

# North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership

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***4 Year Strategic Plan  
2022-2026***





**NORTH  
EAST**  
SCOTLAND  
Biodiversity  
*Partnership*

# 4 Year Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026

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## Contents

	Page(s)
• Our Goal for the Future	2
• Partnership Objectives	3
• Strategic Priorities	4
• Action Plan 2024 - 2025	5 - 6
• Annexe 1 - Partnership Group Members	7 - 10
◦ Management Group	7
◦ Advisory Group	8
◦ Awareness and Involvement Group	9 - 10
• Annexe 2 - Map of Partnership Area	11
• Annexe 3 - Background and Purpose of the Partnership	12 - 13
• Annexe 4 - Contexts for the Partnership's work	14 - 15
• Annexe 5 - Our Approach to Work Planning	16



# Our Goal for the Future



**By 2045, biodiversity in the north east of Scotland will be recovering well, safeguarding our environment for future generations.**

Key habitats for nature will be protected and once degraded habitats will be restored and re-connected to form green networks, increasing the resilience of ecosystems to external pressures.

Awareness of and positive action for biodiversity will have become part of every citizen's daily life.

*Communities, businesses, and individuals will be empowered and supported to drive local action based on expert knowledge from a strong network of environmental professionals and organisations.*

*Nature-based solutions will be commonly utilised to reduce and provide resilience to climate change impacts, while improving both human wellbeing and biodiversity.*



# Our Partnership Objectives

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The following three objectives guide the work we carry out, and are used as the basis for developing our detailed work plan and actions.

**Key Stakeholders** in this document include, but not limited to, the following: Communities, public bodies, environmental organisations and developers.

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## Delivery Through Collaboration

To collaborate with NESBiP Partner Organisations and *Key Stakeholders* to identify, create and implement opportunities for the protection and improvement of local biodiversity.

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## Information Exchange

To provide a regional forum for *Key Stakeholders* as a focus for information exchange on the biodiversity of the north east of Scotland. This includes the promotion of action based evidence, sharing good practices and promoting innovative case studies.

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## Awareness & Positive Action

To raise awareness across the north east of Scotland of the ongoing decline of biodiversity and the urgent need for evidence based action across all sectors and our communities by demonstrating that everyone can make a difference.

This includes utilising communication channels to disseminate up to date information on current trends and highlight practical actions to achieve biodiversity successes.

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# Strategic Priorities

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The priorities listed below have been agreed upon by the NESBiP Advisory Group and will be used to inform work spanning the entire four-year period for the Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026. The priorities will be delivered by the NESBiP Management Group through a one-year Action Plan.

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- Continue to build our resources and advice, making them useful for stakeholders and communities.
- Continue to raise awareness of all the benefits of biodiversity.
- Develop awareness and practical projects for the adaption to or mitigation of climate change impacts which will also include positive effects on biodiversity.
- Continue to show simple evidence-based actions that anyone can do.
- Engage with the farming sector to identify opportunities to support or develop biodiversity projects.
- Encourage and influence businesses, land managers and developers to go above and beyond the legal minimum to protecting and promoting biodiversity by proving evidence of its benefits.
- Map out future strategic priorities, focusing and prioritising our efforts to where we are most likely to have a meaningful impact.
- Build on the successful Wild North East - Scotland's Natural Gem Video.
- Continue to promote the value of biodiversity to placemaking.
- Encourage more participation in citizen science by promoting citizen science projects through our communication channels.

# Annexe 1 - Partnership Group Members



The North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership employs a full-time Biodiversity Coordinator responsible for the day-to-day running of the project. This post is hosted and line managed by The James Hutton Institute. The finances and general direction of the project is provided by an Advisory Group, which is made up of representatives of Partner organisations.

Day-to-day decision making and guidance of the project continues to be delegated to a smaller Management Group.

The Awareness & Involvement Group is the Partnership's largest group, comprising of a wide network of environmental professionals who deliver on-the-ground projects across the north east. This group promotes, publicises and celebrates the work of the Partnership as a whole, the work of individual Partners as well as key biodiversity messages to the widest range of audiences, which is crucial to the effectiveness of our Partnership.

NESBiP Management Group Members	
Name	Role + Representative for / Independent Member
<b>Robin Pakeman</b>	<b>Chair of Group + James Hutton Institute (JHI)</b>
Roger Owen	Chair of Advisory Group + Independent
Lina-Elvira Back	Aberdeen City Council
Emma Williams	Aberdeenshire Council
Sophie Ward	Moray Council
Abbie Ferrar	NESBiP Biodiversity Coordinator
Danny Kennedy	Ithica Energy

# Annexe 1 - Partnership Group Members



NESBiP Advisory Group Members	
Name	Role + Representative for / Independent Member
<b>Roger Owen</b>	<b>Chair of Group</b>
Sue Cumming	Aberdeen City Council
Craig Stewart	Aberdeenshire Council
Ian Hay	East Grampian Coastal Partnership
Annie Robinson	Independent
Robin Pakeman	James Hutton Institute
Sophie Ward	Moray Council
Lorna Paterson	National Farmers Union Scotland (NFUS) - North East
Alan Monk	NatureScot
Abbie Ferrar	NESBiP Biodiversity Coordinator
Annette Ross	Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA)
Steve Hutcheon / John Mackie	Scottish Forestry



# Annexe 1 - Partnership Group Members



NESBiP Awareness & Involvement Group	
Organisations involved as of June 2024	
Aberdeen City Council	Deveron, Bogie & Isla Rivers Charitable Trust
Aberdeen City Council Countryside Rangers	East Grampian Coastal Partnership
Aberdeen University Biodiversity Centre	EDF Dorenell Wind Farm
Aberdeen University Sustainability Team	Forestry & Land Scotland
Aberdeenshire Council	Grampian Fungus Group
Aberdeenshire Council Rangers	Grampian Grazier
Birse Community Trust	Haddo Country Park
Cairngorm NP Ranger Service	Highlands Rewilding
Countesswells to Cults Active Woodlands Group	James Hutton Institute
Crown Estate Scotland	Macduff Aquarium
CuramFyvie	Mammal Society
Dee Catchment Partnership	Moray Climate Action Network (MoraryCAN)

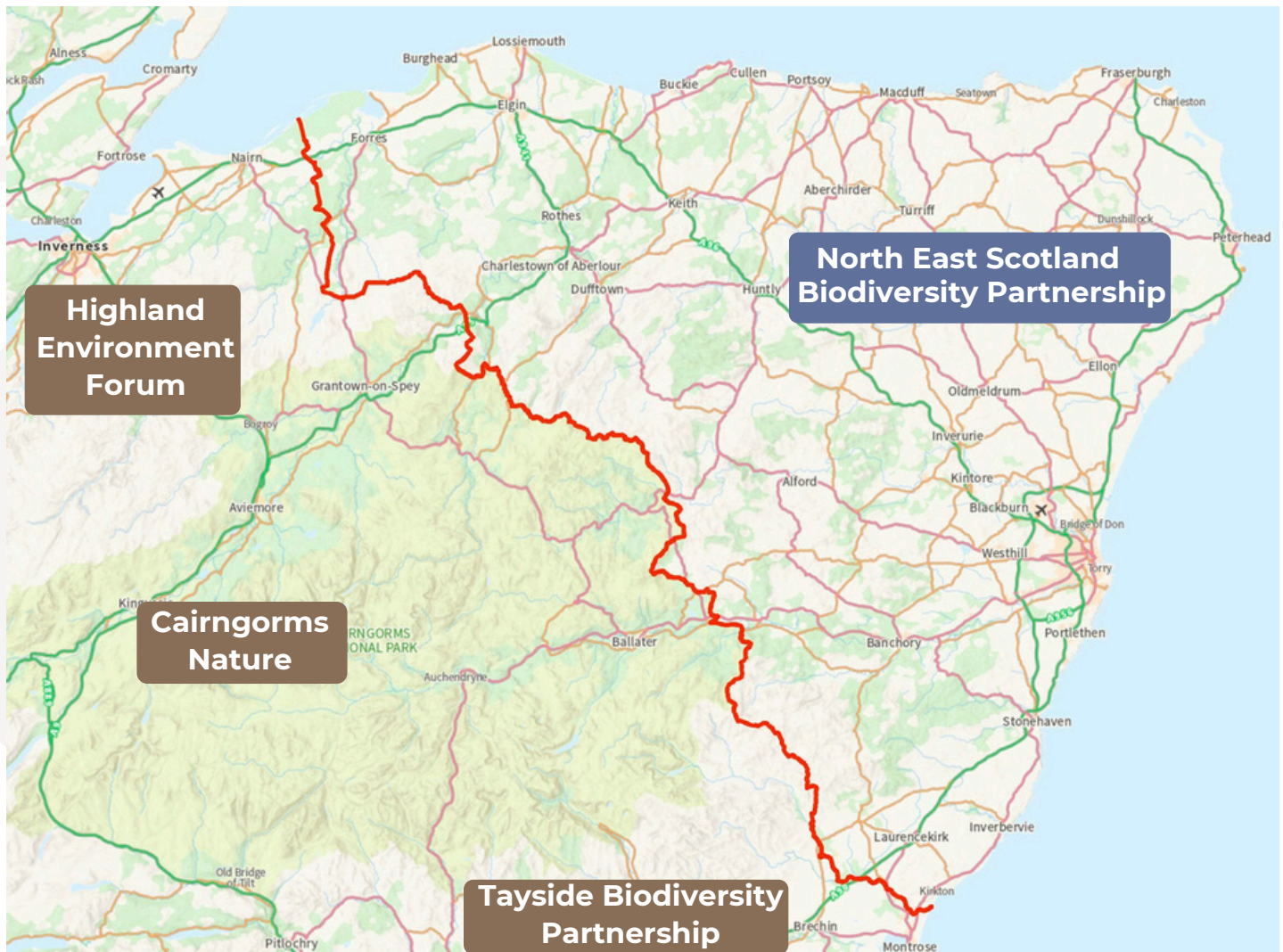
# Annexe 1 - Partnership Group Members (cont..)



NESBiP Awareness & Involvement Group	
Organisations involved as of June 2024	
Moray Council Ranger Service	Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels - North East Scotland
National Trust for Scotland - Rangers	Scotland's Rural College
NatureScot	Scottish Invasive Species Initiative
North East Scotland Biological Records Centre (NESCBrEC)	Tarland Development Group
NESCAN Hub	The Habitat People
NHS Grampian	Ury Riverside Park
Outdoor & Woodland Learning Scotland (OWL)	Wild Things
River Dee Trust	



# Annexe 2 - Map of Partnership Area



# Annexe 3 - Background & Purpose of the Partnership

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Scottish Local Biodiversity Partnerships exist to promote the preservation and enhancement of biodiversity of Scotland's environment at the local level. Detail on the international and national steps leading to the formation of Biodiversity Partnerships can be found in [Annexe 4](#). It began with the [UK Biodiversity Action Plan \(1994\)](#); the UK Government's considered response to the [1993 International Convention on Biological Diversity](#), and included the UK's commitments and obligations.

In 1997, four Scottish pilot Partnerships were set up. The North East Scotland Biodiversity Partnership (NESBiP) was one of those. This partnership brought together three Local Authorities and a range of conservation, research, farming, forestry and land agencies, as well as interested individuals (See [Annexe 1](#) for current membership). The aim of this was to provide the framework for the exchange of information and collaborative action on both national and local biodiversity priorities. Our Partnership is unique in Scotland as it is not hosted by a Local Authority but an independent research body, the James Hutton Institute in Aberdeen. North east Scotland ([Annexe 2](#)) comprises the local authority areas of Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City covering 8,700 square kilometres (approximately 11% of Scotland). Much of the upland lies in the Cairngorms National Park with its own Cairngorms Nature Action Plan and with whom we collaborate closely.

Partners are all committed to their individual biodiversity duties and responsibilities under the [Nature Conservation \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#), whilst also recognise the added value available through partnership working. Especially in achieving co-operation, collaborative working and direct engagement with organisations, businesses, land managers as well as the wider public.

Additionally, having a dedicated and proactive Coordinator has been vital in ensuring the successes we have achieved so far and in raising awareness of improving biodiversity outcomes, especially with local and national politicians. For example, the extent to which our very small camera trapping pilot for north east Scotland schools (shortlisted for the 2015 Nature of Scotland Awards) has grown to countrywide success led by Nature Scot - and now widely praised by the Scottish Government and others. These activities and actions, which the Partnership has delivered over more than 20 years, has led to our gaining a reputation as one of the [most successful, innovative and cost-effective Biodiversity Partnerships in Scotland](#).



# Annexe 3 - Background & Purpose of the Partnership



Through its ethos of collaboration and co-operation, NESBiP is able to pool limited resources and co-ordinate effort to provide a mechanism for shared action. In 2015, we undertook the production of [local Habitat Statements](#) which are used by all three Council Planning Departments without the need for each organisation to produce their own statement. As they are available on our website, other regulatory or advisory agencies have access to use them. Due to these statements it makes things clearer and more consistent for developers and land managers by providing a single source for basic biodiversity information.

Beyond immediate partnership members, NESBiP's Coordinator plays a vital role in developing collaborative projects with neighbouring Biodiversity Partnerships in Tayside, the Cairngorms and Highland. This collaboration aims to deliver projects where local intervention can have significant impact. The Partnership's role is complex and spans informing, coordinating, facilitating and influencing roles in many sectors - from development planning to land management. It also plays a key role both in demonstrating what is possible through its own practical and pilot projects and by encouraging and supporting actions and projects of others.

[Annexe 4](#) shows the wide range of policy and strategy documents produced by National and Local Government. Including National and Local priorities set by Government organisations, from which work of NESBiP is derived. Our actions and the results we want to achieve will sometimes have a clear, straightforward relationship, but other times this may not always be the case. For example, a camera trapping project might raise awareness of the value of the natural world and increase public participation while simultaneously providing information on the status of an elusive species. Improving biodiversity can also deliver multiple benefits such as more effective flood protection and support healthier lifestyles.





# Annexe 4 - Contexts for the Partnership's work

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The work of our Biodiversity Partnership is determined by a complex set of Plans and Strategies, as well as ever-evolving policies and agreements produced at International, National and Local level. Our partner members also develop their own priorities, targets and commitments linked to those Plans and Strategies. In turn, our Partnership identifies the local level actions which we are best placed to deliver, in either a lead or support role, and which contribute to that wide range of priorities and targets. The following describes the main Plans and Strategies which drive that process for us.

The [UK Biodiversity Action Plan \(UK BAP\)](#), published in 1994, was the UK Government's response to the [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#), calling for the development of national strategies and associated action plans to identify, conserve and protect existing biological diversity, and to enhance it wherever possible. In 1996, the Scottish Biodiversity Forum (formerly Scottish Biodiversity Group) was setup to implement the objectives of the UK BAP in Scotland.

In 2004, the Scottish Executive published [Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands](#), followed in 2013 by the [2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity](#) which was published in response to the [Aichi Targets](#) set by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, and the [European Union's Biodiversity Strategy for 2020](#). The current [Scottish Biodiversity Strategy - Tackling the Nature Emergency](#) runs to 2045. This will be accompanied by delivery plans which are currently being finalised.

There has been renewed emphasis in recent years at a national and international level in tackling the climate crisis alongside the biodiversity loss crisis. [Nature based solutions \(NBS\)](#) form a key part of the updated [Scottish Climate Change Plan \(2018\)](#), with many actions to restore biodiversity intrinsically linked to climate actions, and vice versa, within the updated plan.



# Annexe 4 - Contexts for the Partnership's work

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The Biodiversity Duty was introduced as part of the [Nature Conservation \(Scotland\) Act 2004](#) and gives all public bodies a duty to "further the conservation of biodiversity". Delivery of biodiversity actions through Local Biodiversity Partnerships is one way that public bodies can help fulfil this duty. From January 2015, all public bodies were required to provide a publicly available report, every three years, detailing the actions which they have taken to meet their biodiversity duty.

The Scottish Government's [National Performance Framework](#) identifies 11 National Outcomes for Scotland and we contribute to several of these, including, but not limited to 'We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment', 'We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe', 'We are healthy and active', 'We are well educated, skilled, and able to contribute to society'.

Natural Capital is now well accepted. The [2017 World Forum](#) in Edinburgh is referred to by the Scottish Government in several Strategies, Policies and Frameworks, including their [2015 Economic Strategy](#) which explicitly acknowledge the wide ranging socio-economic benefits that nature can have from helping to achieve sustainable economic growth, through to tackling inequalities.

Many of our Partnership actions support outdoor learning in schools and communities, as outlined in the Scottish Government's [Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning](#) policy, which recognises that "*Outdoor learning experiences are often remembered for a lifetime.... whether through play in the immediate grounds or adventures further afield, provides relevance and depth to the curriculum in ways that are difficult to achieve indoors.*"

Local Authority Planning Policies also support protection and enhancement of biodiversity into new development. They also recognise NESBiP's key role in assisting with the development of materials, such as [Habitat Statements](#), to inform and guide developers in putting forward proposals and supporting effective development management decisions. Regulators such as the [Scottish Environment Protection Agency \(SEPA\)](#) and [Scottish Forestry](#) also have their own Biodiversity Delivery Statements to which our Partnership contributes.

# Annexe 5 - Our Approach to Work Planning

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While the Partnership follows a long term vision, it does so within a work planning and funding environment which operates on three- and one-year cycles respectively. Our 4-year Delivery Plan and 1-year Action Targets respectively show the range of work areas we will focus on over the next 4- year planning period and the detailed targets we plan to achieve in the first of those years.

In 2016, the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA), the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) published [Biodiversity Net Gain – Principles and Guidance for UK construction](#) and developments. Biodiversity Net Gain is development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. It has gained traction with the Scottish Government and [NatureScot](#) and is an important underlying principle for our Partnership and ethos of improving local biodiversity through development. Our [Developers Hub](#) is built to support the delivery of biodiversity net gain in the Partnership area.

Other key principles underpinning our approach are to avoid duplication and optimise the alignment and contribution of the individual efforts of Partners and others. For example, where [Forestry and Land Scotland](#), Nature Scot, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds ([RSPB](#)) and others are undertaking a major, national project on capercaillie conservation, there is less likely to be anything of significant value we could add. In such instances, we will not devote much of our limited resources. However, where coordinated action can make a difference and especially where NESBiP's Biodiversity Coordinator is well placed to take such a role and enable a good project to be delivered effectively and efficiently, we will act.

Despite the importance of good planning, the Partnership recognises the importance of flexibility and adaptability - the need to respond to high-level unplanned opportunities that arise. In such cases, the Coordinator agrees changes by email with the Management Group. It is essential that these decisions also include work to be dropped to make room for unplanned work.

Reporting/reviewing is an equally important stage in the planning process and the Coordinator will report to the Management Group at the end of each Financial Year (March) against the budget and Action Plan.



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