



Glossary of terms

Biodiversity The variety of ecosystems and living organisms (species), including genetic variation within species.

Communities In an ecological context this refers to groups of interacting, or potentially interacting, species living in the same place.

Ecosystem A community of organisms and their physical environment interacting as an ecological unit.

Ecosystem scale An approach to nature conservation which considers the functioning of whole ecosystems rather than just their individual components (species populations, communities, habitats).

Landscape scale As for ecosystem scale but usually referring to discrete areas of landscape with similar ecological or geological characteristics.

Local Nature Conservation Sites (LNCS)
Non-statutory sites selected at local level for biodiversity and/or geodiversity importance.

Native species Species which have arrived and inhabited an area naturally, without deliberate assistance by man.

Invasive non-native species Species which have populated an area due to accidental or deliberate assistance by man and which spread readily, dominate certain native species and disrupt the natural functioning of ecosystems into which they are introduced.

Population A group of organisms of the same species occupying a particular geographic region.

Sustainable development Development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

Wildlife-friendly Policies, procedures and practices which aim to enhance and minimise impacts on species, habitats and ecosystems.



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Natural connections

A vision for re-building Scotland's wildlife



Protecting **Scotland's wildlife** for the future
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Natural connections

A vision for re-building Scotland's wildlife

Why we need a vision

A fresh perspective on nature conservation is needed if we are to halt the loss of Scotland's biodiversity. While there have been some notable successes in recent years, wildlife is still in decline. We need to be much more ambitious in the scale and scope of our conservation efforts, particularly in the light of rapid environmental and climatic change.

We now know that fragmented and piecemeal approaches will not work. A stable future for wildlife can only be achieved through greater involvement by the people of Scotland and through re-building biodiversity at an ecosystem scale. This will mean reinvigorated efforts to protect and expand the building blocks of ecosystems: species populations, communities, habitats and wider semi-natural habitat networks. This vision outlines what the Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT) wants to see within the next 25 years, what should be done and how SWT intends to contribute to this action.

The vision for Scotland's wildlife

We need a network of healthy, resilient ecosystems supporting expanding communities of native species across large areas of Scotland's land, water and seas. This can be achieved through:

- Protecting valuable habitats from further loss
- Restoring and enhancing degraded habitats
- Expanding these areas to form an integral part of large-scale, wildlife-rich landscapes
- Having a diverse range of people who are increasingly knowledgeable of, and actively engaged in, wildlife and conservation.

Achieving the vision

This vision needs to be delivered through an integrated approach by government, the voluntary and private sectors, and the people of Scotland. A more strategic and spatial approach to planning and management of key threats is required along with an acceptance that natural processes should be the main driver for determining wildlife communities.

The environment needs to be at the heart of government policy and recognised as one of Scotland's principal economic assets and the foundation for sustainable development.

SWT calls for:

Government to provide sufficient financial support for landscape-scale action for wildlife and a real recognition of the economic and social value of our environment
Full delivery of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy through an innovative and ambitious programme of actions

A strategic approach to tackling the key threats to ecosystem health, particularly:

- climate change
- invasive non-native species
- loss of valuable wildlife habitats to development
- diffuse pollution
- overgrazing by deer and sheep
- highly fragmented habitats with unsustainable populations of species
- inappropriate land management practices
- mismanagement of marine resources

- Integration of wildlife-friendly approaches into all farming, forestry and land management practices
- New legislation to protect Scotland's marine environment
- More quality places in both urban and rural environments where people can enjoy, learn about and experience wildlife
- More initiatives which provide opportunities for people to engage with and learn about their local environment
- The development of, and improved access to, biodiversity data to enhance our understanding of wildlife communities at species, habitat and ecosystem scales.

How SWT will contribute to this vision

SWT has a vital role to play in helping achieve this vision. We will work ambitiously, confidently and innovatively at both national and local levels to ensure its delivery.

The following strategic objectives cover the 25-year-period of the vision and form the basis of future planning. They have been grouped under three key themes: Wider countryside, SWT wildlife reserves, education and communications.

Wider countryside

- To champion ecosystem-scale wildlife conservation on land and sea, working with government, farmers, foresters, local authorities, statutory bodies and other voluntary organisations
- To work with local authorities to establish a complete network of Local Nature Conservation Sites across Scotland
- To ensure wildlife in our cities and towns thrives and to improve people's quality of life by supporting a biodiversity-led approach to the design and management of urban areas

- To provide practical help and expertise to others who want to manage land and seas for wildlife
- To act directly to save threatened wildlife and wild places
- To champion implementation of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and encourage others to deliver their obligations under the Scottish biodiversity duty
- To fight for the restoration, better protection and management of the marine environment.

SWT wildlife reserves

- To safeguard and enhance the range of native habitats and species in Scotland through the expert management of our reserves.

Education and communications

- To promote the gathering, research and sharing of information on wildlife habitats and species to improve their conservation
- To encourage people to see, learn about and enjoy wildlife and to create opportunities for greater involvement in wildlife conservation.