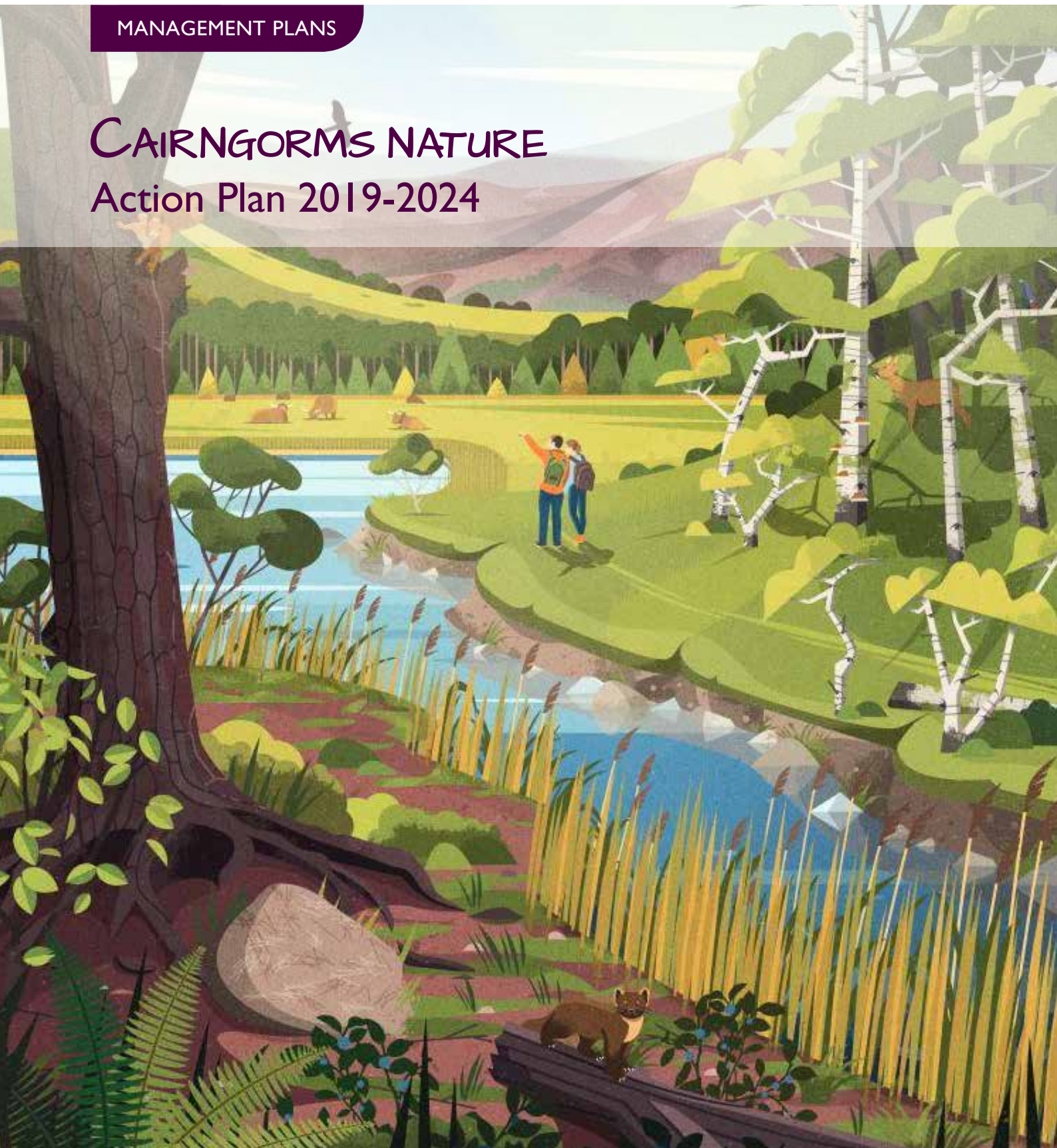




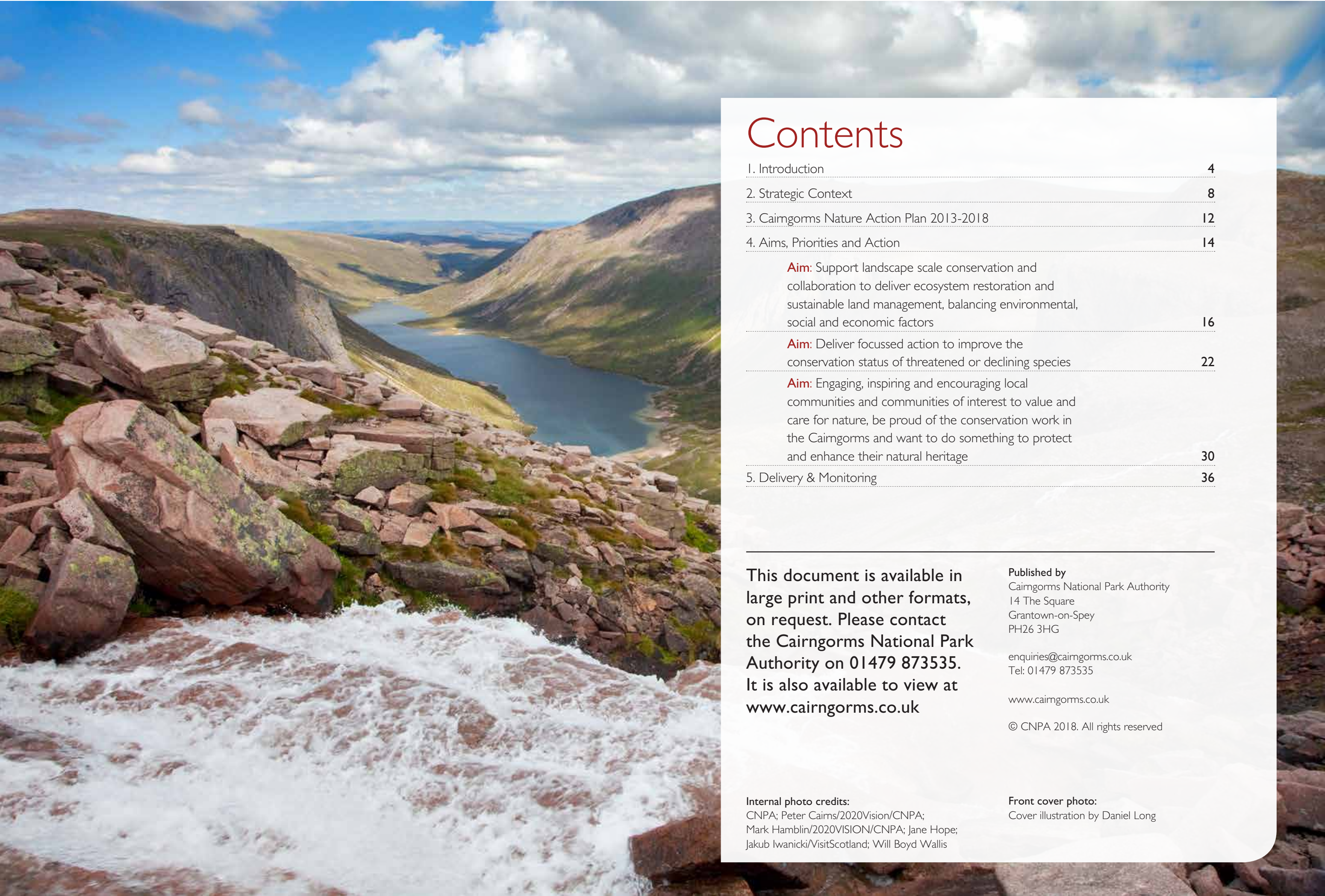
**Cairngorms**  
NATIONAL PARK  
Pàirc Nàiseanta a' Mhonaidh Ruaidh

MANAGEMENT PLANS

# CAIRNGORMS NATURE Action Plan 2019-2024







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This document is available in large print and other formats, on request. Please contact the Cairngorms National Park Authority on 01479 873535. It is also available to view at [www.cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.cairngorms.co.uk)

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# I. Introduction

Very few superlatives can adequately describe the outstanding nature and landscapes of the Cairngorms National Park, its importance for the people who live and work here, the people who visit and enjoy the area and the true magnitude and significance of the wildlife and habitats supported by this unique and special place.

This is a place hugely valued by people for diverse reasons and a landscape of immense importance to wildlife, much of which depends on and is a product of the working of the land over generations. It is also a landscape where there is a shared vision to create even more diversity, even greater abundance of distinctive habitats and species and which is internationally recognised for its quality of environment – but with people at its heart.

Cairngorms Nature is delivering this vision. It is a partnership that brings those with an interest in the area together to promote ecological restoration and biodiversity conservation as part of caring for and managing land, working together to agree objectives, inspiring and developing new initiatives, engaging and involving people, raising awareness and understanding of land management and the multiple benefits conservation brings and ultimately ensuring the area's natural capital – the landscapes, geology, soil, air, water and all living things – is protected and enhanced for future generations, providing a wide range of economic, cultural and other values.

This is the second Cairngorms Nature Action Plan, which follows previous Biodiversity Action Plans, all of which

have made significant contributions. A huge amount has been achieved in the last five years demonstrating the power of partnerships and co-operation, and the energy and dedication of those protecting, managing and looking after the Park's distinctive woodland, wetland, moorland, montane and farmland features.

Cairngorms Nature aims to nurture, inspire and enable this work, bringing people together to collectively make things happen. As a partnership the aim is to be inclusive, to consult and seek agreement, to use evidence and to tackle difficult issues by building trust and relationships through discussion and collaboration and ultimately making a difference on the ground.

Each plan is not an end-point on its own, but a means of focussing priorities for the next stage of the journey. Landscape scale conservation, priority species management and involving people have been agreed as being the key aims for the next five years. This is not a Park Authority plan but is a plan for everyone who lives, works, enjoys, studies in and cares for this wonderful area. By getting involved anyone can play a part in delivering a sustainable future, ensuring the Cairngorms National Park remains an outstanding jewel amongst Scotland's, the UK's and Europe's special places.



**Andy Wells**

Chair, Cairngorms Nature





SCOTTISH BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY – 6 BIG STEPS FOR NATURE			NATIONAL
1. Ecosystem restoration 2. Investment in natural capital 3. Quality greenspace for health & education benefits 4. Conserving Wildlife 5. Sustainable management of land and freshwater 6. Sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems			
Water Framework Directive, Scotland's Wild Deer: A National Approach, Scottish Land Use Strategy, Scottish Forestry Strategy, Scotland's Climate Change Plan, Scottish Pollinator Strategy			
NATIONAL PARK PARTNERSHIP PLAN – BIG CONSERVATION CHALLENGES			REGIONAL
Enhancing habitats on a landscape scale	Protecting & enhancing declining and fragile species	Building support and engagement	
Cairngorms Forest Strategy, Catchment Management Plans, Deer Management Plans, Cairngorms Economic Strategy, Local Development Plan, Active Cairngorms, LBAPs			

CAIRNGORMS NATURE ACTION PLAN			
LANDSCAPE SCALE CONSERVATION	PRIORITY SPECIES	INVOLVING PEOPLE	AIMS
Woodland expansion & enhancement Nature Friendly Farming Freshwater restoration Moorland & peatland	Wildcat Mountain Hare Beaver Capercaillie Curlew Golden eagle Peregrine falcon Hen harrier Invertebrates Freshwater Pearl Mussel Aspen Plants, fungi & lichen	Greater collaboration and engagement in land use decision making Recognise and celebrate good conservation work Provide opportunities to get involved More people actively and responsibly enjoying nature	PRIORITIES
5,000 ha new woodland (incl. regeneration and montane) 70% of new woodland is native 750 ha PAWS & native woodland under active restoration 20 farms in woodland and grassland projects Increase in farmland waders from 2015 baseline 5,000 ha peatland under restoration management 150 km river/ riparian restoration 50 ponds created or restored	Targets identified as per Species Recovery Curve A measurable and sustained increase in both home range (re) occupation and breeding success of golden eagle, hen harrier and peregrine falcon	50 Volunteer rangers 5 communities involved in landscape values project 3 communities involved in land-use decision making 15,000 people at nature events 20 land managers trained in community engagement	TARGETS
Cairngorms Connect, East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership, Deer Management Groups, Catchment Management Partnerships, Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership, Volunteer Cairngorms, Ranger Services, Cairngorms Trust, Wetlands & Wader Initiatives			PARTNERSHIPS & DELIVERY



## 2. Strategic Context

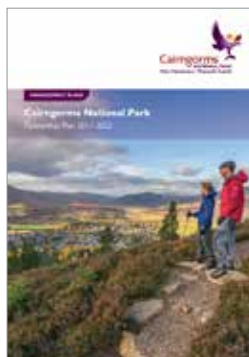
### Scottish Biodiversity Strategy – a Route Map to 2020 (SBS)

The SBS sets our six 'Big Steps for Nature' which provide a focus on collaborative work to help deliver Scotland's commitments to meeting international goals and targets. Cairngorms Nature will make a significant contribution towards five of the six Big Steps for Nature (the sixth is 'Sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems').



1. Ecosystem restoration – to meet the Aichi target of restoring 15% of degraded ecosystems
2. Investment in natural capital – to ensure the benefits nature provides are better understood and appreciated
3. Quality greenspace for health and education benefits – to ensure the majority of people derive increased benefits from contact with nature
4. Conserving wildlife in Scotland – to secure the future of priority habitats and species
5. Sustainable management of land and freshwater – to ensure that environmental, social and economic elements are well balanced

### Cairngorms National Park Partnership Plan 2017-2022



The National Park Partnership Plan sets out how all those with a responsibility for the Park will co-ordinate their work to tackle the most important issues. It sets out the vision and overarching strategy for managing the Park, providing clarity on the public interest priorities we seek to deliver through land

use in the Cairngorms. The Cairngorms Nature Action Plan is one of five key strategies and plans which support delivery of the Partnership Plan. Conservation is one of the three, long term outcomes and the three aims of the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan directly reflect the three big conservation challenges as described in the NPPP:

- Enhancing habitats on a landscape scale
- Protecting and enhancing species
- Building support and engagement

The work of Cairngorms Nature is set within the wider context of land management in the National Park. Cairngorms Nature recognises and respects many of the different ecological, economic and cultural drivers that different estates and organisations have.

Decisions around land use are often guided by existing policies and much of the work Cairngorms Nature undertakes will be supported by, and in the context of, some key plans, principles and projects:

### Cairngorms National Park Forest Strategy 2018

Woodlands in the National Park are vitally important for wildlife and are a distinctive feature of the landscape, ecology, economy and cultural heritage. Part of the reason for their importance and distinctiveness stems from the unusually high proportion of native trees (even commercial woodlands are predominantly Scots pine). Whilst the average proportion of native woodland across all Scottish local authority areas is 22.5 %, in the Cairngorms it is at least 69%. Four of the ten strategic objectives in the Forest Strategy are to:

1. Promote the creation of new woodlands that complement other land use
2. Enhance the condition of existing woodlands
3. Restore lost or vulnerable forest ecosystems
4. Encourage natural regeneration of native forests and the strategy also includes guidance on:

- Creating forest habitat networks
- Integration with managed moorland, farmed land and peatlands
- Deer management and fencing
- Landscape and wild land
- Designated sites
- Biosecurity, invasive species and wildfire
- Montane woodland, riparian woodland and aspen

- Protecting and enhancing woodland remnants and ancient and semi-natural woodlands
- Felling

### Deer management

Deer management is integral to woodland expansion and peatland restoration and Deer Management Groups (DMGs) will play a key role in supporting delivery. The National Park Partnership Plan states "...we aim to continue the current direction of travel in which deer numbers and consequent impacts are reduced, where deer welfare is improved and sport stalking in a high quality environment continues to make a valuable economic contribution to the National Park." Cairngorms Nature partners will continue to advise and support estates and DMG's, working together to achieve this in strategic locations.



### Moorland management

Moorland management is a significant land use in the National Park, extending to approximately 44% of land cover, shaping much of the landscape. Currently, much of it is managed for the primary aim of producing sufficient populations of red grouse and/or red deer for sport shooting. The longer term aim is to develop a more sustainable model of hunting, which includes more habitat and species diversity and delivers more public benefit.

Good moorland management can make a significant contribution to delivering conservation priorities and bring associated social and economic benefits. The key consideration is the balance of land use objectives and the extent to which the intensity of some management practices might be affecting long term sustainability and delivery of outcomes.

A partnership approach to addressing these issues is critical. These are topics which at a national level are often polarised, characterised by conflicting objectives, debates about evidence and lack of trust. Through the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership (ECMP) there is the opportunity to work with a very practical focus at a regional scale. Approaches piloted in the ECMP will seek to establish, deliver and promote a shared understanding of what good moorland management looks like and look to take these forwards with other land managers in the Park.

**Rewilding**

Rewilding is a popular term. It has many definitions and means different things to different people. For Cairngorms Nature rewilding principles run through all of the aims and all landscapes. Rewilding brings benefits to people and wildlife in gardens and fields as well as forests and mountains. Rewilding brings fresh ideas and approaches which allows natural processes to flourish alongside productive land management and building diverse, nature-based economies that support robust, resilient communities.

In this Plan, there are aims and actions for ecosystem restoration, more sustainable land management, species recovery within more natural systems, carefully considered species translocations, re-connecting people with nature and exploring new ways for communities to benefit from the wildlife and nature around them. All of this could be called re-wilding.

**Species reintroductions and reinforcements**

Conservation translocations can bring many benefits for ecosystems, communities and businesses. Many conservation translocations are low-risk. However, some have the potential for negative impacts on the environment and other land-uses. Projects on pine hoverfly, alpine blue sow thistle and fresh water pearl mussel are proving invaluable to the species' conservation and Cairngorms Nature is keen to explore where translocations can have a lasting, positive impact.

Cairngorms Nature will play an active role in carefully considering when conservation translocations may be appropriate and the types of situation in which they may cause problems. Cairngorms Nature will work closely with Scotland's National Species Reintroduction Forum and involve people who live and work in the Park on any proposed translocations that would affect people's wellbeing and livelihoods.



IMAGE

**Wild land and wildness**

Arguably the most celebrated of the National Park's special landscape qualities is that of wildness. The feeling of being surrounded by wildlife and natural habitats is greatly valued as it helps us reconnect with nature, and refreshes the mind and body. Wildland, which is where wildness is most strongly experienced, has been mapped in Scotland by SNH and is safeguarded by Scottish Government policy. There are extensive areas of wildland covering upland parts of the National Park.

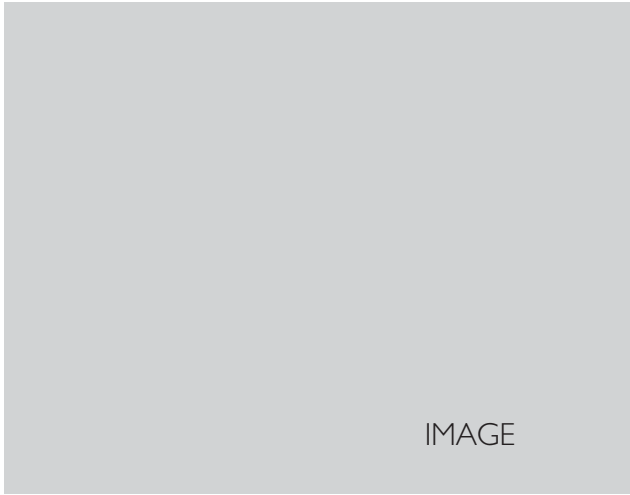
In any area of high wildness, new man-made features or abrupt changes in management may detract from the special qualities. Infrastructure and management for woodland expansion and deer management may well mean interventions that detract from the sense of wildness if not undertaken with care. However research shows that woodland, and more habitat and species diversity, actually enhances the sense of wildness and is therefore encouraged. Each situation is unique and will need to be assessed to minimise the immediate effects, whilst policies and approaches to wildland support achieving the longer term aims.

**Other national and regional plans and strategies**

The Cairngorms Nature Action Plan supports and builds on a wide range of strategies, policies and plans relating to the environment, land use, economy and community engagement, notably:

- Scottish Forestry Strategy
- Wild Deer: A National Approach
- Scotland's Climate Change Plan
- Scottish Pollinator Strategy
- Scottish Land Use Strategy
- Community Empowerment Act
- National standards for community engagement

- Capercaillie framework
- Active Cairngorms
- Cairngorms Economic Strategy
- Local Development Plan
- Community action plans
- Catchment management plans
- Deer management plans
- River basin management plans
- Local biodiversity action plans
- Regional and site specific habitat and species plans



IMAGE



IMAGE



### 3. Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2013-2018

The Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2013 - 2018 was the first Plan for the new partnership, building on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan 2003 - 2013. It detailed the outstanding natural heritage in the National Park, identified the commonly agreed key issues and set out four aims. A report summarising activity over the last five years is available on-line at [www.Cairngorms.co.uk](http://www.Cairngorms.co.uk)

#### Improving the quality and connectivity of woodlands and wetlands:

Significant progress was made in encouraging woodland expansion and enhancement, which remains a priority. Approximately 3,000 ha of new woodland was planted, supported by a 12.5% additional premium rate for planting in target areas. A new, expanded target map is available to support this ongoing work. There are also hundreds, if not thousands, of hectares of natural regeneration across the National Park. Our understanding of the amount of natural regeneration is an incomplete, but extremely important, part of the picture and we will work to quantify this.

Freshwater actions focussed largely on removing man-made barriers, riparian planting, re-meandering and Natural Flood Management knowledge gathering, largely driven by outcomes in the Water Framework Directive and the Flood Risk Act. Catchment Management Partnerships continue to play a key role in 'Freshwater and wetland restoration'. Wetlands and Waders Initiatives worked with farmers and crofters to manage habitat for farmland waders, increasing some populations for the first time in over a decade. This positive work is continued and built on under the landscape-scale priority of 'Nature Friendly Farming'.

#### Priority work on other habitats:

Work on other habitats focused on uplands and grasslands. The Peatland Action project has been a great success, Cairngorms Connect and Mar Lodge Estate have set the agenda for montane woodland aspirations and the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership is a focus for demonstrating what sustainable moorland management can look like. Taking this work forwards, montane woodland is considered part of woodland expansion, a natural extension of the tree line rather than a separate entity. Moorland management is recognised as being more significant and highlighted as a landscape-scale priority. And grassland actions are taken forwards with a renewed focus in 'Nature Friendly Farming'.

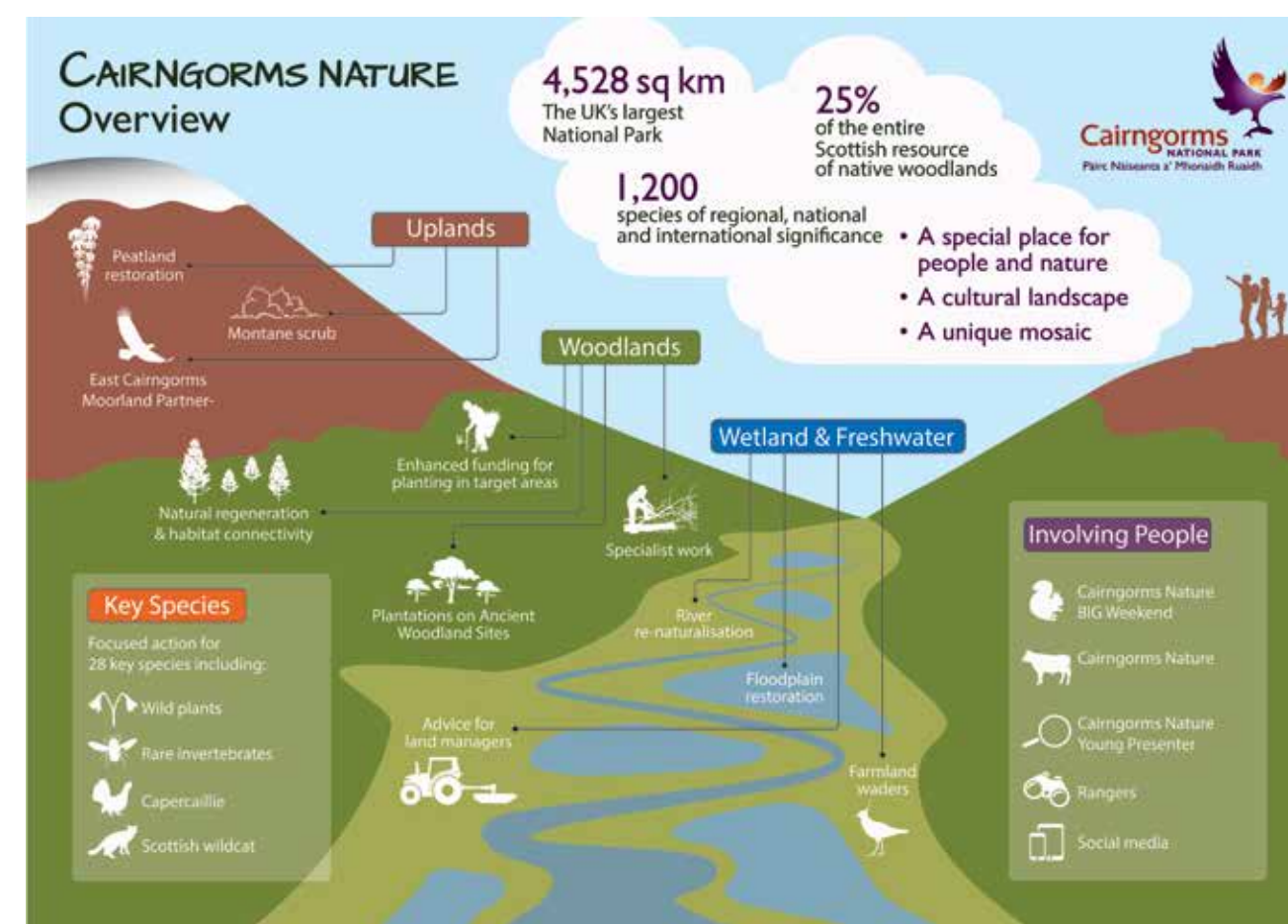


#### Focussed action for priority species:

Action for species progressed significantly with the start of the Cairngorms Wild Plants project and the Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms project. Both projects are recognised as critical to continuing momentum for invertebrate and plant conservation in the Park. Resourcing species conservation was challenging and a refreshed list benefits from having many organisations and NGOs as lead partners, allocating resource and linking with national strategies and plans. Without baseline data and comprehensive monitoring it was impossible to make an assessment of populations. The Species Recovery Curve is being trialled to establish progress and it is a priority to 'Ensure good information and data are available to guide long-term conservation'.

#### Involving People:




The Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend, social media, Young Presenters and Farm Awards have all significantly raised the profile of conservation in the Park and will continue to be supported and built on. Close working with Volunteer Cairngorms and Active Cairngorms presents new opportunities for getting involved and working with visitors and businesses on responsible access and sustainable tourism. Delivery of the actions for community engagement and empowerment were not progressed as widely as anticipated, although there were key successes in certain locations such as the Tomintoul & Glenlivet Landscape Partnership. This work is continued with a renewed focus on landscape and landscape change as an accessible, more relevant subject and community involvement in the three landscape-scale partnerships in the Park.





## 4. Aims, Priorities and Action

The Cairngorms Nature Action Plan 2019-2024 has three aims:

-  Landscape scale conservation
-  Focussed action for priority species
-  Involving people

The aims are split into a number of priorities, reflecting 'Agendas for Action' in the National Park Partnership Plan, 'Priority Projects' in the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, continuing work from the first Cairngorms Nature Action Plan (2013-2018) and consultation with partners on current issues. The aims and priorities in this Action Plan are the next step towards the 50 year visions for 2063, as set out in the first Cairngorms Nature Action Plan (2013-2018).



## AIM:

Support landscape scale conservation and collaboration to deliver ecosystem restoration and sustainable land management, balancing environmental, social and economic factors



The Cairngorms National Park is an outstanding place for natural heritage. Nowhere else in Britain can you find such a collection of different habitats of such high quality and exceptional size and scale. It contains some of the UK's best examples of natural and semi-natural habitats, including a quarter of Scotland's native woodlands, extensive arctic-like plateaux, the headwaters of four of Scotland's major rivers, functioning floodplains and the some of the last few remaining fragments of mountain woodland. The foundations for ecosystem restoration, for habitats to reach their full ecological potential on a grand scale, are impressive.

The main objectives are:

- bigger, more natural woodlands, expanding up to a natural treeline, providing connections across catchments and around the central core of the mountains;
- more natural, dynamic rivers connected to functioning wetlands and floodplains; and
- restored peatlands stopping the loss of carbon, improving water quality and helping alleviate flooding.



## 2063 VISION

Patches of forest and woodland, some miles across, some as small as football fields, link together through farmland and open ground. They are expanding up hillsides and into quiet areas, providing refuge for species to flourish, like the once critically endangered but now flourishing capercaillie. They are made up almost entirely of native trees: a patchwork of different woodlands, including productive plantations, all with rich understories, trees of all ages, clearings, bogs and deadwood scattered throughout. The UK's largest natural forests are considered an exemplar of woodlands managed for multiple benefits.

Most of the blanket bog is in favourable condition, retains water and acts as a carbon sink. Rivers naturally meander and waters rise and fall seasonally across land grazed by livestock. Large, interconnected wetlands help prevent damaging flood events in the Park and further downstream. Natural processes in river catchments do not affect the productivity of land. The high water quality status has been maintained or increased.



The Cairngorms National Park is also a cultural landscape. The work of generations of land managers has produced the landscapes and habitats we see today. It is an IUCN Category 5 protected landscape, which recognises and seeks to safeguard the integrity of the interaction of people and nature over time, and the aims of the Park cater for the needs of people as well as wildlife. Managing for biodiversity and the sustainable use of the area's natural resource is part of many land managers' everyday business. Significant areas of the National Park are managed primarily for forestry, sporting and agriculture and the productive woodlands, moorlands, farms and crofts are home to many of the Park's rare and endangered species. Cairngorms Nature seeks to build on this, supporting land managers working for wildlife.

#### The main objectives are:

- more sustainably managed moorlands with more structural and species diversity and pockets and strips of trees and shrubs on moorland edges, steep slopes, in gullies and around woodland remnants;
- more habitat suitable for breeding waders as part of agricultural systems; and
- wildlife-rich grassland and woodland on productive, profitable farms.

### 2063 VISION

A patchwork of productive land uses is good for wildlife. It supports thriving communities and reflects centuries of tradition. Delivering biodiversity benefit is an integral part of high-quality food production and does not impact on profitability. High-quality grasslands support a healthy range of nationally and locally important species. Farmland wader populations have recovered and increased throughout the National Park, and the area is nationally recognised as a model of farmland management for conservation on productive land.



### 2063 VISION

Moorlands have structural diversity and link habitats together sympathetically. A natural transition from woodland to montane scrub to upland heath is developing throughout the National Park. The contributions it makes to ecosystem services are widely recognised. Raptor persecution ended decades ago and a full complement of native raptors lives and breeds across the National Park. Productive grouse moors and high-quality stalking remains a mainstay of life, contributing environmentally, economically and socially.





AIM: Landscape scale conservation		
Priority	Action	Partners (Lead in bold)
Woodland expansion and enhancement	Engage with, encourage and support land managers in creating new woodland planting and regeneration in priority and strategic areas, prioritising native woodland where feasible	<b>SF</b> & CNPA
	Quantify the extent of native woodland regeneration in the Park and map existing native woodland remnants	<b>CNPA</b> , SF, FLS, WTS and TfL
	Investigate, develop and deliver models for funding woodland expansion and enhancement to work in addition to, or alongside, Forest Grant Schemes e.g. Forest Carbon	<b>CNPA</b> , SF
	Enhance woodland habitat quality to benefit capercaillie population and other species	<b>RSPB</b> , SLE, CNPA, FLS, SNH
	Enhance woodland habitat quality for Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites and degraded native and semi natural woodlands	<b>WTS</b> & TfL
	Engage volunteers in habitat assessments of woodlands to inform management advice and ensure plants are taken into account in woodland management	<b>Plantlife</b> , Volunteer Cairngorms
	Reduce and/or maintain grazing densities that create conditions suitable for the natural regeneration of a montane woodland/natural treeline	<b>CC, MLE</b> & DMGs
	Plant high altitude, mountain woodland species, from a suitable stock and in suitable locations, to act as a seed source in the core of the Park	<b>CC &amp; MLE</b>
	Develop models of how woodland can be accommodated in designated sites with open ground qualifying features (using specific examples such as Glen Tilt and Glenavon)	<b>SNH</b> , CNPA, SF, estates

AIM: Landscape scale conservation		
Priority	Action	Partners (Lead in bold)
Moorland and Peatland	Modify grazing and muirburn on moorland to allow natural regeneration of trees and shrubs, especially in gullies, on steep slopes and around existing remnants	<b>ECMP</b> , CNPA, DMGs
	Pilot new approaches in the ECMP to establish, deliver and then promote across the Park a shared understanding of sustainable moorland management	<b>ECMP</b> , CNPA, Moorland Forum, SLE, DMGs, estates
	Work with a range of land managers across the National Park to deliver restoration management of peatlands at a sub-catchment level to improve ecosystem benefits such as Carbon, water quality and biodiversity	<b>Peatland Action</b> , IUCN, estates
	Work with the IUCN Peatland Programme to source funding through the Peatland Code to support a peatland restoration project	<b>Peatland Action</b> , estates
Nature friendly farming	Through wetlands and waders initiatives, support land managers, agents, farmers and crofters with equipment, funding and management advice to manage habitat so that it is suitable for farmland waders	<b>RSPB</b> , SNH, CNPA, agents and land managers
	Promote Park-wide co-ordination of activity for the conservation of farmland waders	<b>RSPB</b> , SNH, CNPA
	Identify priority areas and work with land managers to sympathetically manage species-rich grasslands	<b>Plantlife</b> , NFUS, SAC
	Work with farmers, crofters and agents to encourage integrated woodland development on farms for ecological and economic benefit	<b>CNPA</b> , WTS, NFUS, Soil Assoc, agents



AIM: Landscape scale conservation		
Priority	Action	Partners (Lead in bold)
Freshwater and wetland restoration	Conduct spatial targeting exercise to identify priority and strategic areas for a freshwater and wetland habitat network and natural flood management which will deliver maximum ecosystem service benefit	<b>CMPs</b> , CNPA, SNH, SEPA, FBs
	Re-connect rivers to floodplains to restore habitat connectivity and natural flooding cycles, for biodiversity and Natural Flood Management gain	<b>CMPs</b> , FBs, SEPA, SNH
	Re-naturalise rivers using techniques such as removing artificial barriers, carrying out river bank protection/ restoration and re-connecting and re-watering or creating some back channels	
	Plant riparian woodland to enhance aquatic ecosystems, strengthen woodland habitat networks, and help manage flooding	
	Seek opportunities, including through development and Sustainable Drainage systems, to restore or create new ponds for wildlife	<b>CNPA</b> , SNH, Local Authorities
Targets		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5,000 ha new woodland (incl. regeneration and montane)</li><li>• 70% of new woodland to be native species</li><li>• 750 ha PAWS and native woodlands under active restoration</li><li>• 20 farms in woodland &amp; grassland projects</li><li>• 5,000 ha peatland under restoration management</li><li>• 150 km river and riparian restoration</li><li>• 50 ponds created or restored, including SUDs ponds</li><li>• Increase in farmland wader populations from the existing 2015 baseline</li></ul>		





**AIM:**  
Deliver focussed action to improve the conservation status of threatened or declining species



The Cairngorms National Park is home to almost 1,200 species considered to be nationally or internationally important. By virtue of their size, rarity and/or appeal, some of these species have a much higher public profile than others, including prominent conservation ‘flagship’ species like the osprey and red squirrel. Yet the bulk of the nationally important species are made up of plants, fungi, lichens, bryophytes and insects. These nationally important species are mainly associated with woodlands (39% of species), rock (20%) and montane habitats (15%), and most will benefit significantly from the landscape scale conservation priorities. However, there are some priority species with very specific and sometimes urgent management needs that demand focussed conservation action.

Raptor conservation is perhaps the most high profile for all the priority species and is frequently a contentious and impassioned issue. Land managers in the Cairngorms play a key role in the national debate. Cairngorms Nature partners are committed to increasing home range (re)occupancy and breeding success of golden eagle, hen harrier and peregrine

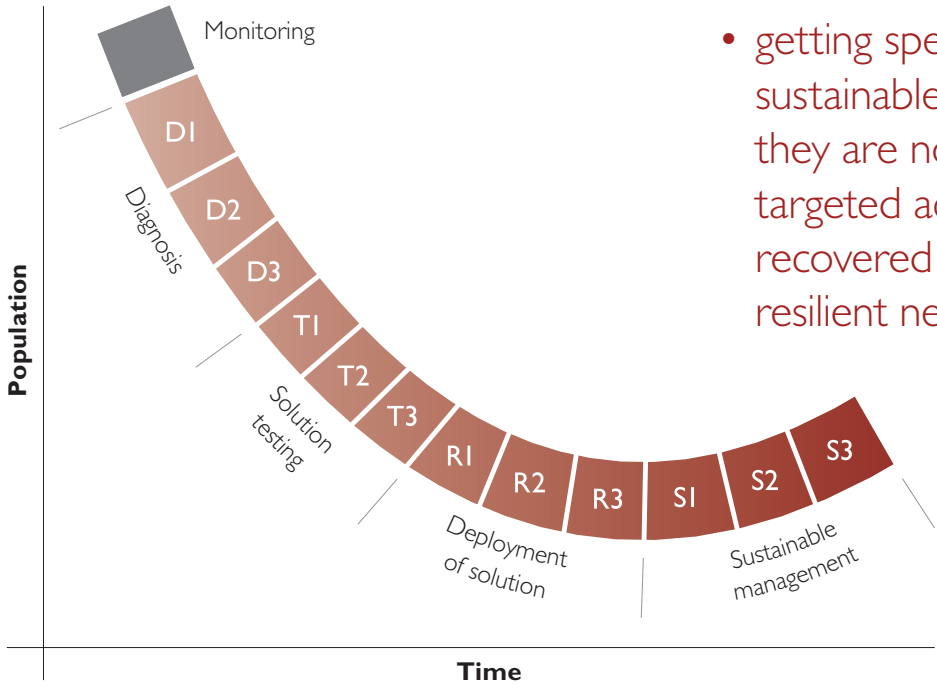
falcon. These are the three Schedule I/Annex I species whose status and trends in the National Park are unfavourable. They are also committed to working with Police Scotland to eliminate illegal persecution of all raptors.

Ultimately, species recovery must be integrated with landscape scale conservation. In order to reach that point we must understand the species’ needs and the issues we have to address (diagnosis), have a proven set of management practices in place (solution testing and deployment) and then integrate the management needs into day-to-day business (sustainable management).

The journey of recovery for a species is illustrated in the Species Recovery Curve developed by the RSPB. (Strategy for Species Conservation 2012 – RSPB). This sets out a thirteen stage action plan for protected species. What each stage means for the priority species varies in detail but overall it allows a consistent approach for action and reporting. We have used it to set targets for each species for the next five years. These targets are for the populations within the Park and not for the whole country.

The main objective is:

- getting species back on a sustainable footing, where they are no longer reliant on targeted action, but have been recovered within a robust and resilient network of habitats.





13 Stages of the species recovery journey		
Stage	Code	Description
Monitoring	M	Purely monitoring, no action taken
Diagnosis (research)	D1	No research undertaken/ cause of decline unknown
	D2	Research underway, but limited understanding of cause of decline
	D3	Research is providing strong indications of cause of decline
Solution testing (research delivery)	T1	Diagnosis provides sufficient results to trial solutions but work only initiated recently
	T2	Trial management underway but not yet clear evidence that it can deliver objectives
	T3	Trial management is providing strong indication that it will deliver objectives
Deployment of solution	R1	Work initiated to roll out solutions across the species' range
	R2	Solutions adopted across the species' range but too early to demonstrate success against population/ range targets
	R3	Solutions enable achievement against population/ range targets but only with continued conservation intervention
Sustainable management	S1	Indication that population/ range targets being achieved with minimal conservation intervention
	S2	Good evidence available that population/ range targets being achieved and can be sustained with little or no conservation intervention (ie population maintained within regular land management practices)
	S3	Population/ range targets achieved and the species' conservation status secured

AIM: Priority species				
Priority	Action	Species Recovery Curve		Lead Partner
		Current	Target	
Scottish wildcat	Promote TNVR and work with land managers to reduce hybridisation, disease, misidentification and accidental control	T1	R3	Scottish Wildcat Action, RZSS, SNH
	Trial release of captive-bred wildcats			
Mountain hare	Counting, reporting and collating of population data across ownership boundaries within the East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership area	D3	S1	ECMP, CNPA, SNH, SLE, DMGs
	Develop collaborative population management plans to sustainably manage at a landscape scale			
	Encourage all estates within National Park to engage with national monitoring scheme			CNPA, SNH, GWCT, Moorland Forum, SLE
Beaver	Plan proactively for the potential and management implications of beaver populations in the Park	n/a	n/a	CNPA, Scottish Beaver Forum
Capercaillie	Co-ordinate habitat, recreation and development management through delivery of the Capercaillie Framework	T1 – T3	R3	CNPA, RSPB, SNH, FLS, GWCT, estates
	Deliver HLF funded project to build support for capercaillie conservation, develop sustainable recreation plans to benefit communities and capercaillie, and support long term survival			CNPA, RSPB, SNH, SLE



AIM: Priority species <i>(continued)</i>				
Priority	Action	Species Recovery Curve		Partners (Lead in bold)
		Current	Target	
Curlew	Carry out an assessment of breeding productivity in the uplands through nest monitoring in the ECMP area	D2	T1	<b>BTO</b> , ECMP
	Produce sensitivity maps identifying key sites for breeding curlew across the Park			<b>BTO</b> , RSPB, CNPA
Raptors	Create the conditions for a measurable and sustained increase in both home range (re) occupation and breeding success of golden eagle, hen harrier and peregrine across the National Park	T2 (all species)	R3 (all species)	<b>CNPA</b> , Estates, SNH, and RSPB
	Identify unoccupied golden eagle, hen harrier and peregrine territories and work with land managers to carry out positive management that will encourage re-colonisation			<b>CNPA</b> , RSPB, SNH, RSGs, estates
	Carry out collaborative mapping and monitoring of golden eagle, hen harrier and peregrine sites and populations, sharing data to establish baselines which will inform management and measure progress			<b>RSPB</b> , CNPA, ECMP, Estates, RSGs
	Build relationships and gather intelligence to eliminate the illegal killing of all raptors through increased wildlife crime enforcement			<b>Police Scotland</b> , CNPA, SNH, estates
	Develop and deliver wildlife tourism opportunities that benefit local businesses and promote the National Park as an example of raptor conservation success	n/a	n/a	<b>CNPA</b> , SLE, estates, Visit-Scotland

AIM: Priority species <i>(continued)</i>				
Priority	Action	Species Recovery Curve		Partners (Lead in bold)
		Current	Target	
Kentish glory	Support the <b>Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms (RIC) project</b> to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>survey new and historic sites</li><li>map available habitat</li><li>conduct captive breeding and translocation programmes</li><li>recruit, train and support citizen science volunteers</li><li>liaise with land managers</li></ul>	T1	R1	<b>RSPB</b> , CNPA, SNH, Buglife, BCS
Dark bordered beauty		T1	R1	
Pine hoverfly		R1	R2	
Northern silver stiletto fly		D2	R1	
Scabious mining bee		D2	T3	
Shining guest ant		D2	R2	
Northern February red stonefly	Complete Park-wide survey and raise awareness of species' needs with land managers and planning authorities	D2	D3	<b>Buglife</b>
Northern damselfly	Recruit, train and support citizen science volunteers to survey new and historic sites	D2	T2 – T3	<b>BDS</b>
	Provide advice to land managers on habitat management and creation			
Wood ants	Safeguard existing populations and promote as ambassador for woodland management/expansion	T1 – T3	R2	<b>Wood Ants group</b> , SF, MLE, RSPB, SNH
	Investigate opportunities for translocations to increase resilience in meta populations			
Pinewood mason bee	Develop strategy for incorporating species' needs into forestry management	D2	T2	<b>SF</b> , FLS, Buglife



AIM: Priority species <i>(continued)</i>				
Priority	Action	Species Recovery Curve		Partners (Lead in bold)
		Current	Target	
Aspen hoverfly	Work with land managers to deliver sustainable management suitable for population expansion	T2	R3	<b>SNH</b> , SF, FLS, RSPB, CNPA, Buglife, CA, RZSS
	Promote as ambassador for aspen woodland eg include in discussions on beavers			
Freshwater pearl mussel	Improve riparian management to reduce sediment and nutrient input in key areas	R1	R2	<b>CMPs</b> , SEPA
	Survey all un-surveyed suitable habitat within Cairngorms National Park			CNPA & SNH
	Support an encystment reintroduction/ translocation project in the Spey Catchment			SCI
Aspen	Work with land managers to manage and improve the conditions of key sites identified in the Aspen Strategy for Badenoch and Strathspey	R1	R3	<b>CNPA</b> , CA, SNH, SF, BCS, agents
	Work with land managers, partners and volunteers to improve connectivity and create new aspen stands across the National Park			
	Develop an Aspen Management Plan for Deeside			
				<b>CNPA</b>

AIM: Priority species <i>(continued)</i>				
Priority	Action	Species Recovery Curve		Partners (Lead in bold)
		Current	Target	
Twinflower	Support the <b>Cairngorms Wild Plants project</b> to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>provide advice and support to land managers at existing sites</li><li>establish new translocation sites across the Park</li><li>recruit, train and support Plantlife Flora Guardians to monitor existing populations</li><li>develop citizen science survey projects</li></ul>	T2	T3	<b>Plantlife</b> , SNH, CNPA
One-flowered wintergreen		T1	T3	
Marsh saxifrage		M	M	
Waxcaps		D3	T2	
Alpine blue sow thistle	Monitoring existing populations (including in collaboration with Plantlife Flora Guardians)  Conduct research to understand causes of decline, and recovery solutions  Carry out translocations contributing to ecosystems restoration, and land manager support for rare species recovery and protection	T2	R3	<b>RBGE</b> , SNH, Plantlife
Oblong woodsia		D2	T3	
Small cow wheat		D3	T3	
Woolly willow		R2	R3	
Alectoria ochroleuca		D2	T3	
Hertelidea botryosa		D2	T3	



## AIM:

Engaging, inspiring and encouraging local communities and communities of interest to value and care for nature, be proud of the conservation work in the Cairngorms and want to do something to protect and enhance their natural heritage



The Cairngorms National Park is home to around 18,500 people, representing a wide range of interests. Natural heritage is fundamentally important to communities – to health and well-being, the local economy and a sense of place, identity and pride – and residents spend a lot of time in, and care deeply about, the landscapes and wildlife around them.

Each year 1.8 million visitors come to the National Park, many for its wildlife and scenery. It is important that recreation in the Park does not have a negative impact on our wildlife, but, at the same time, there is a massive opportunity to reach out to and welcome a new audience. Cairngorms Nature will work closely with the Local Outdoor Access Forum, ranger services and tourism operators on issues of sustainable tourism and responsible access.

Our incredible landscapes and wildlife bring many benefits to residents, visitors and businesses and, for the most part, people value them highly and want to play a part in their success. It is important that people feel well informed and involved in conservation. We need to make the connection between people's everyday lives and the nature and wildlife they value, or even depend on. And we need to make this information accessible and engaging, delivered in the most credible and persuasive manner possible.

Conservation in the Park will only be really sustainable in the long-term by putting people at its heart, either through decision-making, through volunteering or simply by caring enough to write a letter of support or walk the dog on a lead.


### The main objectives are:


- Raising awareness and understanding of land management and clearly demonstrating the benefits that conservation brings for people as well as wildlife.
- more engagement with nature: more people involved in decision making, getting out and enjoying it and helping to look after it.

## 2063 VISION

People who live in the National Park are proud of the nature around them and are more widely involved in its management. Land-based and tourism businesses thrive by looking after the environments they rely on; and contribute to conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. Visitors respect the landscapes and wildlife they come to see and want to contribute to protecting them. The land management community is thriving. It receives strong public support for the services it provides.



AIM: Involving people 		
Priority	Action	Partners (Lead in bold)
Greater collaboration and engagement in discussions and decisions about land use	Consultation with at least 5 settlements in the Park and additional interest groups to better understand what these communities think and value about landscapes in the Park, to influence land use consultations, decision-making and strategy development	<b>CNPA</b> , CDOs, JHI, NGOs
	Raise awareness and understanding of landscape and landscape change through social media, events and projects (e.g. Photo Posts)	<b>CNPA</b> , RSPB, SNH
	Implement 'guidance on engaging communities in decisions relating to land' to support three community representations in landscape-scale conservation partnerships and projects	<b>CNPA</b> , CC, ECMP, SLC T & GLP, CDO's
	Provide training for land managers in approaches to engaging communities in land management decision making and involvement	<b>CDO's</b> , SLC, SLE, Land managers
Recognise & celebrate good conservation work	Raise awareness of conservation and the benefits it brings for people and wildlife, showcasing projects, places and people, through websites, social media, events and awards	<b>CNPA</b> , RSPB, SNH, FLS
	Raise awareness and understanding of land management in the Park and how different land management methods produce multiple benefits for conservation	<b>CNPA</b> , RSPB, SNH, Land managers
Increase engagement and provide opportunities to get involved	Encourage, develop and support biological recorders and recording schemes, highlighting and encouraging citizen science-led information gathering about the Park's wildlife	<b>CNPA</b> , SBIF, NBN, NESBReC, HBRG
	Support and develop Volunteer Cairngorms: a programme of environmental volunteering including the Volunteer Ranger scheme, supporting local wildlife groups, existing schemes and co-ordinating opportunities	<b>Volunteer Cairngorms</b> , SNH, RSPB, CE, FLS, NTS

AIM: Involving people <i>(continued)</i> 		
Priority	Action	Partners (Lead in bold)
Get more people actively and responsibly enjoying nature	Develop and deliver events and activities to encourage people to enjoy wildlife and landscapes e.g. Cairngorms Nature BIG Weekend, ranger events, Wee Walks Week and health walks	<b>CNPA</b> , Rangers, RSPB, SNH, NGOs, estates
	Develop initiatives specifically to encourage young people in schools, colleges and beyond to enjoy wildlife and landscapes	<b>CNPA</b> , RSPB, SNH, Rangers
	Provide targeted information and support to activity providers and education groups using the outdoors	<b>Active Cairngorms</b> , CBP, activity providers, DoFE
	Review, develop and deliver the 'Tread Lightly' responsible access campaign delivering signage, interpretation, trail head information and awareness raising campaigns accessible and relevant to target audiences	<b>Active Cairngorms</b> , SNH, Rangers, VisitScotland, land managers
Targets		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Over 50 volunteer rangers working in Cairngorms National Park</li><li>5 communities fully engaged in landscape values project</li><li>15,000 people attended outdoor, nature-related events</li><li>3 communities involved in land-use decision making in landscape-scale partnerships</li><li>20 land managers trained in community engagement</li></ul>		



## 5. Delivery & Monitoring

Partnerships are fundamentally important to the sustainability of Cairngorms Nature and delivery of the Action Plan. Cairngorms Nature has successfully created an environment for partnerships to evolve and fostered a strong sense of collective effort. The Park Authority leads the development and oversees the delivery and monitoring of the Action Plan, but it is the high levels of involvement and collaboration between public agencies, NGOs and private businesses that will drive delivery.

Cairngorms Nature will champion a spatial approach to collaboration, developing and working with partnerships, management

groups and forums at a landscape scale to identify barriers and bring resources together to discuss and tackle common issues.

It is important that robust scientific evidence is the foundation for conservation action in the National Park. Cairngorms Nature will work with the many people and organisations involved in observing, monitoring and recording nature to bring the data collected by these organisations together, and to make them accessible and applicable, informing land management decisions.

Priority	Action	Partners (Lead in bold)
Ensure good information and data are available to guide long-term conservation	Work with stakeholders to identify needs and service requirements and create a 'Local Atlas' for the collation, analysis and use of biological data in the National Park	<b>CNPA</b> , NBN Trust
	Investigate and trial Natural Capital Accounting for the National Park	<b>CNPA</b> , SNH
	Monitor delivery and progress bi-annually	<b>CNSG</b>
	Produce a 'State of Nature' report for the Park, including a suite of indicators for future monitoring	<b>CNPA</b> , SNH, RSPB, NBN Trust
Ensure resources and partnerships are in place to support delivery	Build and retain constructive relationships with local and national partners and stakeholders	<b>CNSG</b>
	Undertake periodic reviews of funding availability and applicability and, if necessary, investigate options for new funding sources	

### Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group (CNSG)

The Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group co-ordinates, allocates resource and maintains an overview of the processes in place to deliver actions and meet targets in the Cairngorms Nature Action Plan, by:

- taking responsibility for areas of work, encouraging and supporting delivery partners
- leading the way in demonstrating the 'added value' that working collaboratively can bring
- monitoring progress and providing strategic advice to CNPA staff and delivery partners
- advocating and being an ambassador for the work of Cairngorms Nature within organisations and in meetings with others
- providing leadership, inspiration and support to organisations, individuals and communities

Membership of the strategy group is open to agencies and organisations with a direct involvement in the delivery of biodiversity gain in the Cairngorms National Park with the agreement of existing members. The current membership is:

- Cairngorms National Park Authority
- Crown Estate Scotland
- River Dee Trust
- Forestry and Land Scotland
- Scottish Forestry
- Marr Area Partnership
- National Farmers Union Scotland
- National Trust for Scotland
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Scottish Environment Protection Agency
- Scottish Land and Estates
- Scottish Gamekeepers Association
- Scottish Natural Heritage
- Wildland Ltd

### Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group (CUAG)

Upland management issues affect many of the actions for habitats, species and for people. The Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group will work closely with CUAG to progress activity in these areas. CUAG's main functions are to:

- promote better understanding between all organisations with an interest in upland management in the Cairngorms National Park
- advise the CNPA on upland management and, in particular, integration of the different land management sectors within the Park
- share examples of good practise and strengthen the skill base in the sector
- share latest research, relevant to land management in the Cairngorms

IMAGE

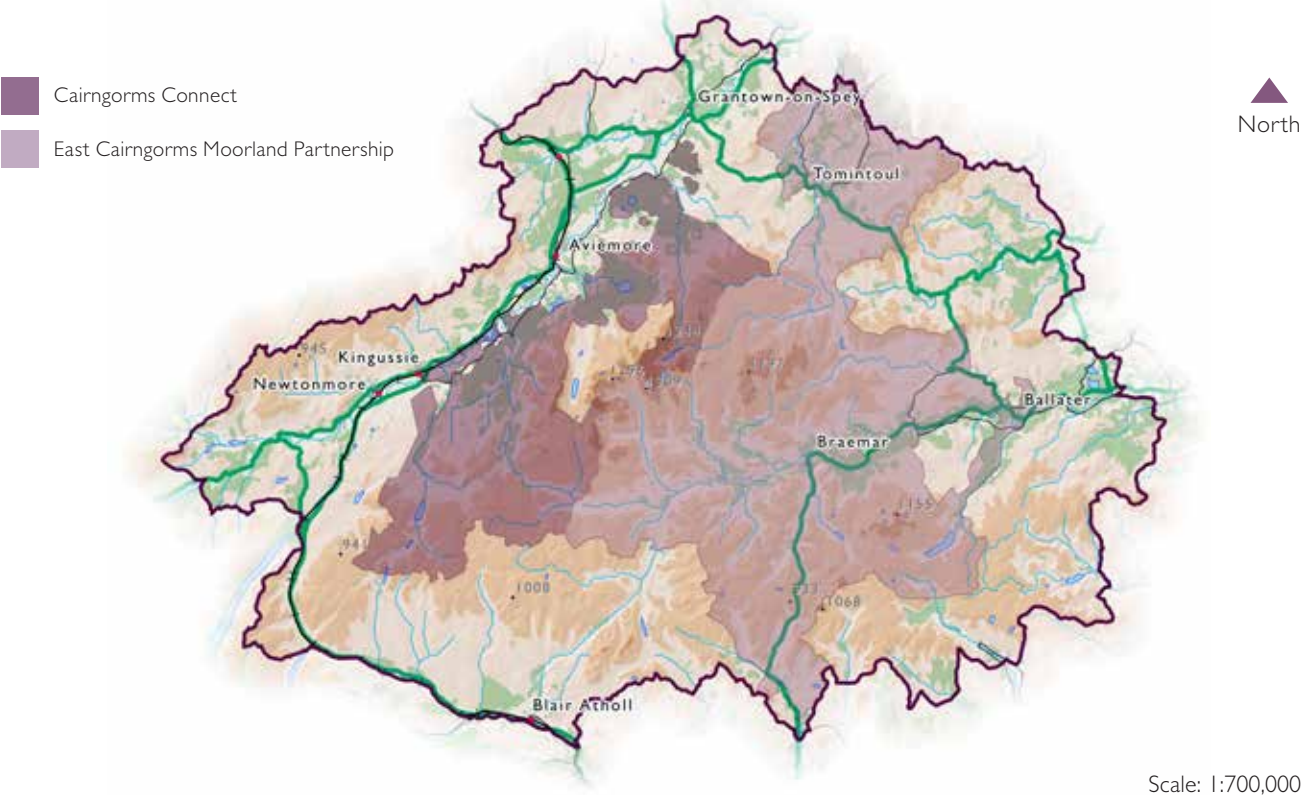


## East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership and Cairngorms Connect

Significant collaboration has developed over recent years, including the evolution of two landscape-scale partnerships, providing a focus for much of the work on ecosystem restoration and moorland management. During the period of this Plan there will be a concentration of resource and effort on delivery in these areas. However, it is important to note this will not be to the exclusion of other opportunities and Cairngorms Nature will continue to work with and support many other estates and organisations.

*Cairngorms Connect* is a partnership of neighbouring land managers, committed to a bold and ambitious 200-year vision to enhance habitats, species and ecological processes. The collaboration between

Wildland Limited, RSPB Scotland, Forest and Land Scotland and Scottish Natural Heritage encompasses around 60,000 ha of contiguous land from Abernethy to Glenfeshie and from the marshes of the Spey to the Cairngorm plateaux. The *East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership* is a collaboration between six estates including Mar Lodge, Mar, Invercauld, Balmoral, Glenavon and Glenlivet to collaborate on delivering the public interest priorities alongside estate objectives including sporting management. This includes management to provide increased woodland and scrub habitat alongside moorland management. The total area of the partnership includes around 50% of the National Park's moorland. Catchment Partnerships on the rivers Spey, Dee and South Esk are also well established partnerships with a track record of delivering collaborative management and projects.



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## Glossary

- BCS - Butterfly Conservation Scotland
- BDS - British Dragonfly Society
- BTO - British Trust for Ornithology
- CA - Coille Alba
- CBP - Cairngorms Business Partnership
- CC - Cairngorms Connect
- CDO - Community Development Officers
- CMP - Catchment Management Partnership
- CNPA - Cairngorms National Park Authority
- CNSG - Cairngorms Nature Strategy Group
- CUAG - Cairngorms Upland Advisory Group
- DoEA - Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- DMG - Deer Management Group
- ECMP - East Cairngorms Moorland Partnership
- FB - Fisheries Board
- FLS - Forestry and Land Scotland
- GWCT - Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust
- IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature
- JHI - James Hutton Institute
- LBAP - Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- LDP - Local Development Plan
- MLE - Mar Lodge Estate
- NBN - National Biodiversity Network
- NESBReC - North East Scotland Biological Records Centre
- NFUS - National Farmers Union, Scotland
- NGO - Non Governmental Organisation
- NTS - National Trust for Scotland
- RBGE - Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh
- RIC - Rare Invertebrates in the Cairngorms
- RSG - Raptor Study Group
- RSPB - Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- RZSS - Royal Zoological Society Scotland
- SAC - Scottish Agricultural College
- SBIF - Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum
- SCI - Spey Catchment Initiative
- SEPA - Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
- SF - Scottish Forestry
- SLC - Scottish Land Commission
- SLE - Scottish Land and Estates
- SNH - Scottish Natural Heritage
- T&GLP - Tomintoul and Glenlivet Landscape Partnership
- TfL - Trees for Life
- TNVR - Trap Neuter Vaccinate Release
- WTS - Woodland Trust Scotland





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