



# NESBiP January 2026 Update

You're invited to our  
Spring Seminar!

You are invited to Nature in North East Scotland: Connected, Expanded, Resilient, Protected!

 Friday 6th March 2026

 The James Hutton Institute, Aberdeen

 10:00 – 16:00

A day of inspiration, collaboration, and action for our region's biodiversity.

Let's connect habitats, strengthen nature networks, and protect what makes the North East so special.

Whether you're a seasoned conservation volunteer, a land manager, or simply someone who cares deeply about nature, this event is a chance to learn, share ideas, and work together for a healthier, more resilient natural environment

Unfortunately this event is fully booked, however we do have a waiting list in case of cancellations. **Add your name to the list here.**

## BTO Birds in Greenspace Project

Get ready to discover the birds in your local greenspaces and make a real difference for wildlife across the UK with the BTO British Trust for Ornithology Birds in Greenspaces project! This exciting new citizen science survey aims to understand how birds use parks, playing fields, cemeteries and other urban greenspaces — and you can be part of it.

To help you prepare for the big launch in April 2026, BTO has released a Winter Warm-up pack — a beginner-friendly guide to 30 species you might see right on your doorstep, plus fun activities to sharpen your bird ID skills this winter.



© Abbie Ferrar

**Find out more**



## Volunteers Needed - Nectar Networks

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Buglife's Aberdeen Nectar Networks will be hosting a series of bulb-planting and wildflower seed-sowing sessions next month! These will be held in coordination with Aberdeen City Council, across several of their green spaces.

To register your interest, please get in touch with Conservation Officer Leanna via email: [\*\*leanna.fernandez@buglife.org.uk\*\*](mailto:leanna.fernandez@buglife.org.uk)

## Behind the scenes of a seal survey at Forvie Nature Reserve

The Aberdeen Marine Mammal's latest blog shares stunning images by Alice Pollard, capturing an early-morning field survey with SRUC PhD researcher Claire Stainfield. These surveys help us understand seal behaviour and support responsible wildlife management as visitor numbers grow.



© Alice Pollard

[\*\*Read the full photo story\*\*](#)

## Share your Climate Stories

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Share a climate-themed story to support new research at the University of Glasgow on how people in Scotland feel about climate change and its effects on wellbeing. No writing experience needed. Stories up to 1,000 words. Fiction or nonfiction. Open to adults living in Scotland.

Deadline: 28 February 2026.

Submit at [\*\*www.climatestories.co.uk\*\*](http://www.climatestories.co.uk)



## RSPB Big Garden Birdwatch

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> to Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January.

The Big Garden Birdwatch is the World's largest garden wildlife survey. It gives us a snapshot of how our garden birds are doing.

**[Find out more and sign up here](#)**

Need a reminder on how you can help our declining birds? **[Check out our blog from 2025.](#)**



© James Davies

## The Secret Gardener: Jobs to do in your garden in January



© Helen Rowe

Even in winter, our gardens provide vital shelter and food for wildlife. The latest Secret Gardener blog from Butterfly Conservation highlights simple, practical actions you can take in January to help butterflies, moths and other insects thrive.

**[Read it here](#)**

## Get involved in Citizen Science in 2026

Do you have, or know of anyone with remnant tree tubes or guards near a watercourse on Deeside or Donside? The River Dee Trust have parties of volunteers that would love to help spend a day supporting previous tree planting sites, by removing tree tubes that are no longer required.

To find out more, please contact the Trust's Outreach Officer, Keilidh at **[keilidh@riverdee.org](mailto:keilidh@riverdee.org)**



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## National Trust of Scotland Updates

### Castle Fraser - Northern Damselfly Habitat Creation Project

A project led by the North East Ranger Service is now underway to increase habitat opportunities at Castle Fraser, Garden, and Estate for the northern damselfly (*Coenagrion hastulatum*) thanks to funds made possible through People's Postcode Lottery. This rare, Scottish species is one of **NESBiP's Big 5** as well as one of the National Trust for Scotland's priority species as laid out in the charity's Plan for Nature. Beginning on 12<sup>th</sup> January 2026, machinery arrived on site at Castle Fraser to begin works to excavate a new pond designed in collaboration with the British Dragonfly Society. When the project is complete, we hope this pond will support the estate's already established population of northern damselflies continue to thrive and begin to expand their range. We look forward to bringing more updates as the project unfolds and presenting more details at the upcoming Spring Seminar in March.



Castle Fraser Pond Work © NTS



Fyvie Castle © NTS

### Fyvie Castle - Swift Tower

Plans have been submitted as a part of the Fyvie Castle, Garden, and Estate Major Project to install a new swift tower near the 800-year-old castle. Swifts (*Apus apus*), another one of NESBiP's Big 5, have been residents in the castle for as long as living history remembers. The National Trust for Scotland hopes to create more nesting opportunities on the estate for future generations of Swifts to breed. With the rapid population decline of these red-listed aviators, any chance we have to provide new opportunities for them to succeed is needed. If approved, a swift nesting tower will be installed providing 32 nest boxes for swifts – but our birds aren't the only ones that might benefit, our favourite flying mammals would also be provided with 8 compartments to provide roosting opportunities for Fyvie's active bat population.



## National Trust of Scotland Updates

### Old Wood of Drum land acquisition

The NTS has recently completed the purchase of two parcels of land around the Drum Castle estate. This extra land, totalling around 50 hectares, will be used to expand the wood pasture habitat currently found on the estate. The Old Wood of Drum SSSI is of high ecological and cultural value, and home to a large quantity of ancient and veteran trees.

Both blocks of new land were previously used for forestry operations and contained mostly Scots pine, Norway and Sitka spruce. Included in this parcel is the historic drive for the Castle and the landscape feature Robbie Rossie's loch. Having the opportunity to expand the wood pasture habitat across the new land will support all the species which currently live in the Old Wood and will provide new ways for people to spend time in and connect with this special place.

View of regenerating woodland at Drum © NTS



Drum clear-felled area © NTS

### Leith Hall - Pond Project

Works to renew the outflow at Leith Hall's new pond were completed towards the end of last year and we now hope to make more improvements in 2026. The old outflow was porous and levels in the pond were critically low in drier summer months. Sealing the areas on the north side of the pond means that levels have been restored now and the spillway is working, retaining a fuller pond for wetland birds and the invertebrates they feed on.

The work at the pond follows forestry restructuring as we move from exotic conifer plantations to more nature-friendly native pine and broadleaf mixes and maximising the wetter areas we have for nature.



Leith Hall Outflow and Sluice © NTS



## Funding

### **Bursary Opportunity for Scotland-based naturalists**

The Glasgow Natural History Society (GNHS) is offering bursaries to support natural history training courses in 2026.

- Open to anyone living in Scotland
- Supports skills in species ID & biological recording
- A great way to build experience and give back to the recording community

Deadline: 31 January 2026

## Have your say!

### **Lynx to Scotland: Join the Conversation**

This winter Lynx to Scotland are hosting a series of drop-in information sessions, providing the opportunity to find out more about lynx and the proposals to reintroduce them to Scotland. And most importantly, to have your say.

### **Draft Climate Change Plan (CCP)**

Deadline: 29<sup>th</sup> January

The draft CCP sets out how the Scottish government aims to meet its emissions-reduction targets. However, it's not only about cutting emissions, but also about how Scotland makes these changes. The plan will play an essential role in shaping a fairer, greener future, and the Scottish Government wants to hear from communities about whether it feels fair and what may be needed to make it work in real life.

### **Proposed Moray Nature Network**

Moray Council's draft Biodiversity Strategy incorporates the proposed Moray Nature Network; a strategic plan to connect and restore nature across Moray that is relevant to anyone interested in nature, or who may impact it through their activities.

Interactive mapping can be viewed in the **Proposed Moray Nature Network** story map.



## Upcoming Events

- National Polecat Survey, Online. Wednesday 28th January, 19:30. [👉 \*\*Book your place\*\*](#)
- Rewilding the Sea: What do you think?, Cromarty or Nairn. [👉 \*\*Find out more\*\*](#)
- NESBReC Recorders Forum, Aberdeen University. Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March. Save the date.
- Reviving the River Calder: A Nature-Based Blueprint for Biodiversity and Climate Resilience, Glen Banchor, Newtonmore. Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> May, 10:00 - 12:00. [👉 \*\*Find out more\*\*](#)
- Wildlife Gardening Talks at Aberdeenshire Libraries [👉 \*\*Find out more\*\*](#)
- Aberdeenshire Council Countryside Rangers [👉 \*\*Upcoming Events\*\*](#)
- Aberdeen City Council Countryside Rangers [👉 \*\*Upcoming Events\*\*](#)
- NESBReC [👉 \*\*Upcoming Events.\*\*](#)
- A brand new film club in Peterhead, and it's free to attend! [👉 \*\*Friends of the Earth Reel Change\*\*](#)

## Other Updates

- Get involved with Citizen Science in 2026 [👉 \*\*Find out how\*\*](#)
- World Wildlife Day 2026: International Youth Art Contest, deadline 1<sup>st</sup> February [👉 \*\*Find out more\*\*](#)
- Job Vacancy with Aberdeenshire Council's Natural Environment Team, deadline 3<sup>rd</sup> February [👉 \*\*Find out more\*\*](#)
- Join the NES Mammal Network [👉 \*\*FREE membership registration\*\*](#)
- Join the Nature-Friendly Farming Network [👉 \*\*More information\*\*](#)
- **NESBiP Big 5:** Learn how to take action and protect Hedgehog, Swift, Northern Damselfly, Mixed Native Hedgerow Species and Native Willow Species.
- Wild About Your Garden booklets [👉 \*\*You can download a copy here.\*\*](#)
- NESBiP is on Instagram [👉 \*\*Follow us, tag us in your biodiversity photos and share our posts\*\*](#)
- Did you miss our previous newsletter and would like to catch up? Find them on our website [👉 \*\*NESBiP Monthly Newsletter\*\*](#)

