **Engage and strengthen the connection between people and communities and nature.** We must widen public awareness and increase understanding of the actions needed to protect and restore nature on land and sea. We will provide more opportunities for people to experience and care for nature so that people's understanding of the role of nature in our daily lives is improved. Nature positive developments and stewardship of public, community and private land are vital to ensure far more people are actively working for nature recovery – and reaping the rewards.

6 Actions taken to address the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss align with GBF Goal B and Targets 14, 15, 16 and 18.

Though campaigns such as NatureScot's **Make Space for Nature** initiative, we will continue to support people to:

- encourage nature into our lives.
- provide water and homes for wildlife.
- plant hedgerows and creating gaps in fences.
- avoid using artificial grass, paving or decking.
- give our time for nature.
- undertake regular citizen science activity.
- join a conservation volunteer group.
- encourage positive action for nature by public and private sectors.
- reduce our impact on nature, for example;
  - use only peat-free garden products.
  - follow the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.
  - take steps to reduce our carbon foot print each year.
- **Embed biodiversity and nature in curriculum development.** In order to fully inform key decision-making for climate-resilient and nature positive communities across Scotland, a widespread knowledge and awareness of what nature provides for people and society is needed. This should not be confined to a subset of science and scientists. Major changes are underway in the **education system** which will provide the opportunity to embed the values, attitudes, knowledge, skills and confidence needed across all sectors to develop practices and take decisions which are compatible with a sustainable and more equitable future. These competencies, as well as a range of practical skills will be essential to Scotland reaching its climate and nature targets.
- **Mainstream and integrate biodiversity policy across government and address unsustainable supply and demand to reduce biodiversity impacts.** In order to achieve our Nature Positive vision for Scotland, biodiversity needs to be mainstreamed across policy development at all levels of government, as well as across business practices and wider society for example:
  1. The **Environment Strategy** has begun to tackle the global footprint of consumption and the challenges and opportunities of shifting to a wellbeing economy.
  2. Securing positive effects for biodiversity' is one of six statutory outcomes of **National Planning Framework 4** and as such NPF4 rebalances the planning system so that climate change and nature recovery are the primary guiding principles for all plans and decisions.
  3. Development of Scotland's National Marine Plan 2 (NMP2) is underway and will set out an updated planning framework for our seas, guiding decision-making to help address the twin crises.
  4. The Agriculture and Rural Communities (Scotland) Act is designed to help farmers and crofters to produce more food more sustainably, supporting their essential role in climate mitigation and nature restoration.
- **Address unsustainable supply and demand to reduce biodiversity impacts.** Halting the loss of biodiversity requires action beyond traditional conservation and management measures. **Recent research** has pointed to the importance of sustainable natural resource consumption and trade, reduced food waste and more plant-based human diets having major positive influences on halting biodiversity loss by 2050. This also has relevance to the **Environment Strategy for Scotland**.

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Annex 1

Landscape and Seascape Codes:

Woodlands

Uplands & Peatlands

Soils

Agriculture

Freshwater

Coastal

Marine

Urban

Overarching

Colour coding for Type column:

Primarily land-based and freshwater actions – Green;

Primarily marine-based actions – Blue;

0verarching – Gold

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
Actions needed to achieve Objective 1: accelerate ecosystem restoration and regeneration					
1	**Introduce statutory nature restoration targets in Natural Environment Bill (scheduled to be introduced in this parliamentary session)**	**Scottish Government**	**NatureScot**	**by 2026**	**–**
2	**Introduce a Programme of Ecosystem Restoration**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
2.1	Collate, review and prioritise all the landscape scale nature restoration projects across Scotland. Using this spatial evidence, NatureScot will identify and help facilitate partnership projects for six exemplar large scale landscape restoration areas with significant woodland components by 2025. By the end of 2026 those projects will have engaged with communities; developed deliverable action plans; identified funding (and where appropriate private finance) to deliver the outcomes required by 2030 and beyond.	NatureScot	Scottish Government, Forestry and Land Scotland	2026	
2.2	Develop the new Register of Ancient Woodlands, to include locational data, a definition of the required 'protected and restored' condition of ancient woodlands, and a process for recording ancient woodlands that reach the required standard.	NatureScot	Scottish Forestry, Forestry & Land Scotland; FR;	mid-2027	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
2.3	Ensure support mechanisms are in place for landowners to restore priority ancient woodlands by 2030, where the initial priority list is those protected/ designated woodlands that are currently in unfavourable condition.	Scottish Forestry	NatureScot	2030	
2.4	Implement Scotland's **strategic approach** for Scotland's rainforest which aims to improve its condition and health so that it can regenerate and expand whilst providing benefits to communities.	Scottish Forestry	NatureScot, Scottish Government, Forestry & Land Scotland	2030	
2.5	Develop upland-specific, best practice guidance on measures for upland restoration to regenerate peatlands, increase nature woodland cover, manage grazing, protect certain target species and priority habitats and increase habitat heterogeneity.	NatureScot	Scottish Government, Scottish Forestry	2025	
2.6	Develop a national peatland monitoring framework that incorporates on-site and remotely sensed assessments of biodiversity indicators, climate resilience and associated functions within the wider landscape, hydrological and ecological network contexts.	NatureScot	–	end March 2027	
2.7	Transition 4 of the pilot RLUPs (Cairngorms National Park, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, and South of Scotland (Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders Councils, NorthWest 2045 Region (Highlands Council)) to formal initiatives as we seek to continue to develop our understanding of how partnership work can help to optimise land use in a fair and inclusive way meeting local and national objectives and supporting Scotland's just transition to net zero.	Scottish Government	–	TBC	
2.8	Following consultation in 2023, continue ongoing work towards implementing a ban on the sale of horticultural peat in Scotland.	Scottish Government	–	–	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
2.9	Publish a plan for marine and coastal ecosystem restoration, including identifying actions to help prioritise habitats and locations suitable for restoration.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2025	
2.10	Deliver additional protection for spawning and juvenile congregation areas where needed, and for species with are integral components of the marine food web.	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Joint Nature Conservation Committee	2028	
2.11	Develop new approaches to marine biodiversity monitoring, covering both state and pressure assessment and aligned with the UK Marine Strategy.	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, SEPA	2028	
2.12	Develop a Blue Carbon Action Plan to identify where the Scottish Government can most effectively address evidence gaps and progress actions to support the protection, restoration, and enhancement of blue carbon habitats.	Scottish Government	Scottish Blue Carbon Forum	2025	
2.13	The RBMPs aims and objectives for the 2021-27 period, and the associated programme of measures aim to ensure that 81% of all Scotland's waterbodies (rivers, lochs, groundwater, transitional (estuary/ firth) and coastal waters) achieve a 'good' or better classification by 2027 and continue to improve as natural conditions recover beyond that date.	SEPA	–	2027	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
3	**Implement a Scottish plan for INNS surveillance, prevention and control.**	–	–	–	–
3.1	Develop and implement an INNS Action Plan, which will ensure pathways for the introduction and spread of INNS are managed to prevent or reduce their rate of introduction and establishment, and prevent further damage to ecosystems. The plan will include: i. reducing the rate of establishment of known or potential INNS by at least 50% by 2030 compared to 2000 level; and, ii. detection of priority INNS through increased inspections and vigilance of citizen scientists, and eradicated or contained before they become established and spread.	NatureScot	Scottish Forestry, Forestry & Land Scotland. SEPA	2025	
3.2	Develop and implement a pipeline of strategic INNS projects to coordinate the control of priority INNS at scale with the aim of eliminating or reducing the impacts of INNS in at least 30% of priority sites.	NatureScot	Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, SEPA	2030	
3.3	Raise public awareness of the impacts of INNS and embed INNS biosecurity practice across industries and recreational activities linked to the most important pathways of introduction and spread, measuring changes in awareness through the NatureScot Opinion Survey.	NatureScot	Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, SEPA	2030	
3.4	Complete feasibility studies for eradication and/or management of island INNS, and where appropriate, develop and implement a rolling programme of island INNS management, focussed on the targeted removal of predators impacting on nesting seabirds.	NatureScot	Scottish Government, partner organisations	2026	
3.5	Develop best practice guidelines and a voluntary code of conduct for INNS biosecurity suitable for supporting marine habitat restoration.	NatureScot	–	2027	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
4	**Improve Resilience in Coastal and Marine Systems by reducing pressures and increase and safeguard space for coastal habitat change.**	–	–	–	–
4.1	Identify and address gaps in current evidence on coastal habitats, through research and monitoring as an enabling action for all coastal biodiversity actions (2024-2028) and fund research commencing in 2024 into better quantifying the adaptation benefits of coastal landforms and habitats to maximise biodiversity benefits.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2025	
4.2	Complete an initial prioritisation exercise identifying accommodation space to be protected for coastal habitat change to promote recovery and adaptation, and identify potential future mechanism(s) to deliver recovery and adaptation, including agricultural subsidies.	NatureScot	–	2026	
4.3	Reduce marine litter and marine plastics by implementing the Marine Litter Strategy for Scotland (published 2022) through a six-year action plan that includes: ○ supporting the improvement of waste management for end of life fishing gear. Enable improved plastic pellet handling and management across the plastics supply chain to reduce pellet loss, and provide guidance to support pellet clean up in the environment.	Scottish Government	–	2028	
4.4	Contribute to the development of an OSPAR Regional Action Plan of measures to reduce noise pollution in the OSPAR maritime region.	Scottish Government	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	2025	
4.5	Develop policy to address contaminants that exceed OSPAR threshold values.	Scottish Government	–	2028	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
5	**Substantially reduce deer densities across our landscapes in parallel with ensuring sustainable management of grazing by sheep to improve overall ecosystem health.**	–	–	–	–
5.1	Introduce new deer legislation which will modernise the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996 and introduce new powers for intervention for the purposes of enhancing or restoring nature, including preventing biodiversity loss.	Scottish Government	–	2025	
5.2	Attain deer cull at level at which habitats and ecosystems can recover and regenerate, and where deer densities are maintained at sustainable levels. This is done by increasing the national cull by 25-30% (from 200,000 – 250,000) sustained over several years; achieving densities of 5-8 deer per km^2 in each of the DMG's in the Cairngorms National Park; and, low deer densities of around 2 deer per km^2 where woodland regeneration is a priority and required to achieve UK Forest Standard.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2030	
5.3	Explore how best to support optimal herbivore densities to enhance biodiversity outcomes in the uplands.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	ongoing	
5.4	Review the use of mechanisms to support effective and safe deer management in new and existing woodlands and neighbouring open habitats.	NatureScot	Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland	2027	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
6	**Enhance water and air quality. Undertake water management measures to enhance biodiversity.**	–	–	–	–
6.1	Ensure contaminants of emerging concern that may impact on biodiversity are identified through existing mechanisms with an additional system in place that uses Scottish data to identify new problems.	SEPA	Scottish Government, Scottish Water	2030	
6.2	Represent Scottish interests in UK chemicals regulation to ensure impacts on wildlife from chemical risks are reduced (eg work towards extending current restrictions on lead in ammunition), and contribute to UK chemicals regulatory reform.	Scottish Government, SEPA, NatureScot	TBC	2030	
6.3	Support projects and programmes that complement regulation to address emerging or novel contaminants in the water environment, e.g. The One Health Breakthrough Partnership on pharmaceuticals and the water industry's Chemical Investigation Programme.	Scottish Water	SEPA	2030	
6.4	Take an adaptive approach to abstraction and flows management to protect freshwater biodiversity from the impacts of water scarcity in response to future climate change pressures, using the Controlled Activity Regulations and review of abstraction.	SEPA	–	ongoing	
6.5	Continue to invest in improvements to the wastewater service to improve freshwater biodiversity by upgrading 40 wastewater treatment works and 24 intermittent sewage discharges, as required.	Scottish Water	SEPA	2027	
6.6	Develop a mechanism to promote positive management of rural and urban sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for biodiversity benefits.	Local Authorities	Scottish Water	–	
6.7	Maintain the long-term monitoring of the freshwater environment in addition to being enhanced and supplemented by new developing technologies such as eDNA when available.	SEPA	NatureScot	ongoing	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
7	**Ensure Grouse Moor management sustains healthy biodiversity.**	–	–	–	–
7.1	Develop and maintain effective compliance monitoring for grouse shooting licence conditions to ensure the legislation introduced in July 2024 acts as an effective deterrent to wildlife crime, particularly raptor persecution.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2025	
7.2	Implement remaining legislative provisions from the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act 2024 relating to the use of snares, use, possession and sale of glue traips, Scottish SPCA Inspector powers and wildlife traps.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	by 2025	
7.3	Implement legislation relating to muirburn and revise Muirburn Code to regulate the use of all muirburn and only allow burning on peatland by exception for limited purposes.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2025	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
Actions needed to achieve Objective 2: protect nature on land and at sea, across and beyond Protected Areas					
8	**Ensure that at least 30% of land, freshwater and sea is protected or conserved and effectively managed to support nature in good health by 2030 (30 by 30).**	–	–	–	–
8.1	Ensure that at least 30% of land and sea is protected or conserved, as protected areas or Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures (OECMs), and effectively managed to support nature restoration.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2030	
8.2	Based on results from the current pilot, develop and implement a national Protected Areas monitoring programme to ensure that Protected Area sites deliver their objectives.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2027	
8.3	Put in place fisheries management measures for those sites in the MPA network that require them to support the recovery and resilience of Scotland's Seas.	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Joint Nature Conservation Committee	2025	
8.4	Develop and implement an adaptive management framework for the MPA network.	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Joint Nature Conservation Committee	2028	
8.5	Assess the MPA network in respect of the resilience of marine biodiversity to climate change, based on the information and methodology from the regional assessment conducted by the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR).	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Joint Nature Conservation Committee	2026	
8.6	Establish a programme to enable protected woodlands to be brought into favourable condition with clear targets and a clear framework for decision making.	NatureScot	Scottish Forestry, Forest and Land Scotland	2028	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
9	**Strengthen the role of National Parks and ensure they act as exemplars of biodiversity protection and recovery.**	–	–	–	–
9.1	Designate at least one new National Park within the current parliamentary term subject to the outcome of the reporter investigation and public consultation.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2026	
9.2	Strengthen the leadership role of National Parks in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises by 2026.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2026	
9.3	Ensure National Parks (NP), National Nature Reserves (NNR) and protected areas are exemplars in better delivery of biodiversity and provisioning outcomes.	NatureScot	Scottish Government NP Authorities and Boards, NNR partnerships bodies	2030	
10	**Fulfil the potential of National Nature Reserves (NNRs) for nature recovery.**	–	–	–	–
10.1	Actively use the NNR suite to develop, deliver and demonstrate best practice in wildlife management, putting in place five demonstration examples.	NatureScot	NNR partnership bodies	March 2026	
10.2	Identify and realise opportunities for expansion of existing NNRs or the designation of new ones, identifying a range of sites by 2026 and designating those considered suitable by 2028.	NatureScot	NNR partnership bodies	2028	
10.3	Adapt the planning and management of NNRs in response to the impacts of climate change on nature, putting in place refreshed management plans for NNRs.	NatureScot	NNR partnership bodies	2028	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
11	**Identify, expand and enhance Nature Networks and ecological connectivity.**	–	–	–	–
11.1	Ensure spatially defined Nature Networks are being implemented in every Local Authority area to provide connectivity between important places for biodiversity, deliver local priorities and contribute to strategic priorities at local, regional and national scales.	NatureScot; Local Authorities	Scottish Forestry, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Government	2030	
11.2	Undertake mapping of opportunities for creating Local Authority wide Nature Networks that connect locally important areas for biodiversity, provide linkages with 30 by 30 sites, and address local and regional priorities for climate and nature.	Local Authorities;	NatureScot, Scottish Government	2030	
11.3	Promote Nature Network implementation via local and regional decision-making processes, following the Nature Networks Framework.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2030	
11.4	Promote the Nature Networks toolbox containing resources such as guidance, case studies, and mapping tools, which will support local authorities and land managers in delivering for, and contributing to, Nature Networks.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2025	
11.5	Develop an open-source platform for blue and green infrastructure and other nature assets in urban areas to support approaches to valuing and financing blue and green infrastructure.	NatureScot	Scottish Government, Local Authorities	2026	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
12	**Champion new planning and development measures for protecting and enhancing biodiversity.**	–	–	–	–
12.1	Develop and publish a biodiversity metric for Scotland's planning system, to support delivery of NPF4 Policy 3b.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	ongoing	
12.2	Raise awareness and promote the **Developing with Nature** guidance to support delivery of NPF4 policy 3c and develop user-friendly version of the guidance.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	ongoing	
12.3	Support wider ongoing work on building skills and capacity on biodiversity and nature across the planning system, including through information sharing events.	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Improvement Service	ongoing	
12.4	Provide guidance on sustainable use and management of soil in planning processes.	NatureScot	SEPA	2030	
12.5	Ensure that development provides positive effects for biodiversity, by developing clear guidance on the implementation and delivery of NPF4 policies which support the cross-cutting outcome 'improving biodiversity'.	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Local Authorities, Improvement Service, CIEEM, RTPI, SEPA	2025	
12.6	Develop and adopt a National Marine Plan 2 (NMP2) that supports action on the twin crises, setting out planning policies on climate mitigation and adaptation, nature protection and enhancement, and sustainable use to guide decisions and activities in line with our ambitions for Scotland's Seas.	Scottish Government	–	2027	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
13	**Enhance biodiversity in Scotland's urban green and blue spaces.**	–	–	–	–
13.1	Ensure that by 2030 every park, reserve or publicly owned green space has a management and maintenance plan that reflects the Open Space Strategy and Local Biodiversity Action Plan outcomes.	Scope to be agreed with COSLA	NatureScot	2030	
13.2	Ensure every new transport and active travel infrastructure project incorporates elements of blue-green infrastructure, and seek opportunities for enhancing/ expanding blue-green infrastructure.	Local Authorities	COSLA, Transport Scotland, Scottish Water	2030	
13.3	Work with social housing providers and the public and private sector to demonstrate how to manage residential, commercial and institutional greenspace in ways that have a positive effect for biodiversity.	NatureScot	–	2030	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
Actions needed to achieve Objective 3: Embed nature positive Farming, Fishing and Forestry					
14	**Ensure increased uptake of high diversity, nature-rich, high-soil carbon, low-intensity farming methods while sustaining high-quality food production.**	–	–	–	–
14.1	Increase the uptake of integrated pest management across Scottish agriculture to minimise risks and impacts of pesticides to the environment in line with the UK National Action Plan on the Sustainable Use of Pesticides.	Scottish Government	SASA, RESAS, SEPA, FAS, Plant Health Centre	2030	
14.2	Develop a routemap (end of 2025) for soil security in Scotland including a review and update of Scotland's Soil Framework and action/implementation plan (2030).	Scottish Government	NatureScot, SEPA	2030	
14.3	Develop evidence-based Soil Health Indicators that can be considered for inclusion in Whole Farm Plans and Forest Management Plans.	Scottish Government	Scottish Forestry, NatureScot, SEPA, RESAS	TBC	
14.4	Undertake an evidence-based update of currently available information and advice on biodiversity management to farmers/land managers, to ensure it is up-to-date, clear and easily accessible.	Scottish Government, NatureScot	Farm Advisory Service Scotland	2030	
14.5	Improve information for land managers on how to assess and interpret soil erosion risks and implement measures to avoid erosion (and other impacts on soil health related to climate change), including: i) the impacts of extreme rainfall drought events on soils; and ii) maps of soils that have been subject to anthropogenic degradation and are candidates for soil improvement programmes.	Scottish Government, NatureScot, SEPA	–	2027/28	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
14.6	Develop and promote clear guidance for practitioners on soil compaction and farm and forestry machinery contractors are engaged in ensuring appropriate use of equipment, uptake of decision-making tools and training, to minimise and ultimately avoid compaction damage to soils.	Scottish Government, NatureScot	RESAS, Scottish Forestry, SEPA	2027	
14.7	Set up monitoring frameworks to assess change in soil health, based on evidence from the Natural Resources theme of the Strategic Research Programme (2022-2027).	Scottish Government, NatureScot, SEPA	–	2027	
14.8	Reduce inputs of nutrients to freshwaters that cause enrichment impacts on biodiversity, by controlling both diffuse and point source pollution through effective nutrient management through agricultural reform and SEPA's Priority Catchment programme, ensuring compliance with the Water Environment (Controlled Activities) (Scotland) Regulations 2011 (CAR) under River Basin Management Planning.	Scottish Government, SEPA	–	ongoing	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
15	**Introduce an agricultural support framework which delivers for nature restoration and biodiversity alongside climate and food production outcomes.**	–	–	–	–
15.1	In 2025, as part of eligibility requirement for Basic Payment Scheme, businesses must undertake two from the following five baselines: biodiversity audit, carbon audit, soil analysis, animal health and welfare plan and integrated pest management plan as part of a revised rural payments process that encourages Nature Positive activities.	Scottish Government	–	2025	
15.2	Implement actions specifically benefitting farmland species as part of ongoing support and the new agricultural payments framework backed by advisory support including new greening requirements which will be introduced in 2026 and form part of the enhanced tier of the future framework.	Scottish Government, NatureScot	–	2030	
15.3	In 2025 there will be new peatland and wetland standards under Cross Compliance which will prohibit a range of activities from being carried out on peatland and wetland areas. We will continue to develop rural support mechanisms to incorporate further requirements to protect and enhance soil health, promote control of soil erosion/compaction and maintain / enhance soil organic matter through appropriate balance of input/outputs and nutrient levels.	Scottish Government, NatureScot	SEPA	–	
15.4	Ensure that farmers and crofters can access tools, information and advice necessary to produce an integrated biodiversity audit as part of the Whole Farm Plan as a requirement of basic payments tier 1 support.	Scottish Government; NatureScot	–	2025	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
16	**Implement fisheries measures in vulnerable marine ecosystems and to protect Priority Marine Features outside MPAs.**	–	–	–	–
16.1	Deliver fisheries management measures for Priority Marine Features identified as most at risk from bottom-contacting mobile fishing gear outwith MPAs.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2025	
16.2	Introduce fisheries closures to protect Vulnerable Marine Ecosystems in offshore waters between 400-800m depth.	Scottish Government	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	2027	
17	**Implement the policies in Scotland's Fisheries Management Strategy to deliver sustainable fisheries, using best available scientific advice, and minimising adverse impacts on non-target species and habitats.**	–	–	–	–
17.1	Consult on proposals to transition our inshore fisheries to a more agile and responsive management system informed by the best available evidence.	Scottish Government	–	2025	
17.2	Develop 21 Fisheries Management Plans as set out in the Joint Fisheries Statement to increase or maintain the sustainability of fish stocks.	Scottish Government	–	In accordance with the timelines in the Joint Fisheries Statement	
17.3	Develop and implement a suite of technical and spatial measures to reduce levels of discarding of 'unwanted' fish catch alongside measures to reduce bycatch of sensitive marine species.	Scottish Government	–	2027	
17.4	Identify high risk areas, gear types and/or fisheries for bycatch and entanglement of sensitive marine species, in which to focus monitoring and mitigation.	Scottish Government	–	2026	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
17.5	Work with stakeholders to focus on identifying practical, achievable actions to reduce pressure on seafloor habitats most at risk or most extensively impacted informed as appropriate by the development of an OSPAR Regional Action Plan on benthic shelf habitats.	Scottish Government	–	2027	
17.6	Support the implementation of Remote Electronic Monitoring (REM) in key parts of the fishing fleet, and consider further rollout as required.	Scottish Government	–	2028	
17.7	Publish the response to the inshore fishing vessel tracking and monitoring consultation and implement the outcomes.	Scottish Government	–	2026	
18	**Implement Scotland's vision for sustainable aquaculture to minimise negative impacts on biodiversity.**	**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
18.1	Implement the sea lice risk assessment framework to manage the interaction between sea lice from fish farms and wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout.	SEPA	NatureScot	2025	
18.2	Deliver a revised Technical Standard for Scottish Finfish Aquaculture to strengthen controls to reduce farmed fish escapes.	Scottish Government	–	from 2025	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
Actions needed to achieve Objective 4: embed nature positive farming, fishing and forestry					
19	**Ensure that forests and woodlands deliver increased biodiversity and habitat connectivity alongside timber and carbon outcomes.**	–	–	–	–
19.1	Meet annual woodland creation target as set in the Scottish Government Climate Change Plans currently 18,000 hectares of new woodland annually (including 4000ha of native woodland).	Scottish Forestry	NatureScot, Forestry and Land Scotland	From 2024	–
19.2	Update woodland management guidance and plans including those for restocking from 2025 onwards to reflect greater emphasis on actions that will improve biodiversity.	Scottish Forestry	NatureScot, Forest and Land Scotland	2025	
19,3	Deliver key research and data analysis project (building on WEC) on improving understanding of biodiversity associated with our woodland types, to guide management requirements and maintain biodiversity in the face of climate change impacts.	Scottish Forestry	NatureScot, Forest and Land Scotland	–	
19.4	Increase biodiversity across all woodlands by increasing the characteristics that improve woodland condition as identified by the Woodland Ecological Condition (WEC) National Statistic, initially by developing a tool based on WEC to allow site ecological condition assessment to be made by 2030.	Scottish Forestry	Forestry and Land Scotland, NatureScot	–	
19.5	Identify where woodland can have the most benefit for water resource management using an evidence-based approach and implement through a range of mechanisms including forestry grants and private restoration initiatives.	Scottish Government Scottish Forestry	–	2027	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
20	**Revise Scotland's list of priority species and habitats for biodiversity conservation.**	–	–	–	–
20.1	Revise the Scottish Biodiversity List of species and habitats that are considered of principal importance for biodiversity conservation in Scotland.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2025	
20.2	To help ensure that species licensing processes are transparent and targeted, a programme of work will be developed, to implement the key recommendations and findings from a review of NatureScot's licensing approach to species conservation and management.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2025	
20.3	Adopt a revised Priority Marine Feature list.	Scottish Government	NatureScot, Joint Nature Conservation Committee	2027	
21	**Develop effective species reintroduction and reinforcement programmes.**	–	–	–	–
21.1	Develop effective species recovery, reintroduction and reinforcement programmes drawing on partnership work on Species at Risk prioritisation, Species on the Edge programme, and evaluation of drivers.	NatureScot	–	2027	
21.2	Develop and implement national plans for conserving species groups for which Scotland holds internationally important populations including lichens and bryophytes (end of 2025), freshwater pearl mussels (end of 2028), herptiles (end of 2025) and national curlew plan (end of 2027).	NatureScot	–	2028	
21.3	Undertake measures to reduce human pressures to give habitats and species (especially specialists; arctic/alpine) more chance of surviving and improve the status of red listed species in Scotland.	NatureScot	–	2025	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
21.4	Assess genetic diversity risks across Scotland and ensure mitigation of genetic diversity risks via Gene Conservation Units and other means. Genetic Scorecards for 50 marine and terrestrial species compiled and published by end 2025. Twenty-five Gene Conservation Units registered by mid-2025, with 50 registered by end-2028.	NatureScot	–	2030	
21.5	Raise public awareness of science and practice around conservation translocations through public engagement.	NatureScot	–	2030	
21.6	Review delivery objectives of Better Biodiversity Data Project, including a new National Hub for Biodiversity Data in Scotland providing services across national and local scale.	NatureScot	–	2026	
21.7	Publish the Scottish Plant Biodiversity Strategy in support of the United Nations **Global Strategy for Plant Conservation**.	NatureScot	–	2025	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
22	**Manage existing and emerging pressures to improve the conservation status of seabirds, marine mammals and elasmobranchs.**	–	–	–	–
22.1	Publish a Scottish Seabird Conservation Strategy which will identify actions to support species recovery and increase the resilience of seabird populations.	Scottish Government	Joint Nature Conservation Committee, NatureScot	2025	
22.2	Increase promotion of the Scottish Marine Wildlife Watching Code.	NatureScot	–	2026	
22.3	Publish the UK Dolphin, Porpoise and Whale Conservation Strategy and begin delivery of actions relevant to Scotland to conserve and manage pressures acting on these species.	Scottish Government	Joint Nature Conservation Committee, NatureScot	2025	
22.4	Review the approach to, and locations of, designated seal haul-out sites in relation to the protection of seals.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2026	
22.5	Develop management actions to improve the status of elasmobranchs in Scotland's waters and continue to build the evidence base for elasmobranchs including: distribution, essential fish habitat, population abundance and social interactions.	NatureScot	Scottish Government	2030	
23	**Implement measures to protect and recover Scotland's wild Atlantic salmon and migratory fish populations.**	–	–	–	–
23.1	Deliver the actions set out in the Scottish wild salmon strategy implementation plan 2023-2028 to improve habitat and reduce pressures on salmon and other fish species.	Scottish Government	–	2028	
23.2	Undertake research on post-smolt and adult Atlantic salmon migration routes around Scottish coastal areas, and the use of estuarine and coastal habitats by other diadromous fish species.	Scottish Government	Diadromous Fish ScotMER Receptor Group	2030	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
Actions needed to achieve Objective 5: invest in nature					
24	**Drive increased investment in Biodiversity and Nature Restoration.**	–	–	–	–
24.1	Maintain and seek to increase investment in nature restoration through our £65 million Nature Restoration Fund.	Scottish Government	NatureScot	2026	
24.2	Develop the targeting of peatland restoration for cost-effective delivery (i.e. identifying priority restoration projects) including for greater private investment in peatland restoration.	NatureScot	–	2025	
24.3	Scale delivery of the Peatland Action programme, restoring the condition of peatlands as a key ecosystem in line with Net Zero targets as well as supporting the expansion and upskilling of the peatland restoration workforce.	NatureScot, Scottish Government	–	2026	
24.4	Prioritise and identify projects that contribute to River Basin Management Plans, and which could benefit from funding other than the Water Environment Fund, e.g. the Nature Restoration Fund, in order to restore rivers, particularly in rural environments.	SEPA	NatureScot	–	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
25	**Establish a values-led, high-integrity market for responsible private investment in natural capital.**	–	–	–	–
25.1	Promote the natural capital market framework to foster responsible, values-led private investment in nature while delivering benefits to local communities. It will do this by providing guidance to investors, land managers, and other stakeholders, offering tools and resources to develop sustainable projects.	Scottish Government	–	2024	–
25.2	Publish a Biodiversity Investment Plan for Scotland by the end of 2024 that contains actions to: support a range of finance mechanisms; promote value for money; and develop biodiversity markets in Scotland.	Scottish Goverment	–	2024	–
25.3	Public funding streams that contribute to nature restoration will be designed in a way that they can be matched or blended with private finance or investment. • New ways of using available Peatland Action funding to leverage other sources of finance for peatland restoration will be tested from 2025/26. • New approaches to further increase the level of private investment in woodland creation are being trialled from 2024/25. • Options for blending agricultural support with other sources of finance will be explored as the new framework is developed from 2025.	Scottish Government, NatureScot	–	2025/26	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
25.4	Build on the experience of CivTech Challenge 8.6 with Credit Nature to explore development of new voluntary codes for nature restoration.	Scottish Government	–	2026	–
25.5	Share and communicate learning from the **Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland** (FINRS) programme through the Community of Practice throughout 2024/25.	Scottish Government, NatureScot	–	2024/25	
25.6	Complete the Facility for Investment Ready Nature In Scotland (FIRNS) projects that develop tools to support smaller-scale projects to participate in carbon markets by end March 2025.	Scottish Government, NatureScot, Scottish Forestry	–	2025	
26	**Increase investment into activities that help restore Scotland's coasts and seas, including through the Scottish Scotland's Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund (SMEEF).**	**Scottish Government, NatureScot, Crown Estate Scotland**	**–**	**2028**	
27	**Provide direction on, and investment in, green skills and local economic opportunities supporting nature-based education, nature restoration skills and volunteering.**	**Scottish Government**	**–**	**ongoing**	–
27.1	Establish supported nationwide information and advice for land managers on biodiversity management including best practice and innovation through the complementary tier of the new agricultural payment framework.	Farm Advisory Service (Scotland), Scottish Government, NatureScot	–	ongoing	
27.2	Explore how best practice advice can be introduced to FAS service provision.	Farm Advisory Service (Scotland), Scottish Government	NatureScot	2026	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
Actions needed to achieve Objective 6: take action on the indirect drivers of biodiversity loss					
28	**Engage and strengthen the connection between people and communities with nature.**	–	–	–	–
28.1	Develop a communication and engagement programme to raise awareness and understanding of the importance of biodiversity and its links to climate change and the changes needed to ensure a just transition to a net zero and nature-positive Scotland.	NatureScot	Scottish Government, public agencies	2025	
28.2	Increase public connection and action for nature through expanding the reach of the Make Space for Nature campaign and develop a national nature volunteer and citizen science frameworks.	NatureScot	–	2025	
28.3	Encourage people's connection to nature through local green spaces and other land managed for nature, supporting capacity-building projects.	NatureScot	–	2025	
28.4	Work with stakeholders to complete a review of opportunities for increasing community participation in safeguarding marine biodiversity.	NatureScot	–	2027	
28.5	Promote and interpret new evidence and understanding relating to climate change and its relevance to Scotland's biodiversity both on land and at sea, to ensure good understanding by the general public.	NatureScot and Scottish Government	–	ongoing	
28.6	Refresh Scotland's Geodiversity Charter, raising awareness of the role of geodiversity in the delivery of valuable geosystem services that serve the needs of biodiversity conservation and restoration.	NatureScot	–	2025	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
29	**Embed biodiversity and nature in curriculum development.**	–	–	–	–
29.1	Progress delivery of the outdoor learning elements of the Learning for Sustainability Action Plan, including nature connectedness and learning, to meet Target 2030 so that every 3-16 place of education becomes a Sustainable Learning Setting.	Scottish Government, Education Scotland, NatureScot	–	2030	
29.2	Explore opportunities to further develop Curriculum for Excellence nature-based resources, and prepare new material on nature and nature-based solutions to be included in the new Learning for Sustainability portal.	Education Scotland and NatureScot	–	2027	
30	**Mainstream and integrate biodiversity policy across government.**	–	–	–	–
30.1	Increase the effectiveness of mainstreaming biodiversity on land and at sea through strategies and programmes that include but are not limited to: • National Planning Framework • Agricultural Reform Programme • Scotland's National Adaptation Plan • Land Reform Programme • Scotland's National Strategy for Economic Transformation • Climate Change Plan • National Marine Plan 2	Scottish Government	–	2030	
30.2	Develop our understanding within government and more widely of the application of just transition principles in moving towards a nature-positive future alongside net zero commitments.	Scottish Government	–	ongoing	
30.3	Publish the next Land Use Strategy which in response to CCC's recommendation provides an overarching 'wrapper strategy' that clearly outlines the relationships and interactions between the multiple action plans and strategies relating to the broader environment.	Scottish Government	–	2026	

ID	Action	Lead	Support	Delivery Date	Type
31	**Address unsustainable supply and demand to reduce biodiversity impacts.**	–	–	–	–
31.1	Progress a range of actions to deliver a more circular economy in Scotland, through the Circular Economy & Waste Route Map and National Litter and Flytipping Strategy and implementation of the Circular Economy (Scotland) Act 2024, in order to promote sustainable consumption and production of materials and products, and responsible disposal of Scotland's waste.	Scottish Government	–	2030	
31.2	Support global and regional efforts to enable business to more effectively monitor and report on their national and global impacts on biodiversity.	Scottish Government	–	ongoing	
31.3	Review the Biodiversity Duty Reporting system with a view to aligning with climate change reporting including consideration of voluntary engagement by business sector.	Scottish Government	–	2024	

Glossary of Terms

30 by 30	The Scottish Government commitment to protect 30% of our land and seas for nature, by 2030
AECS	Agri-environment Climate Scheme
ARE	Agricultural and Rural Economy
BBD	Better Biodiversity Data
CCAP	Coastal Change Adaptation Plan
CES	Crown Estate Scotland
CESAP	Climate Emergency Skills Action Plan
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
COP15	15th meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, December 2022.
COSLA	The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities
FAS	Farm Advisory Service (Scotland)
FLS	Forestry and Land Scotland
FIRNS	Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework (of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity)
HabMoS	Habitat Map of Scotland
HPAI	Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza
INNS	Invasive Non-Native Species
IPBES	Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
MPA	Marine Protected Area
NBN	National Biodiversity Network
NbS	Nature-based Solutions
NMP2	National Marine Plan 2
NNR	National Nature Reserve
NP	National Park
NPF4	Fourth National Planning Framework
NSET	National Strategy for Economic Transformation
OSPAR	The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic
OECM	Other Effective (area-based) Conservation Measures
PMF	Priority Marine Feature
RESAS	Rural and Environment Science and Analytical Services

RTPI	Royal Town Planning Institute
SBS	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
SBS-DP	Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan
SF	Scottish Forestry
SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound
SMEEF	Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund
SNAP3	Scotland's Third National (climate) Adaptation Plan
UN CBD	The United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Scottish Government
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