

THE ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY FOR SCOTLAND: VISION AND OUTCOMES



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
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MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

We have a clearer picture than ever before of the crises in our climate and our natural world. Global assessments have highlighted the scale and urgency of action needed to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and to halt the loss of the Earth's biodiversity. Last year's State of Nature Scotland Report highlighted the pressures on nature in our own country.

I am determined that we in Scotland will play our full part in responding to these crises. We will help to safeguard the wonders of nature for their own sake. We will honour our responsibilities to other nations. And we will help to ensure that we pass on a planet fit to live in to future generations.

2020 is a year of great opportunity. In October, the post – 2020 global biodiversity framework will be agreed at COP 15 in Kunming, China. The following month, Glasgow will host COP 26, a major UN climate conference where countries will pledge their national commitments to deliver the Paris Climate Agreement.

While there is further to go, I am proud of the progress we are making in Scotland. We have the toughest, most ambitious legislative framework on climate change in the world and have almost halved our greenhouse gas emissions since 1990. We are recognised as leaders in developing a circular economy and have some of the most ambitious targets on waste in Europe. The quality of our air and water is improving and we are making progress on many of our targets for biodiversity. We have in place well-regarded strategies and plans for achieving our environmental goals and tackling climate change.

Scotland's Environment Strategy provides an overarching framework to bring these strategies and plans together and identify new strategic priorities and opportunities. It will help to guide us as we protect and restore Scotland's natural environment and strive to live within our planet's sustainable limits. In doing this, we will support the wellbeing of people in Scotland and strengthen our economy.

This document sets out a vision for Scotland's environment and our role in tackling the global crises. It identifies the outcomes on which we need to focus to achieve our vision.

We cannot do this alone. Scotland will continue to work collaboratively with other nations and through international forums. We will continue to meet or exceed existing environmental standards, backed by our strategic approach to environmental policy – including this strategy and arrangements for environmental governance, principles and monitoring.

We also rely on the huge contribution of people and organisations across Scotland who share our goals, and who have contributed to the development of this vision for Scotland's environment. I look forward to further working in partnership as we seek to turn our shared vision into reality.



Roseanna Cunningham

Cabinet Secretary for Environment,
Climate Change and Land Reform

1. Our vision

One Earth. One home. One shared future.

By 2045: By restoring nature and ending Scotland's contribution to climate change, our country is transformed for the better - helping to secure the wellbeing of our people and planet for generations to come.

Scotland's natural environment is central to our identity as a nation. It is fundamental to our health, our quality of life and our economy.

We want Scotland's nature to be resilient and abundant. We want to use its full potential to improve the wellbeing of people in Scotland – ensuring everyone can enjoy the life-supporting benefits it provides.

We share one planet and are sustained by the health of its natural systems. In Scotland, we will play our full part in responding to the global climate and nature crises – meeting our responsibilities to people across the planet and to future generations. We will be innovators and work collaboratively with others to develop solutions to global problems.

Through our work, our country will be transformed for the better. Our natural environment will be restored and resilient to whatever the future may bring. Our net zero, circular economy will be inclusive and sustainable, providing opportunities for all to prosper. We will have reduced the global impact of our consumption. And we will have supported the creation of an economy that thrives while securing wellbeing for our people and our planet.

2. The context

Our natural environment is our greatest national asset. Scotland's nature is unique, with awe-inspiring landscapes and habitats found in few other places on Earth: from our diverse marine life and spectacular coastal machairs to ancient Scots pine forests, peatlands and heather-covered mountains.

Our natural environment contributes to our health and wellbeing in countless ways. It provides the essentials we all need to survive: from the air we breathe, the food we eat and the water we drink - to the materials that house and clothe us. It protects our communities from flooding and extreme weather. It supports our health and quality of life, providing free spaces for exercise, play and inspiration. It plays a vital role in tackling climate change – removing carbon from the atmosphere and securing it in natural habitats on land and in our seas.

Our environment is also vital to our economy. It supports the productivity of many sectors, supplying energy, resources and essential natural processes. The beauty and quality of our nature and landscapes is the essence of Scotland's global brand, supporting the success of our tourist industry and food and drink exports. Our environment attracts people and businesses to choose Scotland as a place to live, work and invest. And it helps to ensure that local economies and communities in rural areas thrive.

Despite this, important aspects of our natural environment are degraded and under threat. We know that significant action is needed to restore the health and vitality of the natural systems that sustain us. In a time of change and uncertainty, we need to ensure that our policy and regulatory framework is robust, so we can foster greater resilience in our natural environment.

Scotland must also play its full part in tackling the twin global crises of climate and nature. Recent global assessments by intergovernmental expert bodies on biodiversity and climate change¹ have highlighted the scale and urgency of these crises. The window of opportunity to avoid the worst impacts of climate change is rapidly closing. The health of the Earth's ecosystems is deteriorating faster than at any point in human history (Box A, page 8).

It is clear that these crises are linked. Climate change is a key driver of biodiversity loss. Conversely, healthy natural habitats play a vital role in removing carbon from the atmosphere. Both crises arise from stretching the Earth's systems beyond their sustainable limits.

The need for action is clear. Tackling the crises will require urgent, transformative changes in economies and societies around the world. This must promote a fairer distribution of resources between the rich developed world and poorer countries, who will be the first to suffer the effects of climate change and ecosystem collapse.

Scotland is already making progress towards this transformation. We are recognised as a world leader in tackling climate change, with the most ambitious framework of statutory targets in the world. Our Just Transition Commission and our circular economy and land use strategies are internationally pioneering. We have some of the strictest targets on air quality and waste in Europe. Our partners are helping to lead ground-breaking initiatives, such as the Scottish Environment Protection Agency's sector plans and the State of Nature

¹ The Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) Link to IPBES global assessment (2019): <https://ipbes.net/global-assessment-report-biodiversity-ecosystem-services>. Link to IPCC special report on global warming of 1.5°C (2018): <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>

Scotland Report 2019, developed through a new partnership approach between public bodies, led by Scottish Natural Heritage, and wildlife organisations (Box B, page 10). Although the twin crises demand a step change in our action, this strong policy framework will support us.

Taking action will create great opportunities for our country – supporting our ambitions for Scotland's society, economy and global citizenship. We will develop new skills and products that will create opportunities for trade. Our economy will be stronger and more resilient, with increased stocks of natural capital. Our society will be healthier and fairer. Working towards our vision will help to deliver many of the National Outcomes in our National Performance Framework² and support our contribution to many of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals³ (Figure 1).

It will also help to support the development of an economy in Scotland which values the wellbeing of our people and planet as measures of success, not just growth in Gross Domestic Product. Scotland is emerging as a leader in the wellbeing economy movement. We recently established the Wellbeing Economy Governments Group with Iceland and New Zealand, bringing together like-minded governments with a shared ambition of delivering wellbeing through our economic approach.

In working to achieve our vision, we will be a committed, international partner: collaborating with other countries and seeking to play our role in European and global forums, including by continuing to contribute to EU environmental policy goals and action.⁴ We are determined to retain the benefits we have enjoyed through membership of the EU in our approach to environmental protection. We will seek to maintain or exceed EU environmental standards. We will ensure that international environmental principles continue to sit at the heart of our approach to environmental law and policy. And we will ensure that we have robust governance arrangements to implement and enforce those laws.

² <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/>

³ <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

⁴ Strategic priorities are set out in *The European Union's Strategic Agenda 2020-2024: Scotland's Perspective* <https://www.gov.scot/publications/european-unions-strategic-agenda-2020-24-scotlands-perspective/>

Figure 1: Contribution of the Environment Strategy vision and outcomes to National Outcomes and UN Sustainable Development Goals



Centre: Environment Strategy vision

Inner ring: Environment Strategy outcomes

Middle ring: National Outcomes in the National Performance Framework

Outer ring: UN Sustainable Development Goals

See key on next page and the supporting document: *Contribution of the Environment Strategy vision and outcomes to National Outcomes and UN Sustainable Development Goals*.

Key

National Outcomes in the National Performance Framework:



Children & young people: We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential



Communities: We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe



Culture: We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely



Economy: We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy



Education: We are well-educated, skilled and able to contribute to society



Environment: We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment



Fair work & business: We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone



Health: We are healthy and active



Human rights: We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination

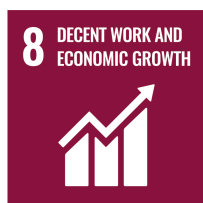


International: We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally



Poverty: We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally

UN Sustainable Development Goals:

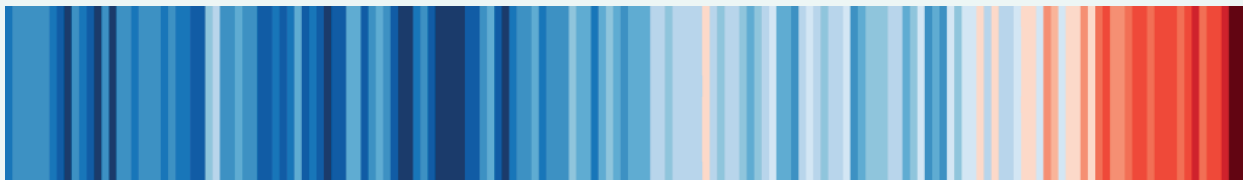


Box A: The global climate and nature crises

Human activities have already caused 1°C warming of the Earth's atmosphere over the past century (Figure 2). Signatories to the 2015 Paris Agreement pledged to hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C. In October 2018, the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)** published a special report on the implications of 1.5°C warming. It delivered a stark warning on the importance of limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C, in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change on humanity and the rest of life on Earth. Even half a degree of warming beyond 1.5°C will substantially worsen the risks of drought, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people. The report also warned of the extremely short window for action – limiting warming to 1.5°C will require global emissions to almost halve by 2030.

Global temperature rise is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052. At the current level of policy commitments, the world has shifted away from a 4-5°C business-as-usual trajectory, but is still on course for around 3°C of warming by 2100. This is predicted to present a high risk of damaging impacts, such as heatwave exposure, damage to ecosystems and 'large scale, singular events', including increasing ice sheet instability.

Figure 2: Annual global temperatures from 1850-2017. The colour scale represents the change in global temperatures covering 1.35°C.⁵



In May 2019, the **Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)** published the biggest ever global health check of the state of life on Earth. It found that the health of the planet's ecosystems, on which we and all other species depend, is deteriorating faster than at any time in human history. The rate of species extinctions is also accelerating, with a million animal and plant species – of an estimated 8 million species on Earth – now threatened with extinction. Human activities have significantly altered 75% of the planet's ice-free land area and humans and livestock now account for 96% of the biomass of all mammals.

⁵ Source: <https://showyourstripes.info/>; Ed Hawkins.

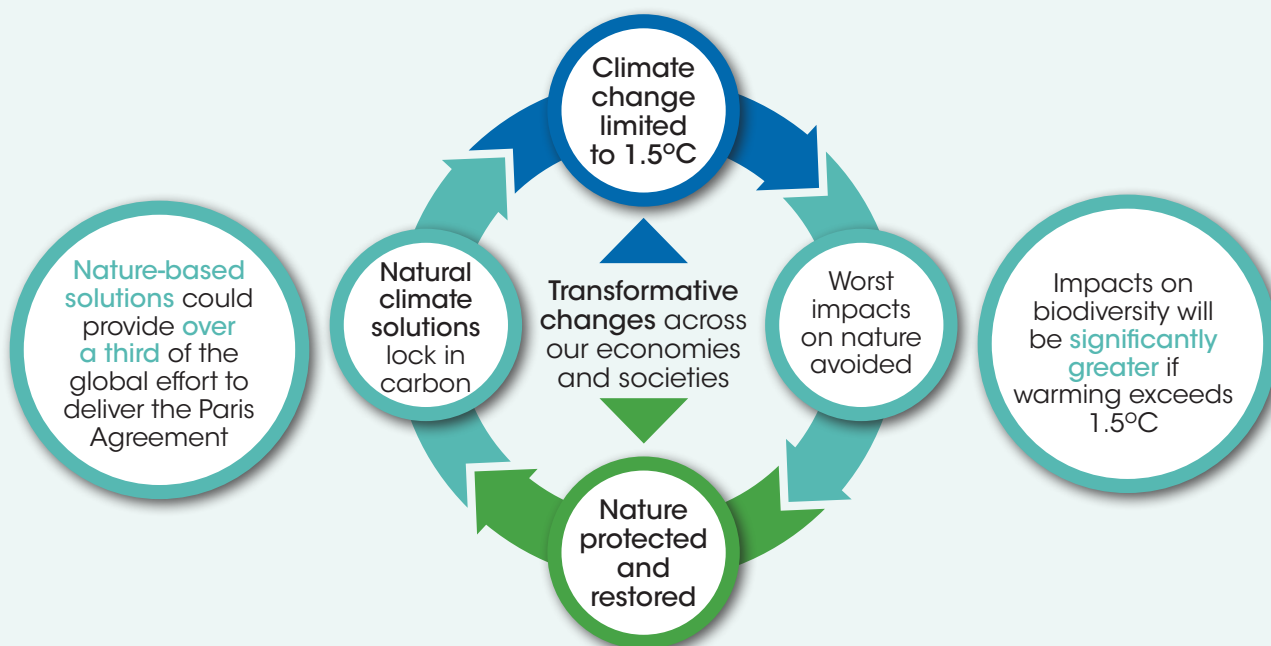
Our ability to survive and thrive is fundamentally dependent on the health of our natural world. It provides us with the essentials we all need:

- Basic life-support for humanity, including clean air and water, fertile soils to plant in, pollination of our crops, regulation of pests and diseases, and buffering from extreme weather and other hazards.
- Material goods we rely on, including food, medicines and materials to house and clothe us, as well as sources of energy.
- Non-material benefits that underpin our health and quality of life, including senses of beauty, belonging and inspiration that support our personal and spiritual wellbeing.

The IPBES report describes these collectively as 'nature's contributions to people' and warns that they are deteriorating faster than ever worldwide, threatening the capacity of nature to support human health and quality of life. While more food, energy and materials than ever before are now being supplied to people in most places, this is increasingly at the expense of nature's ability to provide such contributions in the future and is undermining nature's many other contributions.

The climate and nature crises are intrinsically linked (Figure 3). They are both the result of stretching the natural systems of our planet beyond sustainable limits: exploiting the Earth's natural resources faster than they can be replenished, and overfilling its sinks with our wastes - from plastics in the oceans to greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Our response to the crises must recognise the links and the potential for joined-up approaches, including nature-based solutions. Creating and restoring natural habitats can benefit biodiversity and play a major role in mitigating climate change.

Figure 3: The climate and nature crises are intrinsically linked



Box B: Examples of action underway

Public bodies and other partners in Scotland are helping to lead ambitious initiatives which will drive progress towards our vision. For example:

SEPA's sector plans

To deliver its Regulatory Strategy, *One Planet Prosperity*⁶, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) is changing the way it works to help as many businesses as possible to go beyond compliance, reducing energy and water use, waste and emissions. To support this, SEPA has prepared a series of sector plans,⁷ with the aim of helping businesses and their supply chains to operate successfully within the means of one planet. This ground-breaking approach considers each stage in the supply chain and its impact on the environment systematically. The most successful businesses in the 21st century will be those that are able to reduce energy and resource use across everything they do, and manage their environmental impacts effectively. By working across whole sectors – and with other partners such as the finance industry – SEPA is aiming to help the most ambitious businesses to achieve these aims and enable them to be successful, *one planet* businesses.

The State of Nature Scotland Report 2019

Monitoring and reporting on the status of Scotland's biodiversity is vital in order to understand and respond to the pressures on habitats and species. The State of Nature Scotland Report 2019⁸ provides the clearest picture to date of the condition of biodiversity in Scotland. It was developed through a partnership approach between experts in wildlife organisations, Scottish Natural Heritage and other public bodies. For the first time, working in partnership has made the 2019 report an agreed evidence base for the status of our biodiversity, which can be used by all those with an interest in nature. From now on, the State of Nature Scotland Report will complement other reporting against the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and international targets.

Developing a circular economy

Scotland published one of the world's first national circular economy strategies, *Making Things Last*,⁹ in 2016. Zero Waste Scotland is working in partnership with the Scottish Government and the wider public sector to help drive the delivery of the strategy. For example, it is providing business support services to promote design innovation and sustainable use of resources, currently supported through an EU-funded Circular Economy Investment Fund. This is providing significant funding to Scottish projects – supporting businesses, encouraging investment and creating jobs.

6 <https://www.sepa.org.uk/one-planet-prosperity/>

7 <https://sectors.sepa.org.uk/>

8 <https://www.nature.scot/state-nature-scotland-report-2019>

9 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-things-last-circular-economy-strategy-scotland/>

Creating a Hydro Nation and tackling climate change

The Hydro Nation strategy¹⁰ seeks to maximise the monetary and non-monetary value of Scotland's water resources, boosting both our economy and our environment. Scottish Water is helping to achieve this by growing its renewable energy portfolio. It now generates more than 200% of its electricity needs renewably and has committed to an ambitious 2040 net zero emissions target.

Expanding Scotland's forest and woodlands

In 2018-19, Scotland exceeded the woodland creation target set out in the Climate Change Plan, planting 11,210 hectares against a target of 10,000 hectares. Scottish Forestry is helping to drive the delivery of planting targets by administering the Forestry Grants Scheme; and by working closely with public, private, community and voluntary partners to promote appropriate woodland creation across Scotland.

Evidence-based conservation of plants and fungi

The Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh (RBGE) provides the science to support the conservation of plants and fungi. Recent work has investigated how rare mountain plants in isolated populations are jeopardised by their loss of genetic diversity. By cross-pollinating plants to boost their genetic diversity, growing populations in RBGE and translocating them into secure wild sites, this work is helping to ensure rare plants can respond to environmental change, including climate change.

Adaptive measures protecting wild Atlantic salmon

Atlantic salmon populations are under pressure from climate change, due to the impacts of rising sea and river temperatures. Marine Scotland Science has developed the Scotland River Temperature Monitoring Network to help predict temperatures across Scotland's rivers. To mitigate high temperature extremes, Marine Scotland has produced a suite of tools to plan and prioritise bankside tree planting. As well as protecting Atlantic salmon, this creates wider benefits for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and natural flood management.

Healthy Parks, healthy people

The link between nature, an active lifestyle and health is well understood. Scotland's National Parks are delivering on this agenda by supporting high quality walking and cycling infrastructure; and by getting people active through green health partnerships, health walks, outreach and volunteer programmes. The incredible wildlife and landscapes of the National Parks are key to many of the health benefits.

Re-using vacant and derelict land

The Scottish Land Commission is leading a taskforce to transform the way we tackle vacant and derelict sites. With 1 in 3 of us living within 500 m of a derelict site, bringing this land back into productive use – be it greenspace, community facilities, housing or commercial development – delivers for Scotland's economy, environment and wellbeing.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/policies/water/hydro-nation/>

3. The role of the Environment Strategy

The Environment Strategy creates an overarching framework for Scotland's existing environmental strategies and plans, including the Climate Change Plan. These will be reviewed over time, to reflect international targets and other policy developments. The vision and outcomes set out in this document will help to guide the future development and delivery of these strategies and plans by establishing our long-term direction and shared goals.

We will develop pathways for delivering outcomes, identifying strategic priorities and opportunities. This will help to ensure our efforts are focused in the areas that will have greatest impact. We will work with existing policy frameworks and review processes¹¹ and identify opportunities to improve the delivery of multiple outcomes.

The Environment Strategy will sit alongside existing high-level Scottish Government policy frameworks, including Scotland's Economic Strategy,¹² the Fairer Scotland Action Plan,¹³ the National Transport Strategy¹⁴ and the National Planning Framework.¹⁵ The natural environment makes an important contribution to Scotland's National Outcomes. This strategy sets a clear direction for making more of our opportunities. It will help us to take better decisions for Scotland's future, and to use new powers and freedoms to advance the wellbeing of people in Scotland.

Finally, the long-term goals set out in the strategy will help to guide us as we navigate the changing political context resulting from the UK government's decision to leave the EU. They will help to ensure that – despite the challenges posed by EU Exit – we remain focused on the most important issues for Scotland, supporting our commitment to maintain or exceed existing environmental standards. The Environment Strategy is a key foundation to our strategic approach to environmental policy, alongside future arrangements for environmental principles, governance and monitoring. Further information on our strategic approach is summarised in Box C.

We have based the development of our strategy on evidence. The quality of evidence on our environment in Scotland, and on the effectiveness of policies, is mixed. We have reviewed the evidence and have published summaries as knowledge accounts. That evidence has helped to inform the development of our vision and outcomes. We have also benefited from a rich discussion with a wide range of stakeholders. We will continue to assess evidence and use this to inform our approach.

¹¹ Review processes include the forthcoming updates to the Climate Change Plan and Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy, and Scotland's response to the post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

¹² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-economic-strategy/>

¹³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/fairer-scotland-action-plan/>

¹⁴ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/national-transport-strategy/>

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/national-planning-framework-3/>

Box C: Strategic approach to environmental policy

Figure 4: Elements of our strategic approach



Our strategic approach to environmental policy (Figure 4) brings together our Environment Strategy and future arrangements for environmental principles, governance and monitoring into a single, integrated framework – supporting our objective to maintain or exceed EU environmental standards.

- This **Environment Strategy** describes our long-term ambitions and priorities for action.
- We will propose legislation to ensure that the four EU environmental **principles** continue to influence the development of policy in Scotland, supporting the achievement of our environmental ambitions. These principles will continue to guide any significant policy and legislative developments that could have a significant environmental effect.
 - **Precautionary principle.** Where there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.
 - **Polluter pays principle.** The polluter should bear the cost of pollution control and remediation.
 - **Prevention principle.** Preventative action should be taken to avoid environmental damage.
 - **Rectification at source principle.** Environmental damage should, as a priority, be rectified at source.

- We will develop a proportionate system of environmental **governance**, to ensure the continued effective implementation of environmental law.
- We will develop a **monitoring framework** to track progress in delivering our Environment Strategy – helping to inform improvements in our approach.

The First Minister's Advisory Group on Human Rights Leadership recommended the establishment of a right to a healthy environment.¹⁶ Our strategic approach will take account of the development of this new right.

¹⁶ <https://humanrightsleadership.scot/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/First-Ministers-Advisory-Group-on-Human-Rights-Leadership-Final-report-for-publication.pdf> This overall right is proposed to include the right of everyone to benefit from healthy ecosystems which sustain human wellbeing as well the rights of access to information, participation in decision-making and access to justice.

4. Environment Strategy outcomes: how will we get there?

To achieve this vision, the Scottish Government and our partners will focus our collective efforts on delivering six shared outcomes (Figure 1).

- Three outcomes describe our ambitions for the environment, focusing on nature, climate change and resource-use.
- Three outcomes describe the relationship between the environment and wider ambitions for our economy, society and international impact.

Outcome:

Scotland's nature is protected and restored with flourishing biodiversity and clean and healthy air, water, seas and soils

Scotland's natural environment is our life support system. Our health, wellbeing and prosperity all rely on the services¹⁷ it provides. Global assessments have shown clearly that our natural world is in crisis (Figure 5). The State of Nature Report for Scotland 2019 highlighted the decline in biodiversity in our own country. We must halt and reverse this decline and improve the health and quality of our air, water, seas and soils. This will help to ensure that our natural environment is resilient, whatever the future may bring.

A range of existing policies contribute to delivering this outcome, including our Biodiversity Strategy¹⁸ and Route Map,¹⁹ the National Marine Plan,²⁰ River Basin Management Plans,²¹ the Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy²² and the Scottish Soils Framework.²³ Our Biodiversity Strategy will take account of the new post-2020 global biodiversity framework and targets being developed to deliver the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2050 vision of 'living in harmony with nature'. We will work across government and with partners in the public, private and third sectors to deliver improved biodiversity. We will publish a revised Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy in 2020.

¹⁷ Also described as 'nature's contributions to people', as summarised in Box A.

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/2020-challenge-scotlands-biodiversity-strategy-conservation-enhancement-biodiversity-scotland/pages/3/>

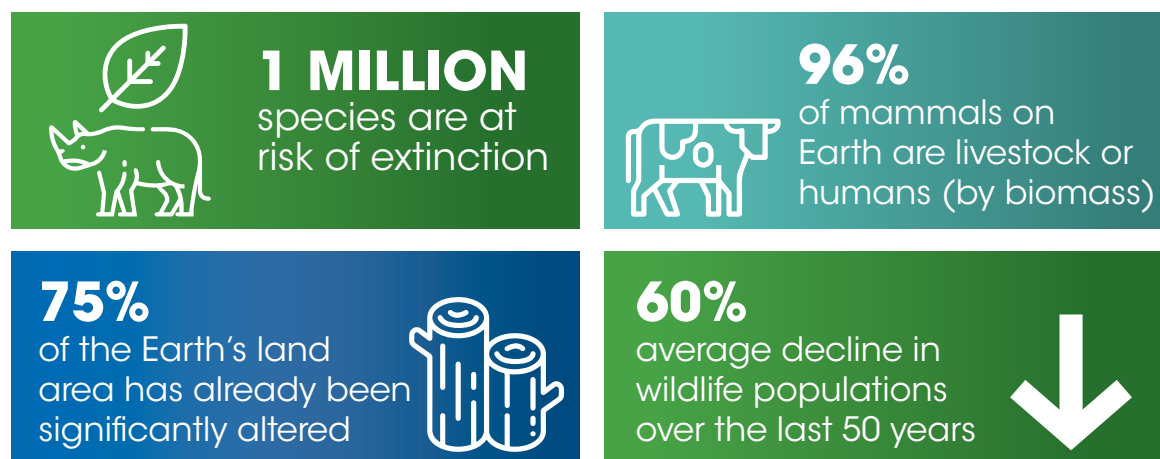
¹⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-biodiversity-route-map-2020/>

²⁰ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-national-marine-plan/>

²¹ <https://www.sepa.org.uk/environment/water/river-basin-management-planning/the-current-plans/>

²² <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cleaner-air-scotland-road-healthier-future/>

²³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-soil-framework/>

Figure 5: The global decline in nature

Source: IPBES Global Assessment (2019) and WWF Living Planet Report (2018)²⁴

Outcome:

We play our full role in tackling the global climate emergency and limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C

Fulfilling Scotland's role in tackling the global climate emergency and limiting temperature rise to 1.5°C is a moral obligation. Climate change is an issue of justice, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable communities and nations around the world, who have contributed least to historic emissions. Climate change is also one of the main drivers of biodiversity loss, threatening the stability of our natural world.

Achieving this outcome means ending Scotland's contribution to climate change, reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2045 at the latest. It also means reducing Scotland's carbon footprint, including emissions associated with imported products. Finally, it means ensuring that Scotland is resilient to the future impacts of climate change through adaptation measures.

A healthy natural environment is key to achieving net zero. Evidence shows that areas which are nature-rich are also rich in carbon. Nature-based solutions, including

tree planting and peatland restoration, will help to lock in carbon and protect us from the impacts of global warming. The way we use and manage our land is also important. For example, we need to make the best use of our productive land by reducing emissions from agriculture while producing high quality food and protecting nature.

Actions to deliver this outcome are currently set out in our Climate Change Plan²⁵ and the Scottish Climate Change Adaptation Programme.²⁶ We will publish an update to the Climate Change Plan by the end of April 2020, identifying how we aim to achieve Scotland's net zero targets. In 2021, we will introduce regional land use partnerships to ensure that we maximise the potential of Scotland's land to help achieve net zero. We will support the reduction of emissions from agriculture through our Programme for Government commitment to create a new agricultural transformation programme and by establishing an agricultural modernisation fund.

²⁴ https://www.wwf.org.uk/sites/default/files/2018-10/wwfintl_livingplanet_full.pdf

²⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-climate-change-plan-third-report-proposals-policies-2018/>

²⁶ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/climate-ready-scotland-scottish-climate-change-adaptation-programme/>

Outcome:**We use and re-use resources wisely and have ended the throw-away culture**

The global use of natural resources has more than tripled since 1970 and continues to grow.²⁷ Using resources sustainably is essential to tackling both the climate and nature crises. This will reduce the pressure on natural systems created as we extract resources and dispose of waste. This means transitioning to a circular economy and ending our reliance on single-use products.

Scotland has been at the forefront of developing a circular economy, which mimics nature by using waste from one process as source materials for another. For natural resources like soil, plants and animals, this means ensuring resources are harvested no faster than nature can regenerate them, and designing production processes to replenish, or 'give back to', living systems. For manufactured materials like plastics, textiles and metals, it means mimicking nature's cycles by designing products to be recovered and restored through repair, reuse, refurbishment and recycling.

Our circular economy strategy, *Making Things Last*,²⁸ and the Food Waste Reduction Action Plan²⁹ will support the delivery of this outcome. We will work to embed circular economy models and practice throughout our economy and society, including through a Circular Economy Bill.³⁰

27 <https://www.resourcepanel.org/reports/global-resources-outlook>

28 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/making-things-last-circular-economy-strategy-scotland/>

29 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/food-waste-reduction-action-plan/>

30 <https://www.gov.scot/news/circular-economy-bill/>

Outcome:**Our thriving, sustainable economy conserves and grows our natural assets**

This means creating a net zero, circular economy that values nature.

Our economy depends on the natural world as a source for its raw materials and a sink for its wastes. Drawing on nature's resources faster than they can be regenerated, and producing wastes faster than they can be absorbed, depletes our natural capital. It is essential to understand the impacts of our economic activities on Scotland's natural capital, and to design our business models to regenerate rather than deplete it. Scotland's first ever Natural Capital Accounts,³¹ published in March 2019, estimated that those elements of Scotland's natural capital that can be valued are worth at least £291 billion. Although the value of nature cannot be given a price tag, this estimate underscores the enormous importance of nature to our economy. We also developed the world's first Natural Capital Asset Index,³² which allows us to track changes in Scotland's natural capital.

Scotland's transition to a net zero, circular economy is already underway. International climate targets and pressures on global resources are creating large emerging markets in carbon-neutral, circular solutions. With Scotland's natural resources, expertise and strong record of innovation, we are well placed to lead change, developing technologies and expertise that we can export across the world. This will continue to create business and investment opportunities and new, high quality jobs across Scotland. We have established a Just Transition Commission to help ensure these opportunities are shared fairly, tackling poverty and inequalities.

31 <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-natural-capital-ecosystem-service-accounts-2019/pages/10/>

32 <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/natural-capital>

Priorities for our economy are set out in Scotland's Economic Strategy³³ and Economic Action Plan.³⁴ Building on these, we will explore opportunities to drive the transformations to our economy needed to protect and restore nature and achieve net zero. Where appropriate, we will explore the potential to deliver priorities that rely on finance and investment through the Green New Deal for Scotland, announced in the 2019/20 Programme for Government.³⁵ We will ensure alignment between the Environment Strategy and the Infrastructure Investment Plan. The next Plan will be informed by the findings of the Infrastructure Commission for Scotland, which recommend that natural infrastructure be included in the Scottish Government's definition of infrastructure.

Outcome:

Our healthy environment supports a fairer, healthier, more inclusive society

Adapting to thrive within the sustainable limits of our single, shared planet will mean transforming the design and delivery of social policies and public services. It will also mean making our lifestyles more sustainable, consuming and wasting less, while improving our wellbeing and quality of life.

We are already making many of these changes. They will help to create a fairer, healthier, more inclusive and resilient society, enhancing the wellbeing of individuals and communities across Scotland. For example, improving air quality and access to greenspace will create significant health benefits and help to tackle inequalities.

Many policies currently contribute to delivering this outcome, including policies on transport, planning, energy, waste, recycling, health, education, early years, access, landscape, culture and Fairer Scotland. Building on these, we will explore opportunities to improve the sustainability of our society while enhancing the wellbeing of Scotland's people.

Outcome:

We are responsible global citizens with a sustainable international footprint

If everyone on Earth consumed resources as we do in Scotland, we would need three planets. Our consumption relies on resources extracted or used in other parts of the world, including water, land and biological and mineral resources. We have a significant carbon footprint, including emissions produced in Scotland, and emissions in other countries making goods which we import. As a result, our environmental impact extends far beyond our own country. The nature of this impact is complex. Some of the commodities we import are associated with deforestation, water stress and other ecological pressures in different parts of the world.

To achieve this outcome, we will strive to ensure that Scotland lives within the sustainable limits of our single, shared planet; and, where we can, take actions which help to make the impact of our consumption and production on other countries sustainable. As a first step, we will gather evidence on the nature of Scotland's international environmental impact.

³³ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-economic-strategy/>

³⁴ <https://economicactionplan.mygov.scot/>

³⁵ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/protecting-scotlands-future-governments-programme-scotland-2019-20/>

5. Realising the vision

This strategy sets out our vision for Scotland's environment, our role in addressing global challenges, and the benefits we want to create for Scotland's wellbeing and prosperity. We live in a complex and uncertain world. It is essential that the strategy can adapt and respond to new evidence and opportunities.

To turn our vision into reality, we will develop pathways for outcomes. These will identify strategic priorities and opportunities, working with existing strategies and plans across government. We will seek to direct our collective efforts in the areas that will have the greatest impact on multiple outcomes.³⁶ Work will focus, in particular, on opportunities to strengthen connections between policies. We will keep these pathways under review, ensuring that implementation of our Environment Strategy is flexible and dynamic.

Our outcome pathways will be based on evidence. We have published high level summaries of evidence as knowledge accounts, which will also be maintained as living documents.

In order to measure progress, we will develop a monitoring framework for the strategy. This will set out indicators to track and report progress towards achieving the strategy outcomes. This, in turn, will guide improvements to the strategy and our approach to delivery.

³⁶ At this stage in the development of the Environment Strategy, we will develop and consult on an Environmental Assessment, to describe and test the effect of the vision and outcomes on the environment, through the influence on other strategies and in the development of outcome pathways. We shall also carry out other Impact Assessments of the Strategy.



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