

## Media News

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### **Report reveals vital role of charities in improving Scotland's biodiversity**

Scotland's environmental charities are playing a pivotal role in helping to improve the biodiversity of Scotland, a new report revealed today (Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> December).

Representatives from 15 charities met today to celebrate their 2008 achievements and outline project plans they hope to implement next year to help drive forward Scotland's efforts towards implementing the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy.

Published by Scottish Environment LINK - a network which unites Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations - the new report reveals how Scottish charities are striving to save Scotland's seas and safeguarding some of the world's rarest habitats, including machair and peatland.

Speaking on behalf of LINK, Scottish Wildlife Trust (SWT)'s Head of Conservation, Stuart Brooks, explained: "Scottish environmental charities have really shown their worth this year by taking the lead on numerous projects for people and wildlife which help meet the objectives of the Government's Biodiversity Action Plan.

"SWT's work to engage the Cumbernauld community in the management of urban wildlife reserves proves that environmental charities can reach out to the public to engage them in wildlife issues and improve their enjoyment of Scotland's wildlife. There have also been some fantastic projects by Plantlife, National Trust for Scotland and Butterfly Conservation to secure a better future for our plants and animals. Although we are unlikely to meet the target of halting biodiversity loss by 2010, it doesn't mean we should give up – quite the opposite – we need to do much more".

Deborah Long, Conservation Manager at Plantlife Scotland and Convenor of LINK's Biodiversity Task Force added "In 2009, LINK members will continue to work together on important issues such as Scotland's Marine Bill and I know that all of us, as individual charities, have important projects planned

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.

**Registered office:** 2 Grosvenor House, Shore Road, Perth PH2 8BD  
Tel 01738 630804, Email [enquiries@scotlink.org](mailto:enquiries@scotlink.org)

**Parliamentary office:** 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Gladstone's Land, 483 Lawnmarket, Edinburgh EH1 2NT  
Tel 0131 225 4345 Email [parliamentary@scotlink.org](mailto:parliamentary@scotlink.org)

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for the future including work to safeguard some of the world's rarest habitats, threatened species and special places. We would all like to do even more, but what we can do is dependent on future funding.

"Many of LINK's member charities are already supported by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and we hope this funding will continue in the future to allow us to carry out our activities. With support from the government, the public and other key biodiversity partners, we can continue to improve biodiversity in Scotland for the future."

Helen Zealey, President of Scottish Environment LINK said: "Although this report illustrates only the tip of a large iceberg of activity by Scotland's environmental charities, it shows how much has been achieved for Scotland's rich heritage of biodiversity when the right resources of funding, people, power and passion are combined. We hope that government and other key players will continue to make this partnership so successful in the future."

Minister for the Environment, Michael Russell, said: "Scotland's voluntary organisations play a hugely significant role in our biodiversity. From raising awareness of conservation, to the planned reintroduction of the beaver, there is much for us to be thankful for, and today's report gives full recognition to this work."

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### Editors' Notes

1. Scottish Environment LINK is the network for Scotland's voluntary sector environmental organisations. LINK has over 30 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](http://www.scotlink.org)
2. The Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, "[Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands](#)" which aims to conserve biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and wellbeing of the people of Scotland now and in the future, was published by the Scottish Government in May 2004. This strategy was developed in close partnership with the Scottish Biodiversity Forum, a broad based working partnership of public, private and voluntary organisations.
3. **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**  
**Nicola McGovern, PR Officer, SWT. Tel: 0131 312 4742. Email: [nmcgovern@swt.org.uk](mailto:nmcgovern@swt.org.uk)**

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