

A nature-rich future for all

Corporate plan 2022-2026



NatureScot
NàdarAlba

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

We are NatureScot

We are Scotland's Nature Agency, protecting and restoring nature, and inspiring everyone to value our natural world. We do this because everyone's future depends on it.



Protect.Restore.Value

Foreword



As I write, the dust has barely settled from the international climate change conference in Glasgow. I also look forward later this year to a global agreement to restore nature.

The global, and Scotland's, nature crisis has shot up the political agenda. Rightly so.

Thinking back to when I was a boy, I can see that nature is in crisis in Scotland. That will be a feeling shared by many of us. The numbers show that the amount

of wildlife in Scotland that we all benefit from has dramatically decreased. For some species to the point of extinction. Climate change is one of the main drivers. That is why international agreements on reducing greenhouse gas emissions are vital. There are others: pollution, the spread of plants and animals that are not native to Scotland, the way we use land and sea, to name a few.

Yet, in solving the crisis, there is opportunity from a nature

positive outcome. There are nearly 200,000 jobs in Scotland's nature sector. It includes industries like tourism, fishing and farming and forestry. Investment is growing in nature-based solutions to climate change. This investment will transform land and sea use and green our cities and towns.

But we have to work at securing those benefits. The Scottish public looks to government to lead nature's restoration in Scotland. That restoration must leave no community behind, and must share the benefits fairly. It must work on the large scale. And, it must inspire individuals to make space for nature in their own lives.

NatureScot's job is to advise the Scottish Government on the best way to do that, and to deliver on the ground and at sea. With that responsibility, we are leading nature's revival.

Put plainly, nature positive means first we protect nature, then we restore. We do this because we value nature.

What does working for a nature-rich future mean in practice?

This Corporate Plan, covering the years 2022-2026, sets out

our priorities. We want to shift into a nature positive gear by 2030. In doing so we provide a springboard towards restoring nature by 2045.

Yet we know that NatureScot cannot do this on its own. We want to inspire you to act for nature. You are the friends we make, the partnerships we forge. You work in the public sector, or for a green organisation. A charity. You run a business. You are a community. You're someone in that community. One thing unites us all. We all want to restore nature in Scotland. Not just because there is no other way, but, most importantly, because we will all be better for it.

Dr Mike Cantlay
Chair, NatureScot
Spring 2022



Our Plan

Shaping the future of Scotland's natural world

Nature is in crisis. There is a climate emergency. Nature's decline has been so dramatic since the 1950s that our health and our prosperity are at risk. The two crises are so closely linked that we must tackle them together.

Big problems need big, bold actions. The Scottish people have laid down the challenge to get on with it. The Scottish Government, along with nations around the world, is responding with new agreements, policies, investments and action. But, we need to urgently pick up the pace.

Our vision is clear. We are in this climate-nature crisis because we are burning fossil fuels and because of the way we are using land and sea. We know that if we restore nature it can also contribute over 40% of Scotland's drive for net zero

carbon emissions by 2045. This is vital if we are to limit global warming to 1.5°C. Meanwhile, we must build our resilience for the warming that is already happening. That means we must protect what we have, restore what we've lost and value it all. This means radically changing how we use and value the land and sea.

Nature must be the first choice in helping people in Scotland to deal with the impacts of climate change and other challenges in society. Nature-based solutions to climate change like tree planting and rewetting peat bogs are nature positive. They





can tackle both the nature and climate crises and bring many other benefits. We know what to do – they are deliverable. They are also cost effective. But we need to do more. The ways we use our uplands, farming and fishing need to change. The way we all act needs to have nature in mind. That will need *us* to change. Many Scots have already accepted that challenge in their own lives. This is our nature-rich future. It is an exciting time and a nature positive Scotland is on its way.

We have seen signs of that change. Many of us responded to Covid 19 by getting out more, to heal in nature by connecting with it. If we keep that connection and make it stronger, we will be much better for it.

So will our economy. Human, social and economic wealth, or capital, is at the heart of our prosperity. Natural capital is now being added to that list. Decision makers and investors will do things differently if society, and its institutions, rules and regulations place more value on the benefits of nature. It means the needs of nature will help shape the way we use important assets like the land and the sea. The Scottish Government is determined to make the recovery from the pandemic a green one. Investment in nature will play its part.

It's important that there is a fair and just transition in the shift to a nature-rich, net zero Scotland. This means investment in nature needs to create good jobs, strengthen communities and support businesses.

NatureScot has a key role in making all of this happen. With the Scottish Government, we lead on the development and delivery of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy. The strategy is due to be launched in late 2022. It will guide our efforts to protect and restore nature in Scotland for the rest of this decade.

That means, over the next four years, we will focus on three priorities:

- **Protecting Nature** by expanding protected areas, regulating species management, and delivering effective planning advice on land and at sea
- **Restoring Nature** through a **new biodiversity strategy**, restoring peatlands, aiding nature's recovery and transforming farming.
- **Valuing Nature** so that the many benefits it provides to society can in turn attract public, private and social enterprise financing for both protection and restoration.

We know that we cannot deliver a nature-rich future on our own. So, we want to work with partners across Scotland's public sector. We also need to work with communities, with businesses, and the environment sector towards a nature-rich future.

This is more than a plan. It's a nature positive vision for what we – working with our partners – can do for nature. It's also a vision of what nature can do for us. It's a vision that stretches far into the 21st Century. It is Scotland's most vital national endeavour and everyone has a role to play.

The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) highlights five direct drivers of biodiversity loss, all of which apply to Scotland.

They are land-use change, climate change, pollution, natural resource use and exploitation, and invasive species.

You can find out more by visiting www.ipbes.net

Protecting Nature



Between 1994 and 2016, 49% of Scottish species have decreased in abundance. This degradation threatens our society and the wellbeing of current and future generations. A nature-rich future starts with turning this around by protecting what we have now.

Through soils, nature governs the global carbon cycle, and hence climate. All uses of the land and sea must contribute simultaneously to achieve net zero carbon emissions, build diversity for resilience to a changing climate and enhance the state of nature.

Biodiversity, the wealth of nature, is also the foundation of our economy and wellbeing. Biodiversity underpins productive and resilient land and economy, and a healthy and happy society. The more variety in nature, the better it will sustain itself, absorb weather shocks, and cope with the impacts of climate change.

The old strategy of protecting the best of our nature in legally defined protected areas has been insufficient. In the future we will need larger networks of connected protected areas, using an array of approaches, to allow nature - including soils - to thrive under pressure from climate change, and to provide a launch pad for restoring all of Scotland's nature. That means we have to listen to and work with

partners if we are to make Scotland nature positive.

Our ambition

By 2030, 30% of Scotland's land and sea will be protected for nature, with at least 10% of our seas under high protection. By taking the lead on reducing deer numbers we will ensure that our woodlands and peatlands are able to naturally grow and capture carbon. To succeed, we will need to be an international leader in wildlife management.

It is widely recognised that to keep warming to 1.5°C around a third of global emissions reductions must come from changes to the way we use land and sea.

Find out more about nature-based solutions to climate change at www.nature.scot

Protecting Nature

Outcome:

Strengthened protection of existing biodiversity

In acting now we will:	By 2026 we will have:	By 2030 we will have:
Lead the delivery of 30% of land and sea being protected by 2030	Clearly identified locations where additional protection will help protect biodiversity	A strengthened range of protected areas covering at least 30% of Scotland's land and seas
Build stronger collaboration reducing the impacts of deer and modernise our wildlife management and underpinning licencing functions to enable a net zero and nature positive future	Deer Management across Scotland, species licensing and other wildlife management tools that support climate and biodiversity actions, leading to less conflict between people and enabling landscape scale, nature positive change	Reduced deer impacts and populations in better balance with nature
Engage and influence planning and other regulatory systems to ensure they deliver for nature and climate	Strategic plans and regulatory approaches across all sectors of the economy that enable nature recovery	Development naturally contributes to enhanced biodiversity
Influence the transformation of marine management through new marine planning, protection and fisheries management frameworks, and working with the marine renewable energy sector	Marine policies that promote nature recovery and sustainable use. We will have played a large part in the development of massive marine renewable energy developments that sit sustainably alongside Scotland's marine natural capital	A robust new marine planning and management framework which steers sustainable marine use to deliver net zero and nature targets



Restoring Nature



Protecting the nature we have will not be enough to secure or maintain net zero, or to turn the corner into a nature positive future. We must also restore nature's lost abundance and variety.

The people of Scotland will prosper if nature is restored. Nature's resources are our life-support system. We all benefit if we cherish it. Land and sea need to be managed for multiple benefits including food, fibre, reducing emissions, adapting to a changing climate and enhancing the state of nature. We recognise the challenges. It will be no easy task rapidly evolving upland management after decades of tradition in farming and fishing.

At the same time we must help our communities to flourish. We must also take care not to be shackled to the past. That

means our ideas about what is possible when restoring nature must take into account the impact of climate change.

Scotland has no time to lose if we are to restore nature by 2045. We must urgently increase the scale of nature-based solutions to society's challenges through people taking ownership and being actively involved in implementation, delivering across whole landscapes throughout Scotland, supporting Scottish Government's vision.

Our ambition

Taking the lead on the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, NatureScot will excel in restoring nature. Partners across Scotland – and from other countries – will turn to our expertise for help. We will also learn from others.

Delivering net zero requires major changes in how we use land and sea. This includes how we cultivate and manage soils for farming, expand our woodlands and hedges, reduce heather burning and manage our seabed habitats.

We will continue leading on peatland restoration, building on the success of our Peatland

In the past ten years, partners across Scotland have restored around 25,000 hectares of degraded peatland bog. NatureScot's Peatland ACTION programme has done three quarters of that work. We have another 1.8 million to do, and every year lost, another seven million tonnes of CO₂ is emitted.

Find out more at www.nature.scot/climate-change/nature-based-solutions/peatland-action-project

ACTION programme. This national effort is a key solution to the climate-nature crisis.

The Scottish Government's major Nature Restoration Fund – delivered by NatureScot – will support nationwide, nature positive action.

Investment in nature will also make Scotland better prepared and able to face the threats posed by climate change.

The rewilding of Scotland has begun. By working towards multiple differing interests, it will be the basis on which a nature-rich future will be built.

Restoring Nature

Outcome:

Halt the loss of biodiversity by 2030 and restore nature by 2045

In acting now we will:	By 2026 we will have:	By 2030 we will have:
Co-lead the production of the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and develop targets to include in a new Natural Environment Bill	A clear direction and delivery plan for a nature positive future with clear targets for species and habitats	Halted the loss of biodiversity
Scale up Peatland Restoration by delivering Peatland ACTION funding to projects	Achieved rates of peatland restoration that exceed the pace set by Scotland's goal of 250,000 ha restored by 2030	Substantially exceeded Scotland's goal of 250,000 ha of restored peatland by 2030
Lead, enable and convene others around the development of ambitious and coherent actions to restore nature. Deliver a major Nature Restoration Fund targeted at high impact nature recovery projects and seeding greater investment from the private sector	Increased funding through public and private sector targeted at high impact and landscape scale nature recovery and climate projects	Secured substantial levels of funding for nature restoration
Demonstrate how agriculture can be transformed with new approaches to deliver targeted outcomes for nature and climate	Provided standard, fully tested and universally adopted tools for land managers to track their performance on delivering biodiversity gain and low carbon regenerative farming	Ensured every farmer and crofter delivers for biodiversity and climate mitigation and adaptation



Valuing Nature

The ways in which we use and consume the products of the natural world need to change if we are to restore nature. The economy is part of that natural system. Nature sustains our economy. If we embrace that idea, nature then emerges as the natural choice to solve many of society's problems.

We will come to value nature for what it does for people, as well as for its intrinsic value. With a new appreciation of nature we will fully account for it in what we do. Doing so will create the conditions to do more to protect our natural wealth and to invest more widely in nature across both the public and private sector. Nature's value is as relevant to the individual as it is to government and business.

Our ambition

We need to see a step change in public and private investment in nature across Scotland, including in the marine environment.

NatureScot will continue to be a leader in this field, collaborating with organisations across Scotland, UK and the globe to shape and grow new markets. We will connect investment opportunities with investors. This will deliver annual investment growth in natural capital. To get that growth, Scotland will need to be the first country to give natural capital equal prominence in national policy and decision making.

We will build capacity in partner organisations to recognise the role of nature in addressing societal issues.

People in Scotland engaging with nature positively is key to long-



term success. We will help create the conditions that connect more people with nature so that we value it more.

We will need a skilled workforce to deliver the restoration of nature and nature-based solutions. So, we will push the importance of nature-based skills and careers to support our nature-rich future and enable a just transition.

We want our 29 National Nature Reserves to be great examples of the future we want to see. These will be places where nature is protected, restoration advanced, networked across Scotland with communities valuing the importance of these special places. National Nature Reserves, and other special places, are the best places to increase climate-nature knowledge and build lifelong connections with nature.

Valuing Nature

Outcome:

The value of nature is reflected throughout public and private sector policy, underpinning care for nature and investment towards a wellbeing economy

In acting now we will:	By 2026 we will have:	By 2030 we will have:
Inspire people to connect with nature, increasing appreciation of nature's value through impactful delivery and communication of our work	Enabled a wider audience to value Scotland's natural environment	Established strong life-long connections between people and nature
Influence the regulatory, policy, market and institutional infrastructure needed to stimulate private sector investment into nature	Helped to establish values-based, high-integrity environmental markets leading to a strong pipeline of investible nature-based projects	Enabled large scale and coordinated nature recovery and restoration projects, funded with blended private and public money
Drive the establishment of Natural Capital as an integral part of public and private business planning and investment decisions at national, landscape and landholding/business scales	Provided a suite of tools that allow public and private sector policy, strategy and investment decisions to account for natural capital	Policies and investments are developed and administered using Natural Capital approaches.
Promote understanding and awareness of skills and capacity needs for the nature based sector	Skills needs for the nature based sector are mainstreamed and aligned with skills policy, planning and delivery partners	Sufficient skills and capacity for the nature based sector are in place to implement nature based solutions



The NatureScot Way



As NatureScots our passion, inspiration and expertise put nature at the heart of Scotland's future. Our Shared Values are the foundations we build everything on. Our Shared Experience is how we collectively realise our values and Our Shared Behaviours are how we live our values.

Our ambition

The NatureScot Way describes our values and how we act towards each other. We want to build a workplace where people feel safe, inspired, productive, and valued for their contribution. Getting this right will strengthen our reputation and people from all backgrounds will choose to work for us.

Our Values –
The foundations we base everything on

Science & expertise

We are passionate experts in all our disciplines.

Our knowledge inspires everyone we reach.

Ambition

We inspire everyone to value nature.

Growth

We invest in the growth of our people and our organisation.

Inclusion

We value everyone's contribution.

Nature is for everyone.

Everyone and everywhere matters.

Collaboration

We inspire innovation, working with everyone to make a difference for nature and Scotland's future prosperity.

The NatureScot Way

Outcome:

Our passion, inspiration and expertise will put nature at the heart of Scotland's future

In acting now we will:	By 2026 we will have:	By 2030 we will have:
Deliver new ways of working to stimulate achievement of our ambitions	Created an agile, green and flexible organisation	We will have become a beacon of good practice, sharing our passion, inspiration and expertise for nature, wellbeing, innovation and leadership to achieve a nature-rich future
Transform our individual and collective leadership capability	<p>Enriched our science and technical expertise by embedding a strategic Learning Framework</p> <p>Strengthened our brand by being bold and ambitious so that we become more influential leaders in biodiversity</p>	Our people will be recognised as being at the forefront of halting biodiversity loss and enabling nature's recovery
Sustain our focus on developing a happy and resilient workforce	<p>A more diverse and inclusive workforce</p> <p>An empowered and engaged workforce</p>	NatureScot will have mobilised a new generation to connect with, and value nature



Measuring Impact

We will judge our success by how well we are working for Scotland's people and nature. The measures outlined in the next section focus on where NatureScot will have an impact and will help us to monitor our progress and respond accordingly. Our priorities are also informed by the state of nature as well as economic and social factors. Progress on specific projects and areas of work will be assessed and reported through our annual business plan.

It is important that we have a robust measurement framework. It will ensure good progress is being made in our national effort to protect and restore nature in Scotland. That framework should be designed so that we regularly check that our work is delivering. If the evidence shows that we and partners can do things better we act on that.

Some of those measures come through a national performance framework set out by the Scottish Government. Others are agreed with NatureScot Board Members. Our progress against these will be reported through our Annual Report and Accounts.



Our role and remit is defined by legislation and Scottish Government policy. We lead the implementation of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

Our work is also driven by legislation and Scottish Government strategies, including

- Scotland's Environment Strategy
- Scotland's Economic Strategy
- Scottish Regulators' Strategic Code of Practice
- Climate Change Plan
- National Marine Plan
- Land Use Strategy
- Scottish Forestry Strategy
- National Planning Framework
- Mental Health Strategy
- National Physical Activity Strategy

What does success look like?

Protect	Result	Corporate Plan Measure
<p>Lead the delivery of 30% of land and sea being protected by 2030</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - People understand, promote and engage with marine protection commitments - The condition of nature has improved across Scotland 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. of restoration projects that we have provided advice for - Condition of protected nature sites - Area (hectares) of woodland
<p>Build stronger collaboration reducing the impacts of deer and modernise our wildlife management and underpinning licencing functions to enable a net zero and nature positive future</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deer Populations have Reduced - Licences are processed in accordance with our licencing standards - Beavers found in new catchments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Deer Cull Return - No. of licence applications that have a turnaround time within standards - No. of catchments with established beaver populations
<p>Engage and influence planning and other regulatory systems to ensure they deliver for nature and climate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developers, decision makers and the public understand our data/guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. of new Local Delivery Plans that have a clear intent toward the SBS and Biodiversity enhancement (2024)
<p>Influence the transformation of marine management through new marine planning, protection and fisheries management frameworks, and working with the marine renewable energy sector</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We can help meet net zero targets through marine renewable energy avoiding major impacts on nature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. of marine renewable energy consultation where we have provided advice on avoiding impacts on nature

What does success look like?

Restore	Result	Corporate Plan Measure
Co-lead the production of the new Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) and develop targets to include in a new Natural Environment Bill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This is predominantly evidenced through the activity of the other objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Qualitative update on performance
Scale up Peatland Restoration by delivering Peatland ACTION funding to projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have reduced biodiversity loss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area (hectares) of peatland put on the road to recovery
Lead, enable and convene others around the development of ambitious and coherent actions to restore nature. Deliver a major Nature Restoration Fund (NRF) targeted at high impact nature recovery projects and seeding greater investment from the private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We have increased investment for nature restoration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Area (hectares) improved for habitats and species through the nature restoration fund
Demonstrate how agriculture can be transformed with new approaches to deliver targeted outcomes for nature and climate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Land managers are motivated to take action to improve nature and climate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. of farmers and crofters that have successfully applied to the ACES scheme or have a management agreement with NatureScot after utilising a biodiversity audit.

What does success look like?

Value	Result	Corporate Plan Measure
Inspire people to connect with nature, increasing appreciation of nature's value through impactful delivery and communication of our work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More People visit nature - More people who visit nature understand their responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More people reporting to have visited the outdoors more frequently - More people are aware of their responsibilities
Influence the regulatory, policy, market and institutional infrastructure needed to stimulate private sector investment into nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Private investment has funded projects that meet SG Interim principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - % of projects that deliver the SG interim principles
Drive the establishment of Natural Capital as an integral part of public and private business planning and investment decisions at national, landscape and landholding/ business scales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The full benefits of nature are included in decision making by public at all scales 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - No. of Landscape partnerships that NatureScot is involved in that use a natural capital approach
Promote understanding and awareness of skills and capacity needs for the nature based sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There are more nature based skills in the Scottish workforce 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Nature Based jobs and skills opportunities

What does success look like?

NatureScot Way	Result	Corporate Plan Measure
Deliver new ways of working to stimulate achievement of our ambitions	- We have introduced new ways of working	- % of Emission reduction
Transform our individual and collective leadership capability	- We have an improved leadership capacity	- Awareness of NatureScot and role
Sustain our focus on developing a happy and resilient workforce	- A diverse and inclusive workforce	- Workforce Diversity - Age, Ethnicity and Disability

National Performance Indicators	Measure of success
Condition of protected nature sites	The percentage of natural features on protected nature sites found to be in favourable condition
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Index of abundance of marine species (based on seabirds) - Index of abundance of terrestrial species - Index of occupancy of terrestrial species
Natural Capital	Natural Capital Asset Index (NCAI) monitors the quality and quantity of terrestrial habitats in Scotland
Visits to the Outdoors	Proportion of adults making one or more visits to the outdoors per week
Access to green and blue space	Proportion of adults who live within a 5 minute walk of their local green or blue space
Carbon footprint	Scotland's carbon footprint expressed in million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent

Protect.Restore.Value



NatureScot

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

All images ©Lorne Gill/NatureScot except p2 ©Greg Macvean/NatureScot; p4 ©George Stoye/NatureScot; p6 ©Laurie Campbell/NatureScot; p9 ©Monkey Business Images/Adobe Stock; p12 ©Pauline Smith/NatureScot