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Still Delivering the Goods

Case Study 13



ONGOING



PLANNED

Species on the Edge (multiple projects)

Multiple eNGOs in partnership with NatureScot



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<https://www.scotlink.org/publication/still-delivering-the-goods/>

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Species on the Edge (multiple projects) Multiple eNGOs in partnership with NatureScot



Background

“Rethink Nature” is a partnership of leading species conservation organisations, including Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, Bat Conservation Trust, Buglife Scotland, Bumblebee Conservation Trust, Butterfly Conservation Scotland, Plantlife Scotland and RSPB Scotland. These bodies initiated the Species on the Edge concept and have since worked jointly with the lead partner, NatureScot to develop the Programme.

Species on the Edge follows the award-winning model set by the **Back from the Brink** programme, with Rethink Nature partners working with a government agency in an innovative partnership to help wildlife species and offering local communities a chance to get involved.



Project aims

The key Species on the Edge objectives are:

- 1 To secure and improve the future for some of Scotland’s most important coastal and island species.
- 2 To take a new partnership approach to species conservation in Scotland, maximise conservation gain by joint working and building on synergies and a common agenda.
- 3 To empower people, particularly island and coastal communities, to safeguard biodiversity and share learning and approaches between communities.
- 4 To engage a new, wide, and diverse audience with coastal and island wildlife, raising awareness of its importance.

As a result of the project’s efforts, it is hoped that the following outcomes will be delivered:



- (a) Target species and populations will be more resilient, and there will be an increased understanding of their requirements which will inform conservation action.
- (b) Working together, the Species on the Edge partnership will establish effective conservation approaches including several partners and stakeholders to benefit target species.
- (c) Communities will be better informed, more engaged, and better equipped to deliver species conservation for locally important species.
- (d) A new and diverse range of people will be aware of the risks and challenges to our coastal and island species and the importance of action needed to conserve them and their habitats.

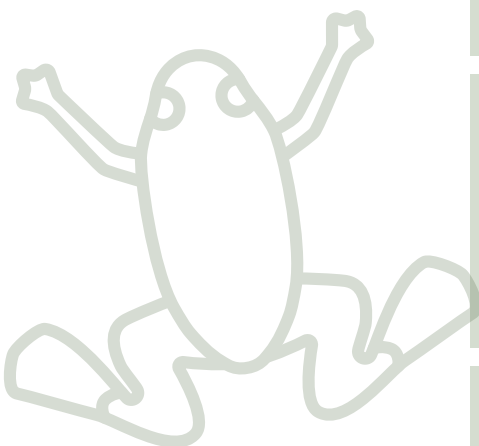


Project Timescale

This is a five-and-a-half-year programme. Stage One development began in July 2020. A Stage Two bid will be made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund in November 2021. If funding applications are successful, the four-and-a-half-year delivery phase is expected to run from June 2022 to December 2026.



SBS Objectives



The aims from the *2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity*:

1

To protect and restore biodiversity on land and in our seas, and to support healthier ecosystems.

By seeking to protect and enhance the populations of Scotland's scarcest and most threatened species, this project will protect and restore both those species and a wide range of others associated with the habitats protected or improved.

2

To connect people with the natural world, for their health and wellbeing and to involve them more in decisions about their environment.

The partnership nature of the project, as well as its focus on engaging and involving land managers and local communities will connect a wide range of key audiences with nature and involve them in decisions.

3

To maximise the benefits for Scotland of a diverse natural environment and the services it provides, contributing to sustainable economic growth.

The aim of involving land managers and the local communities will ensure that the species protected or habitats expanded will be recognised for their ecosystem services, be economically sustainable and support employment.



Project Summary

Continuously sculpted by waves and winds, Scotland's spectacular coasts and islands are amongst the most biodiverse areas in the UK. They provide a last refuge for some of our most beautiful and unusual, but also most vulnerable species, pushed to the edge by changes in land use and climate. These species urgently need our help to save them from extinction, to build resilience within their populations and to address the pressures that could result in further loss of biodiversity.

Species on the Edge is supported by a unique suite of partners working collaboratively to deliver significant benefits for Scottish biodiversity. It will build on the common goals of the organisations in the partnership to put in place proven and novel approaches to working with communities; encourage pride in the local environment and its species; and develop a strong element of community action for species conservation. It will invest in training and up-skilling of local communities to enable them to take practical action and be actively involved in shaping the future of effective species conservation.

Capitalising on the partners' experience, communication skills and networks, the project will use a range of methods to raise the profile of a diverse suite of species – often poorly known or misunderstood – amongst a wider audience and create more opportunities to support practical conservation through volunteering and citizen science.

A list of target species has been carefully chosen for Species on the Edge based on a set of specific criteria:

- All species are highly reliant on Scotland's coasts and islands for their continued survival or have important populations in these areas.
- They are listed on the Scottish Biodiversity List.
- Their management requirements are known and specialists within the Species on the Edge partnership are confident that they can implement conservation measures to benefit them.

The projects/species selected have been agreed as:

- **Coastal Treasures of the Eastern Solway (led by Amphibian and Reptile Conservation):** amphibians, primarily natterjack toads.
- **Bees on the Edge (led by Bumblebee Conservation Trust):** great yellow bumblebee, moss carder bee, northern colletes mining bee.
- **Invertebrates on the Edge (led by Buglife Scotland):** tadpole shrimp, medicinal leech, narrow-mouthed whorl snail, bordered brown lacewing, short-necked oil beetle, plantain leaf beetle.
- **Jewels of the north (led by Plantlife Scotland):** Scottish primrose, purple oxytropis, Irish lady's tresses, eyebrights, curved sedge, oysterplant, autumn gentian.
- **Rockin' the blues (led by Butterfly Conservation Scotland):** small blue and northern brown argus.
- **Protecting Scotland's island wonders (led by Bat Conservation Trust):** common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat and Daubenton's bat.
- **Farming horizons (led by RSPB Scotland):** Greenland white-fronted goose, red-billed chough, lapwing, curlew, dunlin, red-necked phalarope, twite and corncrake.
- **Terning the tide (led by RSPB Scotland):** arctic tern, sandwich tern and little tern.
- **A brighter future for herb-rich pastures (led by Butterfly Conservation Scotland):** marsh fritillary, new forest burnet moth, slender scotch burnet moth, transparent burnet moth and talisker burnet moth.

The nine projects are co-ordinated and managed as programme by a Programme Manager provided by NatureScot.





Climate Impacts

These projects will make species more resilient to climate change and other pressures through habitat restoration and creation, habitat management, understanding their ecology, and undertaking rearing and releases.



People Information

A central objective of Species on the Edge is engagement with the coastal and island communities to empower local people to safeguard biodiversity and share learning and approaches between communities. There will also be opportunities for local people to volunteer with the project.



Successes and achievements

Few, to date, as phase two of the project is the main delivery phase. However, phase one has seen successful project preparation, including development of a shared vision and fundraising – which has demonstrated successful partnership building and raised awareness of the species' conservation needs.



Issues and challenges

The main challenges have related to the size and scale of the project, the complexities of partnership building and the nature of funding, which is competitive and with no guarantee of success. Added to this, the new challenge of project development during the Covid pandemic has meant a reliance on remote working and limited the scope of some engagement activities.



Funding

The cost of phase 1, the development phase, is a total of £544,082. NatureScot has contributed £175,000; the remainder has been funded by the eNGO partners and a £260,000 NHLF 'kick-starting' grant.

The total budgeted cost of the second, delivery phase is £5.8 million over four and a half years. NatureScot has made a commitment of £1,118,000 over 4 years to this phase. The remainder will be raised by the application to the NLHF and from the eNGO partner contributions.

The overall cost is thus £6.34 million.



Further information

<https://www.nature.scot/nature-fund-tackle-most-risk-and-vulnerable-species>

