



Scottish
Environment
LINK

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18 June 2024

**Màiri McAllan MSP
Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero and Energy
Scottish Government**

Dear Cabinet Secretary,

Programme for Government – Natural Environment Bill

As environmental NGOs, we were pleased that the First Minister has said that tackling the climate emergency is a priority for his government, alongside his acknowledgement of the crisis of biodiversity loss.

Scottish Environment LINK has a membership of over 40 environmental organisations with a combined supporter base of more than 500,000. 92% of people in Scotland say that the natural environment is important to them personally, according to a [poll](#) commissioned by LINK.

Tackling biodiversity loss and restoring nature is a key part of tackling the climate emergency. Nature can be our first line of defence against climate change: healthy ecosystems store carbon, and nature can help us to adapt to rising temperatures by, for example, reducing flood risk.

We are at a crucial moment in the fight to protect nature. Scotland has suffered a high historic level of nature loss, and in the context of climate change we face even greater risks today. We have lost more of our natural biodiversity than the majority of other countries, and today average species abundance and distribution continue to decline, with 1 in 9 species at risk of national extinction.

We urge you to commit to introduce a Natural Environment Bill, including statutory targets to recover nature, in the upcoming Programme for Government.

A Natural Environment Bill is an opportunity to prevent and halt declines across land and sea by 2030, and make significant progress towards restoration by 2045.

The Scottish Government has committed to adopting global targets to tackle the nature crisis and making Scotland's contribution to the fight against nature loss. For a small country, Scotland is home to internationally important habitats and species, such as our temperate rainforest and seabird colonies. It is our view that statutory targets, through a Natural Environment Bill, are a necessary part of the government's overall framework and will be required to create a more nature-rich Scotland.

We hope that the Scottish Government can commit to introducing a Natural Environment Bill in the upcoming Programme for Government, and look forward to working with Ministers to deliver a workable, effective and ambitious set of targets.

Yours sincerely,

Deborah Long, Chief Officer, Scottish Environment LINK
Kit Stoner, CEO, Bat Conservation Trust
Steve Micklewright, CEO, Trees for Life
Shivali Fifield, Chief Officer, Environmental Rights Centre Scotland
Eddie Palmer, Chair, Scottish Badgers
Alistair Whyte, Head of Plantlife Scotland
Calum Duncan, Head of Conservation Scotland, Marine Conservation Society
Gus Jones, Convener, Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group
Susan Davies, Chief Executive, Scottish Seabird Centre
Kathy Wormald, CEO, The Froglife Trust
Alan Heavisides, Chair, Scottish Raptor Study Group
Anne McCall, Director, RSPB Scotland
Lang Banks, Director, WWF Scotland
Keith Charman, Secretary, Cairngorms Campaign
David Field, Chief Executive, Royal Zoological Society of Scotland
David Windle, Chair, North East Mountain Trust
Catherine Gunby, Executive Director, Fidra
Jo Pike, Chief Executive, Scottish Wildlife Trust
Tony Gent, Chief Executive Officer, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation



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