



nature's
voice



Challenge 2011-2015

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RSPB Scotland is part of the RSPB, which speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing – help us keep it that way.



We belong to BirdLife International, the global partnership of bird conservation organisations.

The RSPB's Letter to the Future

More than 300,000 people have signed this letter since Autumn 2009.



“We shall all be paying for the impact of this crisis on the public finances for a generation.”

Mervyn King, Governor of the Bank of England,
Speech to Scottish business leaders, Edinburgh,
20 October 2009.

“Climate change represents the greatest and widest-ranging market failure ever seen.”

Sir Nicholas Stern, *The Stern Review into economics of climate change*, October 2006.

Challenge 2011–2015: politicians must cut waste – and invest in nature

In 2011, ahead of the Holyrood Election, we are in the midst of both an ecological and economic crisis. Both are a result of an unsustainable economic system beholden to consumption and GDP. As political leaders grapple with the budget deficit, they must also strive to find ways to settle the ecological debt.

Our children need a chance to grow up in a world worth living in – our politicians must give them that chance. It would be a magnificent legacy to the future. Forests, seas and peatlands provide irreplaceable life-support systems, but many are being lost. Science suggests that human-induced climate change could bring about mass extinctions – and threaten the very survival of our own species. Yet, the current financial crisis also presents an opportunity. The decisions that our political leaders make to fix the nation's finances will have major implications for the health of our natural environment and the well-being of ourselves and future generations.

Now is the time to move away from an economy based on fossil fuels – oil, gas and coal – to one where we use energy efficiently and harness the power of our natural resources – the sun, wind and waves. And this is the time to move towards an economy that does not rely on exploiting natural resources far beyond their capacity to replenish what we take.

Such a new approach has huge popular support. In the year to September 2010, more than 300,000 people across the UK signed the RSPB's *Letter to the Future* including over 22,000 in Scotland. The letter has a simple message. It urges politicians, across all UK administrations, to consider the health of the planet for future generations when they decide where to invest and where to cut spending. Action taken by politicians today should mean that children of the future will inherit a world full of natural beauty, where the engines of life – the air, seas, rivers, forests and land – remain vital and healthy.



This document is a rallying cry to politicians in Scotland. It complements *Challenge 2010*, which focused on policies determined by the Westminster Parliament. Our message is simple: cut wasteful expenditure that pollutes and damages the environment, and invest in protecting nature and all the services that it provides.



Introduction

Public spending decisions should be based on three core spending principles:

Cut the waste

Governments must redirect spending away from wasteful or environmentally destructive activity.

Ensure best value for money

Governments must provide best value – spending on the natural environment does just that, by delivering multiple benefits including to health and wellbeing.

Invest in future prosperity

There are opportunities across government – especially in the land use, energy and education sectors – for carefully targeted investment in our natural resource base. The returns will exceed the initial investment many times over.

RSPB Scotland calls on the political parties to commit to these investments to ensure that we live within our ecological, as well as economic, means.

RSPB Scotland's challenge to the parties on public spending

1. Climate change and Scotland's energy future

To prevent catastrophic climate change, we must prevent average global temperatures from rising by more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The Scottish Climate Change Act target of a cut in emissions of 42% by 2020 helps us towards that goal. This world-leading ambition was widely welcomed. However, to meet such targets requires us to move from a high-carbon to a low-carbon economy and to embrace a green energy revolution. The Scottish Government must **cut the waste**, and end the financing of climate-polluting projects. It must **invest in future prosperity** instead, by diverting funds towards reducing energy demand, wide-scale energy efficiency measures and a well-located broad mix of renewables.

2. Create a countryside fit for wildlife

We failed to meet the 2010 target of halting the loss of biodiversity, so we must redouble efforts to reach the new 2020 target. Farming is fundamental to achieving a healthy countryside that produces food sustainably, is rich in wildlife and supports rural industry. The vital countryside goods and services managed by farming need to be properly supported through measures such as agri-environment schemes. However, the current subsidy system has unclear objectives, and fails to spend enough money on paying for public goods. Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy should **cut the waste**, eg poorly targeted income support payments, and instead use this money in schemes that deliver better **value for money** by rewarding environmental protection, protected area management, improved water quality, wildlife restoration and landscape-scale conservation. Only by such concerted effort will we meet our biodiversity targets.

3. Create green infrastructure and a green economy

Recognition of the importance of large-scale habitat networks in National Planning Framework 2 and the Scottish Government's Green Jobs Strategy shows that politicians have begun to realise the potential of green jobs and green infrastructure.

However, there needs to be a greater commitment to implementation and seeing these aspirations realised in Scotland, so we can move towards a more stable economy and a more sustainable society. Switching from investment in new roads and the additional Forth Crossing, and redirecting enterprise funding away from polluting industries to more sustainable ones, eg developing large-scale habitat networks or wildlife tourism, would **cut the waste** and allow us to **invest in future prosperity** by supporting the development of the renewables industry.

4. Safeguard our sealife

The marine environment has suffered prolonged, severe pressure from unsustainable fishing practices and a disjointed, short-term approach to developing major projects at sea. Recent innovations by Scotland's fishing industry are the way forward and must become the industry standard. The Scottish Government must ensure best value for money and fully fund the establishment of a network of well-managed marine protected areas. It is imperative that these funds are not cut. Full implementation of all parts of the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 was estimated at £18.57m to 2015¹. Such **investment in future prosperity** would yield monetary benefits many times the cost, including more sustainable marine resources.

5. Inspire the environmental champions of tomorrow

Unless children are inspired by nature to become its stewards, we have little hope of protecting and restoring the planet in the future. Learning experiences in the natural environment can do exactly that, while also bringing huge benefits to education, personal development and health and wellbeing. The Scottish Government must **invest in future prosperity** for our young people by investing in education for sustainable development.

6. Effective environmental governance

Since devolution, Holyrood has introduced some excellent environmental legislation. However, in some notable cases implementation remains inadequate and further scrutiny is



The Scottish Government must invest in future prosperity for our young people. David Tipling (rspb-images.com)

required. The Scottish Parliament's committees could have an expanded role in this scrutiny, and a system of environmental courts, similar to that in other countries, could improve enforcement of the good legislation that we have. We should ensure **best value** throughout our public sector and instigate more co-operative public procurement procedures, so that there is more environmentally sustainable sourcing of food and other products.

This document is focused, given the financial context, on public spending commitments. It outlines the benefits to the

environment, to the economy and to our social wellbeing, of targeted investments or re-direction of existing spend.

In the context of the forthcoming Scottish elections, RSPB Scotland calls for all politicians to maintain a wider commitment to environmental sustainability and the conservation of nature. **Our wildlife, wild places and landscapes help define us, Scotland, and our identity in the world. Our international standing is founded on our special environment. Nature should be protected for its own sake – as well as for its economic and social benefits.**

1. Climate change and Scotland's energy future

Vision for 2015

Scotland is on course to meet its 2020 target of a 42% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Shifts in the economy and public sector have been achieved so that our energy use is reduced and made more efficient. A broad range of renewables meet Scotland's energy requirements without harming our most important places for wildlife and our reliance on fossil fuels is being phased out. Natural habitats, including peatlands and native woodlands, are being protected and restored in order to realise their full potential to store and sequester carbon, and to help wildlife and society adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Political commitment

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 was very welcome, especially the strong emissions reduction targets for 2020 and 2050, commitments to produce a Land Use Strategy and improve energy efficiency, and provision of a sustainable development duty for public bodies.

Also welcome were the measures set out in the Scottish Government's Climate Change Delivery Plan.

However, we need to be consistent in our approach to large infrastructure projects to ensure they are in line with the ambitions of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 and the Climate Change Delivery Plan.

The state of the climate and Scotland's efforts to tackle climate change

The Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 is already helping to have a positive influence on ambitions around the world for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. RSPB Scotland is an active member of Stop Climate Chaos Scotland (SCCS) and supports its policies and manifesto suggestions (the manifesto is available online²). The threat of climate change can be best addressed through a combination of demand reduction, energy efficiency, investment in low-carbon technologies and land management aimed at reduced emissions and adaptation.

Green energy

Renewable energy delivered in the right places will be an essential component in the fight against climate change and will play a key part in moving Scotland towards a truly sustainable future. Scotland has a massive renewable energy potential, and is well placed to meet or even exceed the Scottish Government's target for 50% of electricity to come from renewable sources by 2020.

Indeed, research such as the *Power of Scotland Renewed*³ report, has shown that Scotland's electricity needs could be fully met using well-sited renewables and by 2030 renewable energy could meet between 60% and 143% of Scotland's projected annual electricity demand, depending on the level of investment in energy saving and new renewables.

The report demonstrates that this can be achieved without the development of new fossil fuel or nuclear power stations, and consequently we should not be investing in highly polluting proposals such as the new coal-fired power station at Hunterston, where only a fraction of carbon emissions would be captured from the outset.

With the transport sector one of the highest growing sources of greenhouse gases, the next Government should also commit to the stabilisation of traffic growth through improved funding for initiatives which support sustainable modes of transport including cycling and walking. Currently it is business as usual, with commitments to a replacement Forth Crossing and to the Aberdeen Western Peripheral Route. We need to stop investing in these large infrastructure projects that would see an increase in emissions.

Left – Solar panels at RSPB Vane Farm nature reserve, Perth & Kinross. Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Action needed now

The Scottish Government must commit to delivering its 2020 target of 42% reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in sustainable ways that do not damage the natural environment. It must realise these carbon savings within Scotland, ie without purchasing carbon credits.

To deliver our renewable energy ambitions without causing environmental harm will require careful strategic planning both onshore and in the offshore environment. A strategic approach to planning and development in the marine environment, including the creation of a network of Marine Protected Areas, will be particularly important in securing the success of the emerging marine renewables industry. If carefully planned, there is no need for conflict between the delivery of renewable energy targets and safeguarding the environment. See section 4 for more on marine renewables.

Expansion in the renewable energy sector must be accompanied by a reduction in emissions resulting from thermal energy generation. In order to do this, we support the principle of an Emissions Performance Standard (EPS) for all new fossil fuel plants.⁴ An EPS that gradually tightens over time will help to ensure that the carbon intensity of the power sector reduces in line with ambitions to decarbonise the energy sector by 2030. An EPS at 300 grammes or less of CO₂ per kilowatt hour (g/kWh) should be set, which is achievable now by an efficient gas-fired power station, which makes use of waste heat. The EPS should then be gradually tightened over time to require new and existing plants to emit less than 100g/kWh by 2025 at the latest.

RSPB Scotland recognises that carbon capture and storage (CCS) may well have an important role. **However, priority should be given to implementing CCS at existing thermal energy sites** where installation will result in a net decrease of carbon emissions, rather than trying to use CCS as an excuse to build new plants where only a proportion of the total emissions would be captured. This would only result in a net increase in overall emissions. We must avoid the temptation to use CCS to facilitate enhanced oil recovery if this would result in increased emissions.

Land use

The land use sector will also need to do its part to reduce emissions. Government must do more to refine and understand the carbon impact of land management techniques and land uses. RSPB Scotland seeks the promotion of carbon-efficient land management solutions and multiple benefit delivery from land rather than single benefit outcomes. The land use sector also has the responsibility to protect carbon stores and restore high carbon habitats, such as peatland, saltmarsh, ancient woodland and permanent grassland.

In addition to these measures to reduce emissions and thus mitigate climate change, **policies are also necessary to support adaptation to the inevitable changes resulting from past and**



Wind turbines at Soutra Hill, Lothians.

Laurie Campbell (rspb-images.com)

future emissions. Policies must ensure that adaptation measures are sustainable and do not adversely impact the environment. In fact, the natural environment can cost-effectively provide many goods and services, and sustainable solutions to adaptation – we need to help nature help us to adapt. Furthermore, restoring and protecting natural habitats at an appropriate scale is needed to ensure that biodiversity can adapt too.

Actions needed now

The following measures can help both biodiversity and society adapt to inevitable climate change:

- deliver managed re-alignment projects in our major Firths to ameliorate coastal flooding and restore inter-tidal habitats
- introduce and implement sustainable flood management policies, especially by re-establishing river floodplain functionality
- establish a funding package for peatland restoration. Re-wet and restore at least 600,000 hectares of Scotland's degraded blanket bog and phase out peat extraction for use in horticulture by 2015, which could stop 2.7 million tonnes of annual CO₂-e emissions, with more saved through sequestration. These emissions impose a cost of £140 million each year.⁵ This could also bring wider benefits and cost savings through helping to address water quality problems arising from damaged peatland ecosystems.
- commit to delivering favourable condition within all of Scotland's SSSI habitat network. The SSSI network provides benefits of approximately £192 million a year to the Scottish public.⁶ See page 10 for more information on protected areas.
- fund and enable landscape-scale conservation projects to help wildlife populations increase their resilience to climate change impacts at the scale needed.
- a Climate Adaptation Fund to provide grants to local authorities, communities and NGOs to deliver initiatives that can demonstrate solutions for adapting to climate change in the most sustainable way.

2. Create a countryside fit for wildlife

Vision for 2015

Scotland has a healthy countryside, rich in wildlife, that produces food and timber sustainably, supports rural industry and inspires those who live within it and visit each year. The Land Use Strategy is being implemented and is ensuring sustainable land use. Public funds are used to secure vital public goods and services from our countryside. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has been reformed and its funds are being used to deliver a range of environmental goods and services, alongside a sustainable farming industry. Scotland's High Nature Value farming systems are recognised and supported for the public benefits they deliver. Agri-environment schemes receive a much greater proportion of CAP funds and Scotland's forestry sector is delivering enhanced environmental objectives. These changes have delivered multiple benefits: biodiversity targets are met, carbon emissions reduced or sequestered, flood risk managed, water quality improved and the landscape adapted to inevitable climate change. There has been a substantial investment in protecting and restoring peatland, improving water quality and natural approaches to flood management. All SSSIs are properly protected and managed, and species and habitats are thriving throughout the countryside.

Political commitment

There was international support for the aim of stopping biodiversity loss by 2010, yet the target was not met. There has been strong commitment from the current and previous Scottish administrations on particular species in some protected areas, but what is needed is a political commitment to tackle species and habitat declines across the wider countryside. The new biodiversity target for 2020 makes such a commitment.

The next Scottish Government must take strong action this time to meet it.⁷ For instance, it must defend protected sites such as SSSIs, promote landscape-scale habitat management and re-direct agricultural and forestry subsidies towards the delivery of public goods.

State of the countryside

Population growth and increasing consumption mean that the countryside must produce more food, fuel, fibre, clean water, opportunities for recreation and other valuable goods and services. Climate change poses new challenges such as increased drought and flooding. In addition to its traditional roles, the countryside must help reduce greenhouse gas emissions and facilitate adaptation to climate change for ourselves and wildlife. The countryside's ability to sustain us is being stretched and much of it is already in an impoverished state thanks to our current activities, for example:

- Many countryside bird species are in trouble as a result of changes in farming and land management: between 1989 and 2007, the number of singing male corn buntings declined by 83% across 30 study sites in Eastern Scotland (its core range); between 1994 and 2007, three of the four breeding waders that are characteristic of Scottish farmland (oystercatcher, lapwing and curlew) showed significant declines of 21–54%; and, the Scottish population of black grouse declined by 29% from c.4,700 lekking males in 1995/6 to c.3,340 in 2005.

- 35% of water bodies in the Scotland River Basin District do not meet Water Framework Directive objectives with the main problems arising from diffuse and point source pollution, physical alterations to waterbodies and abstraction.

- Scottish soils are a major store of carbon but much of this is in blanket peat which is vulnerable to drainage, ploughing and overgrazing.

Ensuring the continued provision of countryside goods and services into the future, without degrading or depleting the very natural resources and ecological systems that make them possible, is perhaps the greatest challenge we face and of fundamental importance to our future health and wellbeing. Farming, crofting and forestry, which occupy more than three-quarters of Scotland's land mass, are at the heart of delivering these countryside services, if carried out sustainably. Land managers therefore have a key role to play in the stewardship of the countryside. In future, policies must recognise the full range of goods and services that the



Farming, crofting and forestry occupy more than three-quarters of Scotland's land. Andy Hay (rsqb-images.com)

countryside delivers and support those who produce them. **Any public funding supporting farming, crofting and forestry must be targeted at delivering public benefits**, including biodiversity, clean water, reduced flood risk, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions mitigation (such as through peatland restoration) and adaptation to the impacts of climate change.

provides some less obvious benefits; it is habitat for a diversity of wildlife and plays a vital role in water, carbon and nutrient cycles. **The first Land Use Strategy (LUS) 2011–16 should establish clear objectives for land use in Scotland**, and identify how land use can contribute to meeting our GHG emissions reductions targets and achieving sustainable development.

Action on the land use strategy

Scotland's land resources are finite, but provide us with a wide range of goods and services, from primary products such as food and timber to space to live, work and play. Land also

Action is needed now to ensure effective implementation of the LUS. A key first step is to translate the high level, national strategic objectives in the LUS into meaningful regional/local objectives. The development of regional land use strategies is a means to achieve this. Further work is then

necessary to review the regional/local decision making and delivery mechanisms needed to achieve these objectives. At the same time, sectoral proposals, policies and funding streams, eg for agriculture, peatland protection, forestry, renewable energy, built development and transport must be revised and re-aligned in order to meet the overarching objectives of the LUS. These objectives, despite being widely agreed by all political parties, will not be met if sectoral policies remain unchanged. Government should also fund a number of large-scale pilot projects to provide clear demonstrations of best practice in integrated, multiple benefit land use, for example, peatland restoration, coastal re-alignment or native woodland expansion.

Adaptation to the impact of climate change

If Scotland's wildlife is to thrive in a changing but unknown climate we will have to ensure that the countryside is fit for it. First, Government needs to fund monitoring to aid understanding of the impacts of climate change on the countryside and biodiversity. Alongside and in response to this, **funding must be directed to develop the resilience of wildlife populations to changes in climate, through projects that aim for high quality, connected habitats at a landscape-scale.** These areas should encompass nature conservation areas and the wider countryside, ensuring sympathetic management for biodiversity.

Action on agriculture

Farming and crofting are key to achieving a healthy countryside that produces food sustainably, is rich in wildlife and supports rural industry. The vital countryside goods and services produced by farming and crofting need to be properly supported. In particular, Scotland has a high proportion of High Nature Value (HNV) farming and crofting systems that, without support, would struggle to survive. The current system of financial support for agriculture and rural development is poorly targeted at the delivery of public goods. Of the c.£600 million annual CAP payments in Scotland, 71% is allocated to the Single Farm Payment (SFP) based on historic production levels rather than any objective measure of economic, social or environmental need. The distribution of these funds is skewed towards the more intensively farmed areas in the east and south west of the country where farming practices are more likely to give rise to problems such as water pollution, soil degradation and loss of biodiversity. Such Pillar I income support payments are poorly justified in public expenditure terms and demonstrate limited value for money. The remainder of the funds (Pillar II) – distributed through the Scotland Rural Development Programme (SRDP) – are better tailored to delivering public goods and services, although in some cases, particularly the Less Favoured Area Support Scheme (LFASS), the links to the benefits provided are weak or unclear. The SRDP has huge potential to deliver economic, social and environmental benefits but is severely under-funded and fails currently to meet its potential.

Action is needed to secure a fundamental reform of the CAP from 2013. We want our political leaders to negotiate in Europe during 2011–2013 for a reform that significantly shifts public money away from poorly targeted income support payments (Pillar I) towards more specific and targeted payments, such as those provided by agri-environment and other rural development measures, designed to deliver public benefits (Pillar II). A reformed CAP should ensure that all farmers receive a basic level of farm support in return for meeting certain environmental stewardship requirements. Additional support should be provided for High Nature Value (HNV) and organic farming systems that deliver a higher level of public goods and for those farmers and crofters who enter targeted agri-environment agreements.

Funding for the next SRDP, 2014–2020, must increase. If the average payment per hectare of farmed land is calculated, Scotland receives the lowest rural development funding contribution from Europe of any EU country. Within the SRDP, funding for agri-environment schemes must be increased and measures focused on halting the loss of biodiversity by 2020, as well as promoting more sustainable land management and rural development. For example, agri-environment schemes can contribute to restoring habitats, improving water management, managing protected areas, helping deliver landscape-scale management (as promoted by the RSPB's Futurescapes) and assisting the move to low-carbon farming. Planning for the next SRDP – in terms of reviewing objectives and measures – must start in 2011.

Action on forestry

Within the forestry sector, **the top priority should be that all new woodland planting, including for climate change adaptation and mitigation, is appropriately located to benefit, not harm priority biodiversity.** We must also restore the wildlife of Scotland's peat bogs, and other priority non-woodland habitats. This targeted removal of key forestry plantations and onward restoration management will provide biodiversity benefits, and for peatland habitats it will also offer real opportunities to help Scotland tackle climate change. There should be further positive forest management for capercaillie and black grouse within the National Forest Estate and by private landowners, to safeguard these species. In order to achieve a sustainable industry the forestry sector should be developing markets and other mechanisms to generate biodiversity-beneficial management of Scotland's native woodland, such as native pinewood and Western Atlantic oakwoods. New forestry planting for biofuels should be undertaken with a strategic sensitivity/opportunity mapping approach. In addition, new forest design practices for short rotation plantations should be adopted in a way that ensures biodiversity benefits are maximised, particularly for areas with threatened populations of key species such as black grouse.



Scotland receives the lowest rural development funding contribution of any EU country. Richard Revels (rspb-images.com)

Action on water

A healthy and sustainable freshwater environment in Scotland is essential for providing drinking water, producing food, sustaining world-renowned businesses, recreational activities and supporting our biodiversity. To safeguard this valuable resource, Government must ensure that we meet the targets that are set out in the first cycle of River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) – for 71% and 55% of all water bodies in the Scotland and Solway-Tweed river basin districts, respectively, to reach good ecological status by 2015. This will be a crucial step towards achieving the overall targets for 2027. From now until 2015, there must be considerable effort to ensure that the measures set out in the RBMPs and supplementary plans are delivered on the ground. **Key to this is adequate funding for restoration projects and enforcement of the regulations that are in place to protect our water environment.**

Scotland's water industry has a vital role to play in securing these targets and having a more sustainable industry must be a priority for Scotland. Scottish Water's sustainable land management funding for 2010–2015 should be directed towards projects that not only improve raw water quality, but also deliver positive benefits such as biodiversity, climate change adaptation and flood risk management. Land management practices that improve raw water quality and thus reduce the extent of treatment needed would enable savings to be passed on to the consumer. **Action is needed to ensure that exemplars of sustainable land management are developed in Scotland to help focus future water industry spending on sustainable land management rather than capital expenditure.**

The Flood Risk Management Act, passed in 2009, is an excellent opportunity to change the way that flooding is managed in Scotland. Sustainable flood management is at the heart of the Act and this approach will not only benefit homes and businesses at risk of flooding, but will deliver benefits in terms of habitat restoration, maintaining biodiversity and climate change adaptation. **To secure successful implementation of the Act, Government and responsible authorities must ensure that stakeholders are fully engaged in the process; and that there is research and demonstration of natural flood management techniques to sufficiently improve knowledge and raise awareness: Scotland must be equipped to produce high quality flood risk management plans by 2015.**

Action for biodiversity

A rich and diverse natural heritage is a cornerstone of a high quality sustainable economy. Scotland's striking natural heritage means it is well positioned to develop a strong and sustainable economy that values biodiversity, but there needs to be recognition from the top to the grass roots that Scottish wildlife defines what our country is, and who Scots are. How well we conserve and promote our wildlife reflects the worth and value of our culture. We need a recognition that the social, spiritual, psychological and health benefits of wildlife also constitute

Protected areas

Protected areas – nature reserves or privately managed designated sites – are the cornerstone of Scotland's nature conservation. They play a key role in protecting habitats and species of international and national importance. Government policy must ensure this role remains – this means clear and transparent mechanisms to protect the best, and sufficient resources to permit their positive management (see sections on land use and the green economy).

Of course, while important in building resilience to, and adapting to, climate change, protected areas alone will never be sufficient for this, or to meet our environmental ambitions. Therefore, action must also be taken to build biodiversity restoration into wider landscapes, through the Land Use Strategy and related land use policies. RSPB Scotland is, with partners, pioneering this landscape-scale approach through our Futurescapes programme.

essential 'public goods' and that biodiversity has intrinsic value. Globally, we failed to meet the aim of stopping biodiversity loss by 2010. However, the fact that we failed to do so in a relatively prosperous, developed nation like Scotland is a damning indictment of how difficult this challenge will be.

In order to stand a chance of meeting the revised 2020 target we must ensure that:

- **the network of European (Natura) and national (SSSIs) terrestrial/freshwater protected areas is completed, managed and in favourable conservation status**
- **marine protected areas are designated and managed**
- **strategic approaches to planning are adopted to minimise impacts on native biodiversity**
- **a landscape-scale approach to conservation is achieved through integrating biodiversity with wider land use practice and protected areas**
- **an active programme of key restoration of lost habitats and re-introduction of lost native species is carried out as early as is feasible. Funding could come from planning gain/land banking**
- **we address invasive non-native species (INNS) through full implementation of relevant legislation, with recognition of the severe impact INNS have on biodiversity**
- **action is taken to improve the success rate in the fight against wildlife crime, which is a blight on Scotland's reputation, and is having serious conservation impacts.**



Sustainability must be a priority for Scotland's water industry. Chris O'Reilly (rspb-images.com)

3.Green jobs and green infrastructure

Vision for 2015

Scotland is a greener, more sustainable place to live, with several large-scale habitat creation projects in place or in development. The renewables industry has expanded in a sustainable manner, delivering Scotland's targets for renewables without damaging our natural environment and making Scotland a world leader in the sustainable development of offshore wind and tidal power, whilst creating skilled jobs.

Planning reforms arising from the 2006 Act have been fully implemented, and a lead from Government ensures a planning culture where developers seek early engagement with stakeholders and are keen to work with and listen to those seeking to protect the natural environment. The protection and enhancement of the natural environment is integral to the siting and design of new developments, which are high quality and sustainable. Where damage is unavoidable, developers invest in substantial habitat creation and enhancement.

Opportunities are maximised to use and manage natural habitats to deliver goods and services, overseen by Scotland's Land Use Strategy. The Land Use Strategy has helped deliver multiple benefits, and the skills required for this diverse work have created and sustained jobs in the rural economy.

Political commitment

Recognition of the importance of large-scale habitat networks in National Planning Framework 2 and the Scottish Government's Green Jobs Strategy have shown that politicians have begun to realise the potential of green jobs and green infrastructure, but

there needs to be a greater commitment to implementation and seeing these aspirations realised in Scotland so we can move towards a more sustainable society.

Economic recovery and green jobs

The increasing mention by the political parties of the importance of shifting to a low-carbon economy with thousands of green jobs as part of the economic recovery is a welcome recognition that sectors such as the renewable energy industry can provide employment and an economic boost to help us out of the recession, whilst delivering environmental objectives. We need a comprehensive green jobs strategy that includes roles in environmental management, wildlife tourism, energy efficiency and demand reduction programmes, rather than the current focus simply on jobs in the renewables sector, important though these are. It is also vital that measures to take us out of recession do not lead to any short-term economic fixes at the expense of the environment.

Green infrastructure

In recent years, we have begun to break the link between economic development and environmental damage. We should see environmental investment as a catalyst for economic development and include sustainable places in our future planning. RSPB Scotland published a report called *Nature and Sustainable Growth: Investing in Scotland's Natural Heritage*⁸, which looked at how a new approach to development has been achieved in locations across Europe. In projects in Denmark, Norway, Germany, Spain, the Netherlands and closer to home in North England and South Wales, the emphasis has been on moving towards the provision of green infrastructure. Green infrastructure can be incorporated in both urban and rural areas, and supports economic regeneration by attracting inward investment and attracting visitors to those places that are rich in wildlife and are pleasant places, where people want to live and work.



Sustainable places create sustainable long-term employment. Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Physical and mental wellbeing and life expectancy are being increasingly linked to access to a high quality natural environment. Glasgow University research published in *The Lancet*⁹ showed that exposure to the natural environment has an independent effect on health – populations that are exposed to the greenest environments have the lowest levels of health inequality related to levels of income deprivation.

This demonstrates the link between social and environmental justice and health.

In addition, appropriately managed natural habitats can provide cost-effective natural services to society, such as flood alleviation, pollution reduction, carbon storage and adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Already, Scotland's natural landscapes and wildlife provide the resources and the backdrop for a number of our key industries including food, drink and tourism. Scottish Government must do more to identify and assess the full range of ecosystem services provided by the natural environment and compare this to conventional delivery. Investment in Scotland's natural assets through establishing green infrastructure makes both environmental and economic sense.

Examples elsewhere, often involving the RSPB, demonstrate the value of this approach. For instance, in the Dearne Valley in South Yorkshire, an area with an image as a run-down former mining area, we have been leading a programme of environmental restoration and improvement in partnership with local development agencies. Focused on the 75-hectare RSPB Old Moor nature reserve and a network of linked sites, the creation of wildlife-rich habitats and visitor facilities has attracted leisure and tourism spend to the area, created facilities much-used by local people, boosted the appeal of the area for business and increased local land values. The RSPB has also been involved in similar projects in the Thames Gateway regeneration initiative and in South Wales with the Newport Wetlands project.

Futurescapes¹⁰ is the RSPB's contribution to landscape-scale conservation, a growing movement among UK conservation groups to provide more rich habitats for wildlife and diverse, green spaces for people to enjoy in our countryside, not only in protected areas but far beyond. With continued biodiversity loss and the uncertainties as a result of a changing climate, we must redouble our conservation efforts and up the scale of our activities, to enable existing species to survive and to provide them with the flexibility to respond to these pressures. To deliver Futurescapes, we will work with a growing range of partners ranging from other conservation organisations to landowners, local communities, businesses and government bodies to develop a vision for a wildlife-rich countryside in selected areas and to work together to achieve it.

Scotland still lacks these kinds of urban regeneration projects, and there is a real danger that we will fall behind the rest of Europe if we do not provide investment to make it happen. There is plenty of scope for this, particularly in the central belt. The Scottish Government's plans for the 2014 Commonwealth Games to leave a lasting legacy to be enjoyed by future generations of Scots could drive the development of green infrastructure in the central belt and create special places for people to live and work in. The Second National Planning Framework (NPF2)¹¹ recognises the value of these large habitat networks. In *Greening the Environment* (p34) it states, "Building environmental capital at a landscape scale can deliver important benefits for the economy and communities. The creation of national ecological networks, potentially encompassing large strategic habitat restoration projects, could make a major contribution to safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity and landscape, make it easier for species to adapt to climate change and create a better environment and new opportunities for local communities."

RSPB Scotland is taking action to address this gap. For example, as part of our Futurescapes programme, we are currently working in partnership with local authorities, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH), Scottish Environment Protection Agency (SEPA) and others to progress an exciting large-scale habitat creation project in the Inner Forth. Our vision is a network of new habitats across 2,000 hectares. By creating a network of new wetland habitats, including saltmarsh, mudflat and reedbed, we will deliver homes and food for wildlife and help to achieve a wide range of other benefits for people living around the Forth¹². While initial support is welcome in creating such partnerships, longer term political and financial support will be needed to ensure delivery.

Glasgow residents are proud of its reputation as the 'dear green place.' Ben Hall (rspb-images.com)



This approach of creating large-scale ecological networks is similarly needed in rural areas. For decades, RSPB Scotland has been managing land for conservation at a landscape-scale. Delivery of large-scale habitat recreation at Abernethy and the Flow Country has been among the most extensive projects anywhere in the UK. We need more of this scale of work in order to help wildlife adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Alternatives to GDP

This move towards a more sustainable economy would be aided by **the development and implementation of Sustainable Development Indicators**, including a new measure of social and economic wellbeing (to complement the traditional, but limited measure, of GDP). Sustainable development is the overarching theme that flows through our 'manifesto'. Clearly, RSPB Scotland supports and promotes policies that protect and enhance biodiversity, and these are central to our recommendations. However, we are also conscious of other social objectives; we believe our environmental proposals are not only compatible with the social and economic components of sustainable development but, often, enhance their delivery as well as improve the quality of life for all.

Action needed

The Scottish Government should facilitate and help fund the creation of a number of large-scale habitat network projects across Scotland with at least one developed as part of investment in the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014.

To make this happen the next Scottish Government must:

- **ensure that the Land Use Strategy, National Planning Framework and other policies facilitate landscape-scale conservation**
- **introduce innovative mechanisms for funding landscape-scale conservation, make existing funding mechanisms, such as the SRDP, work harder for wildlife and ensure that public spending does not have negative impacts on the natural resource base**
- **pilot its own landscape-scale initiatives and share learning with others.**

Scotland needs the commitment and investment to deliver green infrastructure projects – the expertise exists, the policy is in place. Now we must make it happen.



RSPB Scotland has been managing areas such as Forsinard in the Flow Country as part of landscape-scale habitat restoration. Niall Benvie (rspb-images.com)

4. Safeguard our sealife

Vision for 2015

Scotland's most vulnerable marine wildlife is protected, including the millions of seabirds that breed on our coasts. Sustainable management is ensuring a future for coastal communities that rely on the health of the marine environment, and marine ecosystems are recovering and yielding greater benefits to people. An ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas is established, which represents the range of species and habitats that make our seas and coasts special. These contribute to a burgeoning industry in wildlife tourism.

The industries that use the sea are managed sustainably within a marine spatial planning system that is fair and transparent. These industries adhere to the principles of sustainable development, ensuring the seas continue to bring in much-needed income to both coastal communities and to Scotland as a whole.

A reformed Common Fisheries Policy supports Scotland's fishing industry in following an ecosystem approach to fisheries management. Environmentally sensitive gear, area closures, minimal discarding and an end to bycatch have reduced impacts on sensitive marine habitats and wildlife. Too many boats chasing too few fish is a thing of the past. Inshore fisheries are managed sustainably, with local management plans supported by all stakeholders.

Political commitment

The Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 is now in place; it was secured, in part, thanks to a decade-long campaign by RSPB Scotland and other environmental organisations. It received cross-party support and the backing of various marine industries.

We believe the Act includes the tools needed for us to manage our seas sustainably, but it is imperative that this is implemented effectively and with adequate resources. Any funding squeeze will be detrimental to Scotland's economy in the longer term.

Scotland is committed to ensuring all fisheries are exploited at Maximum Sustainable Yield by 2015 (under the World Summit on Sustainable Development). To ensure we meet this responsibility, all Scotland's fish stocks should have Long Term Management Plans, and Scotland's fleet capacity must be balanced with available resources. Decisions must be based on sound science and monitoring that is trusted and supported by all stakeholders. Enforcement must be fit for purpose and adequately funded.

The state of our marine environment

Scotland's marine wildlife ranges from top predators such as seabirds, sharks and dolphins, down to the rich soup of microscopic plants and animals that form the base of the marine food chain. Our marine habitats are equally diverse, ranging from cold-water coral reefs in the dark depths far offshore, to fragile seagrass beds in the warmer sheltered coastal waters. Marine wildlife has, however, suffered prolonged and severe pressure from the increase in human activities at sea; the disjointed, short-term approach to their development; unsustainable fishing practices, which have depleted stocks and disrupted the food web; and the impacts of climate change. It has never been more important to strengthen the resilience of the marine environment to these cumulative impacts.

Seabirds are a well-monitored indicator of the health of the marine environment. The following snapshot illustrates the

threats to marine wildlife:

- Between 2000 and 2008, Scottish seabird numbers fell by 19%
- Since the mid-1980s, the Scottish breeding populations of the following seabirds have suffered severe declines:
 - Arctic skuas have declined by 71%
 - Kittiwakes have declined by 55%
 - Arctic terns have declines by 26%.¹³

These losses are unacceptable, especially given the global importance of Scotland's seabird populations, and the absence of offshore Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for these populations. There needs to be investment now to create the network of protected areas that will prevent further damage to marine biodiversity and to allow our natural resources to recover.



Ailsa Craig is one of Scotland's spectacular seabird cities and is managed by RSPB Scotland. Andy Hay (rspb-images.com)

Action needed now

Funding to ensure the effective implementation of the Marine (Scotland) Act is essential. There will need to be adequate resources to designate an ecologically coherent network of well-managed protected areas and to deliver a marine spatial planning system that is fair, transparent and has the environment at its heart.

Sustainable marine planning and a marine protected area network would provide excellent value for money. Marine ecosystems provide broader environmental services worth billions of pounds per year, services that boost our economic productivity and quality of life. A network of marine protected areas would safeguard vital organisms that remove waste from seawater, store carbon, and recycle nutrients. Scientists estimate that the value of nutrient recycling in UK waters is £1.3 billion per year.¹⁴ Phytoplankton, which accounts for most photosynthesis in the marine environment, sequesters carbon with a value of £8.2 billion per year in the UK alone. Other crucial benefits of a well-managed network include increased resilience of the environment to disasters, benefits for eco-tourism businesses, and the inspiration and cultural resource provided to the public by a healthy marine environment.

With the 2002 reform of the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) having failed to make adequate progress towards sustainable fisheries, the 2013 reform is now crucially important to building resilient, healthy seas, and to restoring the balance between fishing effort, fish stocks and the wider marine environment. Thus, **the Scottish Government should support a reformed CFP that takes an ecosystem-based approach.** This includes adequate provision for independent science and data collection, effective enforcement, measures to ensure fleet capacity is balanced with stock availability, significant reductions in discards and bycatch of non-target species and measures to significantly reduce impacts of fishing gears on sensitive habitats and wildlife.

Marine renewables

The potential for development of a marine renewables industry in Scotland is enormous. It could contribute not only to meeting our climate change targets, but also as a significant energy technology export. It is imperative that lessons are learned from other industries, and that we become

a world leader in developing a sustainable industry that avoids environmental harm. RSPB Scotland supports the recommendations of Scottish Environment LINK's report *Avoiding conflicts in the marine environment*.¹⁵

As the report states, **we support a strategy-led consenting process**, compliant with the provisions of the Marine (Scotland) Act, which will ensure we can deliver our renewable energy ambitions without causing environmental harm. In the early phase of marine renewables development, while spatial plans are in preparation, **developers should be discouraged from commitments to sites where potentially significant adverse environmental impacts could damage the ecosystem.**

Absence of sufficient data to adequately assess potential environmental impacts has been identified as a key barrier to the deployment of marine renewables. There must be improved collection, management and sharing of environmental survey and monitoring data. Lessons from the experience gained in the COWRIE (Collaborative Offshore Wind Research Into the Environment) initiative should be reviewed and implemented beyond wind to wave and tidal.

The following presumptions will help to sustain the precautionary principle and the reputation of the industry:

- adequate baseline survey and subsequent monitoring to identify sensitivities, assess impacts and develop management and mitigation procedures
- ensuring that sites/species/features with particular sensitivities are protected (which may mean they need to be avoided at this exploratory stage in the development process)
- explicit commitment that in these cases consent to continue is strictly subject to evidence that there is no significant adverse impact
- acknowledgement that this is a risk-based approach that may allow early development, but may equally lead to withdrawal of this and further consents
- all baseline data collected as part of licensing requirements are made publicly available, and updated at least annually, so that they can be reviewed and fed into an adaptive management process
- close attention to advice of statutory consultees, particularly SNH and Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).

5. Inspire the environmental champions of tomorrow

Vision for 2015

Scotland is committed to inspiring young people to develop a connection with the natural world, both locally and globally, and to become active citizens who care about the future of the planet. To achieve this, the Scottish Government invests in and supports Sustainable Development Education (including global citizenship), which is adopted across the whole curriculum and in the management of schools. There is sufficient investment in outdoor learning so that all children in Scotland have the chance to regularly experience the natural world throughout their formal education across a range of academic subjects, and this form of teaching is seen widely as beneficial to both personal development and attainment.

Political commitment

There has been a shift in perception of outdoor learning in recent years, as demonstrated by the Scottish Government's Curriculum for Excellence through Outdoor Learning guidance, which is supported through GLOW (Scotland's online education community) and Learning and Teaching Scotland's linked online

resource. However, we have yet to tackle some of the barriers such as teacher training, inspections, funding and worries about health and safety. Until these barriers are removed, outdoor learning will continue to remain only an aspiration for many teachers.

Real World Learning

Giving children their first contact with nature can start a lifelong relationship with the natural world and help equip young people to handle the environmental challenges that lie ahead. A quality outdoor experience, such as that provided by the RSPB, delivers multiple benefits including a greater depth of understanding and improved learning across the whole curriculum, benefits to their sense of self and to their health and wellbeing; and a commitment to protecting the environment.

RSPB Scotland welcomed over 12,000 pupils to our outdoor teaching sites in 2009–2010 and supported a further 12,000 through outreach work, witnessing first hand the inspiration and confidence that real world learning gives to pupils and school staff.

RSPB Scotland is a member of the Real World Learning Partnership (RWLP), working with a range of environmental NGOs and providers of outdoor learning across the country. Politicians from all parties agree that outdoor learning should be an entitlement for every child. However, improving education tends to be regarded as "more teachers, more books, more schools" – quantities rather than qualities of the learning experience. Curriculum for Excellence guidance has set a welcome vision for educational settings to provide frequent and progressive outdoor learning opportunities for all young people, but we need more political commitment and action to realise the potential of quality outdoor learning for every school pupil in Scotland.

Education for sustainable development

The United Nations Decade for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) was launched in 2006 with the overarching goal 'to integrate the principles, values and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning'. At the heart of this goal is our shared natural environment and all it provides for us today, and will need to provide for future generations. A huge amount was achieved in Scotland in the first five years with major input from the Sustainable Development Education Network (SDEN), which involves a wide variety of organisations in the NGO sector, including RSPB Scotland.

The second half of the UN Decade in Scotland concludes in 2015, and is set against the backdrop of the new Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009, with the most ambitious climate change targets in the world. This has been followed by the endorsement of a new action plan for ESD in Scotland by the Scottish Government in 2010, which establishes the unique role of outdoor learning in helping to develop the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that are essential to foster sustainable lifestyles. Outdoor learning and education for sustainable development can both support each other, so investing in one can contribute to the other.

However, despite the apparent high level of commitment from all political parties, sustainable development education has yet to



Contact with nature today creates the environmental champions of tomorrow. David McHugh (rspb-images.com)

become mainstream in Scottish schools. The sustainability of a school is not just about the content of the formal curriculum but includes its role within the community and environment, urban and rural, locally and globally, as a physical structure and a source of learning, inspiration and action. Without real commitment and action from government, the vision for all schools in Scotland to be truly sustainable schools will remain an aspiration.

Action needed now

- Embed outdoor learning in initial teacher training and in continuing professional development for teachers, building capacity amongst teachers and schools and raising the profile and use of existing government guidance documents.
- Extend and expand the active role of Sustainable Development Education and Global Citizenship within the Curriculum for Excellence.

- Enhance the position of outdoor learning and SDE in the HM Inspectorate of Education school inspection process, including training inspectors in how to assess their contribution.

- Set up a system to monitor and raise quality and safe practice in outdoor learning in Scotland, encouraging and reassuring schools, teachers and parents.

- Ensure outdoor learning visits once a year for all children in primary and secondary education. There are 676,740 pupils in publicly funded schools in Scotland, with around 20% coming from households classed as living in some form of poverty or material deprivation. At a cost of around £25 per child per visit, the Scottish Government could help ensure universal participation in outdoor learning by funding visits for children from less well-off households, costing £3.4m per annum.

6. Effective governance

Vision for 2015

The Scottish Government and other public bodies carry out their functions using the best practice of transparency and participation – engaging stakeholders in a meaningful manner. The Scottish Parliament effectively scrutinises both proposed new laws and the implementation of existing legislation. The Parliament also holds relevant bodies to account when delivery is slow or poor. The Parliament and Government have undertaken an assessment of ‘environmental rights’ to ensure full compliance with the Aarhus Convention as well as best practice in participative democracy and environmental justice. As part of this process, the establishment of an environmental court system has been considered.

Political commitment

Quite rightly, the first three administrations since devolution have focused on filling the legislative gaps left by Westminster. In environmental terms, much of the legislation required to better manage the environment has now been passed; this includes laws to establish National Parks in Scotland, to reform nature conservation laws, to implement the Water Framework Directive and to introduce a marine planning and conservation system.

It is now vitally important that this legislation is implemented well – so that it delivers on the political promises made as the

laws were passed. One way to ensure such implementation is for Parliament to review progress and to hold to account the Government and other public bodies responsible. Another key tool in ensuring delivery is to empower stakeholders – so that decisions by Ministers and public bodies are transparent, that participation is genuine and that those affected have the rights (and means) to hold Ministers and public bodies to account.

The state of environmental governance in Scotland: action needed

Good governance includes transparency, effective participation, and fair, clear and affordable rights for all stakeholders. This is good in itself, but is essential to the implementation of environmental policy. As the environment has no “owners”; but is the common inheritance of us all – and of our descendants – it is Government’s role to ensure that individuals, communities and NGOs are empowered to speak up, and to act, on behalf of the environment and future generations. To this end, we support proposals to apply the principles of sustainable development, and the founding principles of the Scottish Parliament, to the development and implementation of environmental policy. This means greater accountability, openness, participation and transparency. These principles are expressed, internationally, in the Aarhus Convention¹⁶ – to which both the UK and the EU are signatories.

In particular, we believe these principles can be better applied by:

1. Improving the process of Scottish Government consultations and participative policy development. We recommend the use of an independent body to provide guidelines on good practice, to scrutinise their application and

make recommendations for improvements. This need not be a new body, but an extended role for Audit Scotland, accountable to the Audit Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

2. Enhancing scrutiny of Scottish Government’s policies on sustainable development and environmental justice:

Linked to the proposal above, the remits of Audit Scotland and the Audit Committee should be extended beyond the purely financial to one of addressing all the aspects of sustainable development – economic, social and environmental. This is not a duplication of, for instance, the roles of the enterprise or the environment committees.¹⁷ A strong audit function would also enable a clear analysis of value for money and the efficacy of the structures and processes used to deliver environmental outcomes. In parallel, the various “subject” committees of the Parliament should enhance their scrutiny of delivery – perhaps reviewing the implementation of legislation and the performance of Departments and Non-departmental Public Bodies.

3. Maintaining and enhancing Freedom of Information:

In many respects, Scotland’s Freedom of Information legislation is among the best in the UK. This needs to be maintained. However, in addition, a culture of pro-active publication and openness should be developed, reducing the number of long-winded and contentious cases reaching the Information Commissioner.



The Scottish Parliament’s founding principles include accountability, openness, participation and transparency.

Julia Harrison (RSPB)

4. Ensuring Aarhus-compliant rights of access to justice:

One of the strongest incentives to public bodies to comply with the principles of openness, participation and environmental justice is to enable affected individuals, communities and NGOs to challenge poor decisions. This is a right afforded to such parties in the Aarhus Convention but very incompletely applied in Scotland – the recent Gill review of civil justice¹⁸ recognised a number of these deficiencies, although others are apparent to campaigners. The new Scottish Government must ensure that, at a minimum, the recommendations of the Gill review are implemented, but should look further at matters of affordability, timeousness and merits-based challenges.

5. Consideration of an environmental court: The next Scottish Government should assess the benefits of a civil environmental court to oversee these matters of environmental justice and bring together all civil appeals on environmental matters. Such a Court should be entirely Aarhus-compliant with clear rights of affordable access for all citizens, communities and NGOs. This could be through an extension of the current role of the land court.



Pristine peatland, part of the blanket peatland at the RSPB Scotland Forsinard Flows nature reserve. Steve Austin (rspb-images.com)

Conclusion

In the future, people will look back at the economic crisis and judge the decisions that politicians made to deal with it. RSPB Scotland hopes it is seen as the time that we turned our backs on an economy-based over-exploitation of the natural world and unsustainable economic practices to one that allows us, and future generations, to live within ecological limits. Such a shift is necessary in environmental terms, but it is also essential for our wellbeing and a good quality of life for future generations.

In order to cut the waste, ensure best value for money and invest in future prosperity, RSPB Scotland recommends redirecting funding to the following policies:

Theme	Government action	Benefits
Climate	Through a roll-on of the existing Climate Challenge Fund, there should be a Climate Adaptation Fund to provide grants to local authorities, communities and NGOs to provide finance for initiatives that can demonstrate solutions for adapting to climate change in the most sustainable way.	Delivery of Parts 4 and 5 of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009.
	Establishing a funding package for peatland restoration through re-direction of funding currently used for intensive forestry grants. Re-wetting and restoring at least 600,000 hectares of Scotland's degraded blanket bog and phasing out peat extraction for use in horticulture by 2015.	This would stop 2.7m tonnes of annual CO ₂ -e emissions, with more saved through sequestration. It can also bring wider benefits and cost savings through helping to address water quality problems arising from damaged peatland ecosystems and thus reduce costs to Scottish Water.
Countryside	Increase proportion of funding for the next SRDP, 2014–2020, as part of overall agricultural support, and ensure a consequent increase in agri-environment measures. Planning for the next SRDP – in terms of reviewing objectives and measures – must start in 2011.	Great public benefit can be delivered through agri-environment schemes including habitat restoration, flood management, managing protected areas, delivery of landscape-scale management and assisting the move to low-carbon farming.
	Fund monitoring to aid understanding of the impacts of climate change on the countryside and biodiversity through strategic redirection of resources in the RAE budget. Alongside and in response to this, funding must be directed to develop the resilience of wildlife populations to changes in climate, through projects that aim for high quality, connected habitats at a landscape-scale. This should include designated sites and the wider countryside.	This approach can cost-effectively provide natural services such as flood alleviation, pollution reduction, carbon storage and adaptation to the impacts of climate change and protection of biodiversity and habitats.
Green economy	Direct a portion of the £2bn that will be invested in infrastructure for the 2014 Commonwealth Games to the creation of a large-scale habitat network.	Large-scale habitat restoration and creation in urban areas can deliver flood prevention, pollution reduction, climate change adaptation, increased biodiversity, increased tourism revenue and improvements to health and wellbeing through increased outdoor activity.
	Development and implementation of Sustainable Development Indicators, including a new measure of social and economic wellbeing that is used in forming policy, plans and programmes.	Ensure transition to a more sustainable society by fuller accounting for costs and benefits beyond GDP.
Marine	Fully fund the establishment of an ecologically coherent network of well-managed marine protected areas. This has been budgeted for – it is imperative that these funds are not cut.	Prevent further damage to marine biodiversity and allow our natural resources to recover, safeguard vital organisms that remove waste from seawater, store carbon, and recycle nutrients, and lead to an increase in the sea's productivity.
	Ensure all Scotland's fish stocks have Long Term Management Plans and Scotland's fleet capacity is balanced with available resources.	Sustainable fisheries for long-term benefit to the industry and to coastal communities.
Education	Ensure all school pupils have at least one outdoor learning visit per year, by funding one quarter of the cost to local authorities.	Inspiring young people to develop a connection with the natural world, both locally and globally and to become active citizens who care about the future of the planet. Outdoor learning is also very beneficial to both personal development and attainment.
Governance	Ensure there is in-house ecological expertise in the planning department of each local authority.	Better informed decision making and more sustainable planning and development across Scotland.

Endnotes

- 1 (Costs in the draft Bill's Financial Memorandum were estimated at £18.57m to 2015)
www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/25-MarineScot/b25s3-introd-en.pdf
- 2 <http://www.stopclimatechaos.org/sccs-manifesto>
- 3 www.rspb.org.uk/Images/PowerofScotlandRenewed_tcm9-222405.pdf
- 4 http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/joint_public_ccs_statement_june_09.pdf
- 5 DECC, 2009, *Carbon valuation in UK policy appraisal: a revised approach*. Central price of £52/tonne CO₂-e use
- 6 Based on Defra's Environmental Accounts for Agriculture's figure of £132 million for Scotland's agricultural SSSIs, which represent 68% of the total SSSI network.
- 7 http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/policy/pdf/communication_2010_0004.pdf
- 8 www.rspb.org.uk/Images/natureandsustainablegrowth1_tcm9-191730.pdf
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- 10 www.rspb.org.uk/futurescapes
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- 13 www.jncc.gov.uk/pdf/Complete_seabird_pops_exec_summary.pdf
- 14 Scottish Agricultural College and University of Liverpool, 2008, *The Marine Bill – Marine Nature Conservation Proposals – Valuing the Benefits Final Report*, Defra www.liv.ac.uk/marinebiology/DOCUMENTS/CRO380%20FINAL%20REPORT.pdf
- 15 www.snh.org.uk/trends_notes/pdf/B377378
- 16 UN Economic Commission for Europe: *Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters*, signed 25 June, 1998 at Aarhus, Denmark.
- 17 For instance: www.audit-scotland.gov.uk/media/article.php?id=123
- 18 www.scotcourts.gov.uk/civilcourtsreview/

