

Scottish Natural Heritage Strategy and Priorities





Securing the value in Scotland's natural assets

“Scotland’s environment is unique and irreplaceable. While it supports our health and wellbeing, it also underpins much of Scotland’s wealth creation ... our natural assets are an immense resource for the whole of Scotland’s economy. It is our responsibility to protect and enhance our environment for future generations and to ensure our natural resources are deployed in support of our economy in a sustainable way.”

(Renewing Scotland: The Government’s Programme for Scotland 2011-2012)

Introduction

Our ambition is that Scotland’s natural assets will generate wealth for all, sustaining us and improving our health, lifestyles and culture.

Here we have summarised our ambitions for Scotland’s natural assets, highlighting how we will work with others to achieve them. This document updates our published Corporate Strategy and complements the current priorities of the Scottish Government, setting the strategic context for more detailed proposals which will be presented in our Corporate Plans.

Who we are and what we do

Scotland's nature and landscapes are a superb inheritance, internationally renowned. Through their life-giving processes they sustain all our lives and wellbeing: a healthy natural environment not only provides food and water, minerals and energy, flood protection and climate regulation, but also sustains our mental and physical wellbeing.

Our purpose is to:

- secure the conservation and enhancement of nature and landscapes
- foster their understanding and facilitate their enjoyment and
- promote their sustainable use and management.

We are responsible through Ministers to the Scottish Parliament and are funded by the Scottish Government.

We are a national organisation with a local presence allowing us to **deliver a national service locally**. We promote good practice widely and help to care for local nature and landscapes of national and international significance. Our success depends on working with others.

We fulfill our purpose by...

Providing **advice** to the Scottish Government and its agencies, local authorities, developers, land managers and others. We advise on how best to meet Scotland's international obligations as well as legal requirements to protect and enhance Scotland's nature and landscapes.

Gathering evidence to inform the public and **promote** the wider benefits of protecting and enhancing nature and landscapes in the public interest. Our work includes surveillance and monitoring, sharing good practice, championing the value of nature and encouraging people to enjoy the outdoors.

Targeting **action** to protect and enhance nature and landscapes, working in partnership with others. Examples include our work on protected places, action to protect certain plants and animals, restoring damaged habitats, and providing better places to live in our towns and cities.





We aim for...

- High quality nature and landscapes that are resilient to change and deliver public value
- Nature and landscapes that make Scotland a better place in which to live, work and visit
- More people experiencing, enjoying and valuing our nature and landscapes
- Nature and landscapes as assets contributing more to the Scottish economy

In delivering our aims we embrace three principles of public service delivery:

- **user focus** – putting the person or customer first
- **public interest** – focusing on real improvements through services delivered for the people of Scotland
- **value for money** – making sure that every public pound is spent wisely.

In all our work we are:

- **trustworthy** – we provide proportionate, expert and authoritative information and guidance based on good evidence
- **committed** – we celebrate Scotland's nature and landscapes and encourage

people to understand, appreciate and engage with nature and to appreciate its value as a cultural, economic and physical asset

- **supportive** – we support a diverse range of people through advice and funding to improve Scotland's natural environment by way of our combined passion, knowledge and skill
- **open and fair** – we listen to the needs of others and try to see the world from different points of view, share good practice, and engage with people wherever possible to make the most of our various strengths. We welcome diversity and value and build on the differences individuals bring.

Scotland's natural assets

Scotland's health and prosperity depend on the quality of our nature and landscapes - our natural assets.

Alongside their undisputed inherent value, these natural assets contribute more than 10% of Scottish economic output and support 1 in 7 of all full time jobs. They are worth more than £17.2 billion to the Scottish economy. High quality nature and landscapes are essential in the transition to a green economy.

But not all of the benefits can be fully measured by putting a price on them. There are many less tangible ways in which our natural assets sustain us, contributing to our health and wellbeing, enjoyment, sense of place and who we are as a nation.

Well managed natural assets directly affect the delivery of at least 7 of the **National Outcomes** in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework:

- We live in a Scotland that is the most attractive place for doing business in Europe
- We live longer, healthier lives
- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need
- We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others
- We value and enjoy our built and natural environment and protect and enhance it for future generations
- We reduce the local and global environmental impact of our consumption and production
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs

Natural assets contribute to outcomes that benefit people both now and in the future. We use evidence to show how natural assets support wellbeing, and to help guide investment and action now to **prevent** longer term social and environmental costs. This is an important part of our local work, for example through development planning and working with local partners.





Our Ambition...

Our ambition is that natural assets are managed so that they generate wealth for all, and they sustain and improve our health, wealth, lifestyles and culture.

To achieve these ambitions we will take action in the following areas:

- **Biodiversity.** Interpreting and assisting Scotland to achieve the new global and EU 2020 targets to maintain Scotland's contribution to halting the loss of biodiversity
- **Climate change.** Contributing to Scotland's low carbon economy, by maximising the capacity of the natural environment, such as peatland, to store carbon and providing advice on adapting to the impacts of climate change
- **Development advice.** Supporting **onshore and offshore renewables** to meet Scotland's renewable energy targets. Establishing **marine planning**

and **Marine Protected Areas** to improve environmental quality and guide better decision-making for marine development. Engaging with **development planning** to create better places for people to live, work and play in

- **Protected places.** Maintaining and enhancing the quality of Scotland's best nature and landscapes, showing how they help Scotland to meet its biodiversity targets, and how they deliver wider benefits for the local economy, jobs and tourism
- **Land use.** Supporting the implementation of Scotland's **Land Use Strategy**. Advising on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and renewal of the **Scotland Rural Development Programme** to deliver investment in our natural assets and secure public benefits from them
- **Wildlife management.** Getting the best from our wildlife: balancing management for wildlife with wider land use, other environmental interests, and public health & safety.

Taking all this together represents a rounded **ecosystem approach** which allows us to be clearer about how best to

care for nature. Our advice is evidence-based, proportionate and concise, and shows decision-makers the levels of risk and uncertainty to which they may be exposed. We will streamline our guidance to deliver national and local priorities, simplify regulation and speed-up decision-making.

Complementing these actions, achieving our ambition will depend on our success in helping more **people** to connect with nature, through increased participation and understanding in many ways including:

- working with Forestry Commission Scotland and others to deliver the **Central Scotland Green Network**, helping to increase **levels of physical activity**, improve people's **mental health and wellbeing** and stimulate economic productivity
- helping more people to **enjoy the outdoors**, especially disadvantaged groups and young people as this can bring real benefits to their lives
- improving on-line access to data and information about the environment and support **citizen science** — supporting people to get involved in collecting information about the environment

- presenting evidence and explaining the value of **local landscapes, physical outdoor activity, accessible greenspace and path networks** as part of the solution to inequality and deprivation, improving **health, employability, early years development and sustainable economic growth**
- supporting **place-based partnerships**, for example a neighbourhood or community, to collaborate on local solutions to problems in the national interest including climate change and public health, including Community Planning Partnerships and Single Outcome Agreements

To do this we shall continue to work closely and collaboratively with the Scottish Government and a wide range of partner and stakeholder organisations. We continue to support the management of Scotland's **National Parks** as places to trial and develop **innovative** approaches to sustainable management of natural assets.



Looking after all of Scotland's nature and landscapes, across all of Scotland, for everyone

Delivering a national service, locally

Our work supports the Scottish Government's Purpose: *to focus government and public services on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth*

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ISBN: 978-1-85397-833-3

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Scottish Natural Heritage
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

All of nature for all of Scotland
Nàdar air fad airson Alba air fad

Using targeted and proportionate **Action, Promotion** and **Advice**, our aims are:

- High quality nature and landscapes that are resilient to change and deliver public value
- Nature and landscapes that make Scotland a better place in which to live, work and visit
- More people experiencing, enjoying and valuing our nature and landscapes
- Nature and landscapes as assets contributing more to the Scottish economy

Our actions involve:

- Securing the management of Scotland's natural assets to deliver the National Outcomes in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework.
- Assembling and presenting evidence and interpretation to shape the way that natural assets support investment and secure public benefits.

Our success depends on working with others including national and local government, national park authorities, other public bodies, land managers, businesses, voluntary organisations, community groups and individuals.

We welcome diversity and value building on the differences individuals bring.