

Briefing: Nature Recovery Jobs

The Nature Recovery Plan, developed jointly by RSPB Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust and WWF Scotland, sets out a routemap of 11 transformative actions to kickstart nature's recovery in Scotland.

Further analysis has shown that investment in five areas of the plan could create up to 7,000 new jobs across Scotland over the next ten years, including 4,000 jobs in peatland restoration; native woodland restoration, management and expansion; deer control; delivery of a Scottish Nature Network; and a farming advisory service. A further 3,000 jobs could be supported indirectly.

The data, developed by economist Matt Rayment, show that there is strong potential for these five areas to contribute to a Green Recovery from Covid-19 by creating nature-based jobs, helping to make rural and local economies more diverse and resilient and delivering many other benefits. This is just a snapshot of job opportunities, indicating that beyond these five areas the potential for the nature sector could be huge with the right level of ambition and investment.

Scotland's land and sea – our natural assets – already support many jobs, in sectors such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries. These sectors house invaluable skills and expertise relating to land and sea management. While many in these sectors are taking steps to actively help the environment, not all jobs that are dependent on nature are currently supporting or managing nature and the climate in a sustainable way. The way we use our land and sea is a key driver of wildlife declines and contributes to greenhouse gas emissions, but with better management both have an important role to play in transitioning to net zero and supporting nature's recovery.

This new analysis highlights the potential for more jobs that are directly focused on meeting climate and biodiversity targets. Some of these roles will also help existing nature-dependent sectors to transition to more nature and climate-friendly practices. For example, scaling up the existing rural advisory service will mean more specialists on the ground to provide tailored advice to farmers, crofters and land managers about climate and biodiversity. This is a double win, creating immediate direct jobs, and supporting existing jobs and sectors to be more diverse and resilient in the long-term.

Private and third sector investment will need to play a key role in expanding the nature sector, alongside increased levels of public spending and repurposing or better targeting of existing public money, for example rural payments and forestry budgets, to meet the Scottish Government's ambitious climate targets and restore nature.

Much of this action must be front-loaded over the next few years, as activities like tree planting and peatland restoration take time to deliver public goods such as healthy soils, biodiversity and carbon storage. There should also be further mapping of the skills and infrastructure needed in these roles, and upfront investment to provide the skills, training and equipment to get people into these jobs.

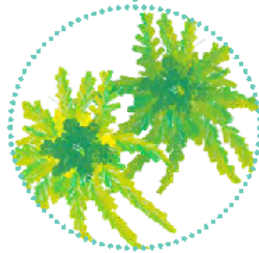
Increasing upfront public investment in nature-based jobs and skills will send a strong signal to the private sector that nature's recovery is an ongoing priority and will play a vital role in the transition to net zero emissions. This will give other sectors the confidence to invest in the upskilling and infrastructure needed to unlock some of these roles.

Most importantly, this investment will avoid further costs down the line of having to adapt to the more severe impacts of the climate and nature crisis that would result from inaction. Nature jobs will help make sure our nature is thriving, more resilient and playing a key role in locking up carbon, providing a return to our societies and economies in the longer term.

The role of nature's recovery in a green recovery

The Nature Recovery Plan, developed jointly by RSPB Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust and WWF Scotland, sets out 11 transformative actions for nature recovery in Scotland.

Of the 11 parts of the plan five areas in particular will deliver nature-based jobs and should be invested in as part of Scotland's green recovery from Covid-19. Many of these jobs, will be in rural areas and benefit local people and communities.



Restoring and protecting Scotland's peatlands

1,500 jobs

A £51 million per year investment in restoration of blanket bog and £2.9 million investment in lowland raised bog over 10 years could create 770 FTE jobs directly and 770 FTE jobs indirectly.



Restoring and expanding native woodlands

4,000 jobs

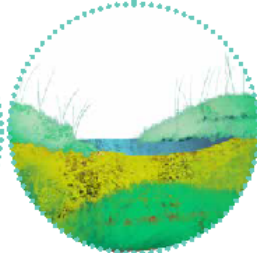
Annual creation of 8,000 – 12,000 hectares and restoration of 23,500 hectares of native woodland could support 1800- 2000 FTE jobs directly and 1800-2000 FTE jobs indirectly per year for the next ten years.



Tackling deer management

1,270 jobs

Sustainable deer management could create an additional 670 FTE jobs directly and a further 600 FTE jobs indirectly.



Linking up wild places by delivering a Scottish Nature Network

528 jobs

£15 million annual investment in restoration and expansion of other priority habitats, in addition to native woodlands and peat, could create 214 FTE jobs directly and 214 FTE jobs indirectly. Designing and delivering the Scottish Nature Network could support a further 100 FTE specialist roles across the 32 local authorities.



Supporting climate- and nature-friendly farming

460 jobs

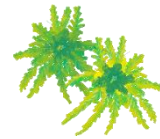
Good quality, tailored advice is essential to help farmers deliver nature and climate outcomes. Effective rural advice requires an estimated £20 million investment each year, which could support employment of 460 FTE advisors across Scotland.



Nature Jobs Methodology

1. Restoring and protecting Scotland's peatlands

A £51 million per year investment in restoration of blanket bog and £2.9 million in lowland raised bog over 10 years could create 770 FTE jobs directly and 1500 FTE jobs in total.



METHOD: Rayment (2017, 2019) estimated the costs of meeting priorities for environmental land management in each of the four countries of the UK, in a report for the RSPB, the National Trust and The Wildlife Trusts. The analysis included estimation of the costs of restoration, creation and maintenance of priority habitats, including blanket bog and lowland raised bog. The study estimated that annual investment of £51m for blanket bog and £2.9m for lowland raised bog is required annually in Scotland over the next 10 years. Analysis of the costs of EU LIFE and HLF funded habitat restoration projects indicates that they provide one job year of employment per £70,000 spent, and that one job is supported indirectly for each direct job, as a result of project spending on purchased goods and services (which provides employment for contractors and suppliers), and multiplier effects (resulting from further expenditures by staff and suppliers in local economies). The investments required are therefore estimated to support 770 FTE jobs directly and an additional 770 FTE jobs indirectly and through multiplier effects, over the 10 year period.

2. Restoring and expanding native woodlands

Annual creation of 8,000 – 12,000 hectares and restoration of 23,500 hectares of native woodland would support 1800- 2000 FTE jobs directly and 1800-2000 FTE jobs indirectly per year for the next ten years.



METHOD: The targets are based on targets for woodland expansion proposed by the Committee on Climate Change (assuming that native woodlands account for at least 50% of the target) and estimates of restoration needs in the study by Rayment (2019), with annual costs of £101 million for restoration and £25-37 million for woodland creation. Using the same cost per job ratios as for peatland restoration projects, this gives estimates of job creation of 1800-2000 FTE and a similar number of indirect jobs.

3. Tackling deer management

Sustainable deer management could create an additional 670 FTE jobs directly and a further 600 FTE jobs indirectly.



METHOD: The estimate is based on unpublished analysis of deer management expenditures across Scottish estates undertaking habitat restoration activities, which are scaled up to estimate employment required across the land area needed to meet Scotland's targets for restoration and creation of woodlands and peatlands. The indirect jobs are taken from estimates by PACEC that 0.9 FTE jobs are created indirectly in game processing and the supply chain per 1 direct FTE job.

4. Linking up wild places by delivering a Scottish Nature Network.

£15 million annual investment in restoration and expansion of other priority habitats, in addition to native woodlands and peat, could create 214 FTE jobs directly and 214 FTE jobs indirectly. Designing and delivering the Scottish Nature Network could potentially support a further 100 FTE specialist roles across the 32 local authorities.



METHOD: The estimate of investment needs for other priority habitats is taken from Rayment (2019). The job creation estimates follow a similar method to those for peatland restoration projects above. The jobs in design and delivery across local authorities assume that 1-5 FTE jobs will be required by each organisation, varying by size of local authority.

5. Supporting climate- and nature-friendly farming

Good quality, tailored advice is essential to help farmers deliver nature and climate outcomes. Effective rural advice requires an estimated £20 million investment each year, which would support employment of 460 FTE advisors across Scotland.



METHOD: Rayment (2019) estimated the advice needed to support environmental land management agreements to ensure that they deliver environmental priorities effectively. He estimated that supporting environmental land management agreements across 4.8 million hectares of Scotland would require employment of 460 FTE advisors, at a cost of £21 million annually, with each advisor covering an average of 10,400 hectares of agreements through a combination of group and 1:1 advice.

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