

## Press Release

29<sup>th</sup> MAY 2014, for immediate release

### **Nature needs our help to adapt to a changing climate**

The Scottish Government today published the first 'Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme'. Government is required to produce this Programme by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, and it sets out the policies and proposals that Government believes are needed to help Scotland adapt to huge changes in our climate.

Scotland's climate is predicted to change and this means we will experience drier summers and wetter winters. However, we also need to expect more weird weather and its impacts - more intense storms and flooding, and unseasonal weather. These alterations in our climate will affect our way of life, our economy and our environment.

Scotland's iconic and special wildlife is already feeling the impacts of climate change. Seabirds, such as kittiwakes are struggling as the climate warms the oceans and the foodchain is affected. The low-lying, flower-rich, coastal machair of the Western Isles, is under threat from sea-level rise.

To reduce these impacts Scotland has targets to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases, as set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009. The actions outlined by Government in the new Programme aim to increase resilience to the inevitable impacts of climate change. The Programme covers the next 5 years and responds to risks identified in the UK Climate Change Risk Assessment 2012.

Jim Densham, Convener of Scottish Environment LINK's Climate Adaptation Task Force said: "Nature needs our help if we are not to lose many of our special wildlife species and habitats in coming years as a result of global warming and climatic changes. Nature isn't able to respond to the rapid speed of change so Scotland must do all it can to protect our environment and create habitats for nature".

"We welcome the publication of the Adaptation Programme as a springboard to greater action on making Scotland resilient to climate impacts. It contains many actions to improve the environment and help wildlife. However, we warn that it must kick start a much wider effort to adapt the way we live our lives as we set off on a journey into the future Scotland with an uncertain climate.

We want everyone to see examples of adaptation in their everyday lives and understand the positive and exciting ways we can make Scotland a better place. Nature can also help Scotland's people by providing positive solutions to problems we will face when living in a changing climate. Restoration of habitats such as, river floodplains, saltmarsh along our coasts, and peatlands in the hills, can help to prevent homes and businesses being flooded. Trees and attractive greenspaces in our towns and cities can keep us cool and give us a feeling of wellbeing."

Working with the natural environment requires a vision over decades rather than a few years so we need to invest for the long-term in nature and our green assets with plans that are flexible. The Minister's announcement today must see urgent but sustained effort in working with nature to solve the problems of today and tomorrow caused by climate change.

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## **Editors' Notes**

(1) Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 35 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

LINK is a Scottish Charity (SC000296) and a Scottish Company Limited by guarantee (SC250899). LINK is core funded by Membership Subscriptions and by grants from Scottish Natural Heritage, Scottish Government and Charitable Trusts.

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