



Scottish Environment

LINK

News Release

Global warming a threat to tourism in Scotland

Changes in weather patterns due to global warming threaten the tourist economy in Scotland, a conference in Edinburgh will report. Climate change will be one of the key issues discussed by speakers at a conference on sustainable tourism on 1st February at the Royal Botanic Garden in Edinburgh, to launch Scottish Environment week. Billed as a celebration of Scotland's landscape, wildlife and historic environment, the event will consider both the pressures on the natural and cultural heritage that is so appreciated by visitors to Scotland; and the possibility of sustainable or 'green' tourism that finds ways to minimise both our carbon emissions and our impact on the earth. The conference comes ahead of the publication 4th Assessment Report on Climate Change by the Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (the body panel of scientists on climate change established by the UN) on Friday: <http://www.ipcc.ch/>

The Scottish Countryside is a major attraction for tourists, bringing in £3.6 billion in revenue annually for outdoor recreation trips. However, some of Scotland's most distinctive landscape could undergo profound ecological change because of climate change, threatening the tourist economy. Scotland's iconic wildlife is a key part of our tourism industry and the birds and other wildlife of our coastal cliffs, our mountains and moorlands are amongst the most threatened by climate change¹. Examples include: Scottish crossbill, ptarmigan, black grouse - all of which will find their suitable climate moving northwards away from Scotland. In their place will come more southerly species which are already widely found throughout Britain and so of less interest to visitors here. The predicted increase in heavy rainfall and stormy weather will also impact on tourism via its impact on our road network which already has felt the effects of storm damage and flooding².

Clifton Bain, Scottish Environment LINK Climate Task Force Convenor said: 'It is ironic that the spectacular wildlife species, historic environment and unique landscape that supports our tourism industry, is under threat from carbon emissions produced by the massive growth in cheap flights and car travel which brings our visitors.'

Mike Robinson, Stop Climate Chaos Scotland said: 'Cutting down on flying and driving is probably the most effective personal action we can take to combat climate change. Helping those who visit Scotland to use sustainable transport like trains, walking and cycling and to encourage more people to enjoy holidays locally in the UK, rather than flying abroad, is essential if we are to keep the environment people are attracted to in the first place.'

¹ For more information on bird species and climate change contact Clifton Bain (see editor's notes)

² Information on climate change between 1961 – 2003 and future trends available in the handbook of Climate Trends Across Scotland <http://www.sniffer.org.uk/climatehandbook/>

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In addition to promoting sustainable transport and encouraging people to holiday at home, the conference will suggest measures such as 'slow tourism' where visitors are based in one place for the duration of their trip, rather than moving on; and fewer trips abroad for a longer period of time.

Patricia Ferguson, Minister for Tourism, who will welcome delegates to the conference said: "Scotland's environment, both natural and built, is central to the success of our tourism industry. Ensuring its ongoing sustainability will help us achieve our aim to grow tourism revenues by 50 per cent, between 2005 and 2015.

"Our ambition is for Scotland to be the most sustainable tourism destination in Europe. We can achieve this by offering an all year round experience for visitors, and encouraging them to spend more during their stay and visit a wider variety of the country's tourist attractions. This strategy will help to both boost the economy and lessen the impact on the environment."

Editors' Notes

(1) 'Wildlife, Spectacular Species and Castles: How sustainable tourism can make the best of Scotland's Environment' takes place at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh on 1st February from 7:30pm – 10pm. To see full list of speakers go to: http://www.scotlink.org/LINK_action/sew2007_launch.php

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The event launches **Scottish Environment Week** which runs from the 5th – 11th February, mainly in the Scottish Parliament. Go to: http://www.scotlink.org/LINK_action/environment_week.php

Thanks to our sponsors: Cairngorms National Park Authority; Greenspace Scotland; Historic Scotland; Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park; Paths to Health; SEPA; Scottish Natural Heritage; Sustainable Development Commission; Triodos Bank.

(2) **Scottish Environment LINK** is the network for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK has 36 member organisations spanning interests across the natural environment and associated cultural heritage and supported by around 500,000 people. Further information on LINK is available at www.scotlink.org

(3) **Stop Climate Chaos Scotland** is the Scottish arm of the UK wide Stop Climate Chaos coalition, which brings together environment and development organisation, unions, faith, community and women's groups. Members include Friends of the Earth, RSPB, Greenpeace, WWF, Oxfam, Tearfund, Christian Aid, the Women's Institute and UNISON. For full membership list visit www.stopclimatechaosscotland.org

The coalition aims to create a popular public mandate for political action to stop human-induced climate change. It calls for:

- **action internationally:** to ensure that global greenhouse gas emissions are irreversibly declining by 2015.
- **action for justice:** to deliver assistance to developing countries to adapt to climate change and give access to clean energy to meet their developmental needs.
- **action in the UK:** to introduce a climate bill to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 3% per year.

The campaign website of Stop Climate Chaos is www.icount.org.uk

(4) For further details contact:

Jane Herbstritt, Parliamentary Officer, Scottish Environment LINK. Email: jane@scotlink.org Tel: 0131 225 4345 or 07908856411.

Clifton Bain, LINK Climate Task Force Convenor. Tel: 0131 311 6511 or email: Clifton.bain@rspb.org.uk