

Briefing Paper

LINK's Wildlife Forum welcomes report from Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee on Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy

LINK's Wildlife Forum welcomes the publication of the Challenge 2020 report from the Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee and we look forward to seeing the committee's recommendations incorporated into the government's review. We support the committee recommendations, particularly those on mainstreaming biodiversity into all Scottish Government departments, defining clear and unambiguous roles and responsibilities for delivery and their support for the development of a National Ecological Network. We applaud the committee in having scrutinised Scotland's Strategy for Biodiversity in 2013, Year of Natural Scotland, when we need to take extra steps to safeguard the future for Scotland's nature.

The problem for biodiversity, as members of the Wildlife Forum see it, is that wildlife has no champions in the Scottish Government. As a result, other efforts to conserve and enhance biodiversity by policies outside of 'mainstream' conservation action are weak and under-resourced. This is despite the fact that, in the long run, it is easier and cheaper to achieve biodiversity conservation through, for example, improved agriculture, flood management, planning or forestry policy. We welcome the committee's call for other Parliamentary committees to give consideration to biodiversity in delivering their portfolio

We believe that success now depends on all organisations and businesses delivering for wildlife, and recognising that increasing their positive contribution to nature and landscapes can help them to better meet their own corporate priorities and performance. We support the committee's call for all Scottish Government departments to provide a lead for business, industry and society and the need for further detail on how the biodiversity duties of public bodies will be met.

Challenge 2020 needs to provide a vision, as well as guidance and leadership on what needs to be done to alter our current trajectory, to reverse rates of change and to

Scottish Environment LINK is a Scottish charity under Scottish Charity No SC000296 and a Scottish company limited by guarantee and without share capital under Company No SC250899.

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build wider public support. Against this background and the need for urgent, coordinated and effective action, the current review of action to deliver the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity in Scotland needs to be well designed and ambitious. It needs to identify key steps required for Scotland to make progress towards our biodiversity targets.

For more information on the Wildlife Forum's views on the future for Scotland's Biodiversity Strategy, see

<http://www.scotlink.org/files/policy/ParliamentaryBriefings/LINKPBBioDebate17.1.13.pdf>

Notes for editors:

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with over 30 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

http://www.scotlink.org/public/about/link_is.php

Scotland failed to meet its biodiversity target in 2010. The Scottish Government is now aiming to halt biodiversity loss by 2020, as per the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

<http://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/>

In May 2011, 10 member organisations from Scottish Environment LINK launched the wildlife proclamation, to raise the profile of nature conservation amongst our politicians and to find wildlife champions amongst them, with whom we could work to improve the future for Scotland's nature. For more information and to see who has signed up, visit

<http://www.wildlifeproclamation.org.uk/>

The Species Champion initiative is part of Year of Natural Scotland

http://www.visitscotland.org/business_support/advicelink/year_of_natural_scotland.aspx

Members of the Wildlife Forum are:

Bat Conservation Trust, Buglife, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Froglife, John Muir Trust, Marine Conservation Society, National Trust for Scotland, Plantlife Scotland, , RSPB Scotland, Scottish Wildlife Trust, Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society.

18 March 2013

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