**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority**

**Scottish Biodiversity Duty Report 2015 – 2017**

**The Scottish Biodiversity Duty**

The Scottish Government published [Scotland’s Biodiversity: It’s in Your Hands](http://scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2004/05/19366/37239) in 2004 which aims to “*conserve biodiversity for the health, enjoyment and well-being of the people of Scotland, now and in the future”.* This Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) was updated in June 2013 by the [2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2013/06/5538). This update to the SBS reflects international commitments to the [Aichi Targets](https://www.cbd.int/sp/targets/) and the [European Union’s Biodiversity Strategy for 2020](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/biodiversity/strategy/index_en.htm). It focuses on the desired outcomes for 2020 to halt the loss of biodiversity in Scotland and to restore the essential services and benefits to society that a healthy natural environment provides. [Scotland’s Biodiversity a Route Map to 2020](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00480289.pdf) was published in June 2015 and sets out six ‘Big Steps for Nature’ as well as a number of priority projects. These focus on collaborative work which the Scottish Government and a wide range of partners are taking forward to help deliver the 2020 Challenge and to improve the state of nature in Scotland.

Under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act (2004), all public bodies in Scotland are required to further the conservation of biodiversity when carrying out their responsibilities. The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act (2011) requires public bodies in Scotland to provide a publicly available report, every three years, on the actions which they have taken to meet this biodiversity duty.

**Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park’s Biodiversity Duty**

As a National Park Authority we are charged with safeguarding an area of outstanding and diverse landscape and habitats. Our role is to co-ordinate the delivery of the four statutory aims to secure a sustainable future for this very special part of Scotland. This delivery agreement shows the vision and drive in how we are fulfilling our biodiversity duty and embedding conservation across all our organisational services (Rural Development, Visitor Experience, Conservation and Corporate Services) with innovative use of our resources to deliver the National Park’s services to the highest standard. As a lead organisation with a primarily role in delivering conservation benefits for this area we are hugely committed to embedding conservation throughout our functions and steering other organisations to also deliver through their plans and projects. Across all our services, we provide key direction, leadership and co-ordination of this effort with our successes in collaborative working underpinning many of the important conservation initiatives in the National Park.

This biodiversity duty report for the LLTNPA covers the period 2015-2017. The report reflects activities relevant to the 2004 Strategy and the refreshed 2020 Challenge, and also refers to the National Park’s Delivery Agreement and the ‘Big Steps for Nature’ taken from Scotland’s Biodiversity a Route Map to 2020. It seeks to summarise our lead role on biodiversity matters and working in partnership with other stakeholders, key activities carried out by the LLTNPA on biodiversity, signposting to other publicly available information on plans and updates for further detail on individual projects or subject areas, how we have raised awareness of biodiversity issues within the National Park and worked with communities to enhance biodiversity and lastly how we have incorporated biodiversity into corporate policy, plans and projects.

**Leadership on Biodiversity**

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park is one of the most important places in Scotland for nature conservation: it provides ‘ecosystems services’ of vital importance to the nation. As well as supplying most of Glasgow's drinking water and a considerable amount of hydro-electricity, our lochs and rivers are home to an impressively diverse range of native fish from the celebrated salmon to the archaic jawless lamprey. Our inspiring and much loved mountains are the hunting grounds providing the habitat for up to ten pairs of golden eagles. Our peat bogs lock up millions of tonnes of carbon that would otherwise add to climate change. Likewise, our woodlands and forests store a large volume of carbon, as well as being a major source of timber and a huge attraction for visitors. They are also some of the most ecologically diverse and fascinating habitats on earth with a rich array of mosses and other plants.

The National Park Authority’s role is to coordinate the delivery of the four statutory aims to secure a sustainable future for this very special part of Scotland. The National Parks (Scotland) Act 2000 sets out four National Park aims, to:

* Conserve and enhance the natural and cultural heritage of the area
* Promote sustainable use of the natural resources of the area
* Promote understanding and enjoyment (including enjoyment in the form of recreation) of the special qualities of the area by the public
* Promote sustainable social and economic development of the area’s communities.

The National Park Authority has taken the lead in the management of biodiversity matters and three key documents summarise our lead role as well as the roles of our partners.

* [National Park Partnership Plan 2012 - 2017](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/nationalparkplan/) (NPPP) (Soon to be succeeded by: National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023)
* [Wild Park 2020](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wildpark/)
* [LLTNPA Corporate Plan](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/publications/) (Soon to be succeeded by Our New 5-year Plan 2018-2023).

**Key Achievements 2015 - 2017**

**National Park Partnership Plan 2012 – 2017**

The National Park Partnership Plan was formally approved by Scottish Ministers and launched by Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, on 22 June 2012. The plan was developed following extensive public consultation and outlines conservation, visitor experience and rural development policies and actions for the next five years.

LLTNPA lead on the production of the National Park Partnership Plan (NPPP) which describes the vision and outcomes for the whole National Park area and requires contributions from many different organisations. Delivery of the outcomes within the Partnership Plan is the responsibility of all the organisations that operate in the Park and the Plan is underpinned by a set of Individual Partnership Agreements with key public sector organisations. Conservation is one of the key policy areas within the NPPP and securing the commitment of organisations to deliver for biodiversity is a huge achievement.

**Wild Park 2020**

Wild Park 2020 is the nature conservation strategy and biodiversity action plan for the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and sets out the delivery of the 2020 Challenge in more detail including what we need to do to conserve the National Park’s biodiversity*.* It sets out objectives for what we want to achieve for nature in the National Park over the next 25 years and what action we are taking in bringing our partners together to meet these challenges. As well as listing all the projects that we and our partners aim to deliver between now and the year 2020, five large flagship projects are highlighted which will push forward on some key priorities within the National Park. These are our five ‘Wild Challenges which are:

* Mountain bogs
* Red squirrels
* Black grouse
* Woodland habitat network
* Invasive non-native species

**LLTNPA Actions which contribute to Scotland’s 2020 Challenge for Biodiversity**

A brief description of some of the key projects and actions carried out by the LLTNPA is given below. The [LLTNPA annual reports & accounts](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/publications/annual-reports-accounts/) expand on these actions.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **SBS Key Step** | **SBS Key Step under each Outcome** | **Key Contributing Action** |
| **SBS Chapter 1. Healthy Ecosystems** **OUTCOME: Scotland’s ecosystems are restored to good health so that they provide robust ecosystem services and build our natural capital** |
| 1.1 | Encourage and support ecosystem restoration and management, especially in catchments that have experienced greatest degradation | **Wild Park 2020 - Riparian INNS Wild Challenge**We continue to work in partnership to facilitate the delivery of our Riparian Invasive Non-Native Species Wild Challenge Action Plan as set out in Wild Park 2020. The Upper Tay INNS project continues to work in partnership with land managers and local community groups to control the negative impact of INNS on riparian habitats on the catchment of the River Tay in the north of the National Park. We have continued to support ongoing INNS control in the Forth catchment, working in partnership with the Forth Fisheries Trust. In 2017, we have also started a programme of INNS control in East Loch Lomond and expanded upon control efforts on the Endrick Water. We have funded two community groups in Cowal to train and equip members of the local community to carry out INNS control in their local area. This Wild Challenge also contributes to our People and Nature Programme (see under key step 4.5) **The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 1 Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 3 – Restoration of freshwaters****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 4 Conserving Wildlife in Scotland - Priority Project 8 – Protected Areas in good condition****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – More people experience and enjoy nature****Rhododendron Wild Challenge**We continue to work in partnership to facilitate the delivery of our Rhododendron Wild Challenge Action Plan as set out in Wild Park 2020. We have been working with National Park volunteers to remove rhododendron at priority sites within the Great Trossachs Forest NNR at Loch Katrine. We have worked in partnership with the Loch Lomond & The Trossachs Countryside Trust to remove rhododendron in several locations at Stronachlachar and Loch Lomond Golf Course – the latter project being shortlisted in the Nature of Scotland Award 2017. Our contributions included funding through our Natural Heritage Grant Scheme and facilitating volunteers to assist with rhodododendron removal. We have worked with two private land managers to clear rhododendron from Hell’s Glen SSSI (a nationally important oak woodland) in Lochgoilhead, as well as supporting a third land manager with assistance in submitting a Forestry Grant Scheme application to fund rhododendron control. A fourth land manager has submitted a Forestry Grant Scheme application separately. This Wild Challenge also contributes to our People and Nature Programme (see under key step 4.5)**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 1 Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 2 – Restoration of Native Woodlands****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – More people experience and enjoy nature****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 4 Conserving Wildlife in Scotland - Priority Project 8 – Protected Areas in good condition** |
| 1.2 | Use assessments of ecosystem health at a catchment level to determine what needs to be done. | **Strathard Project**The Strathard Project is one of over 100 partner biodiversity projects in the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and takes an ecosystem approach to action at a landscape scale.The project was launched in 2016 with a number of partners including SEPA, FCS SNH, the Community Partnership and land managers. The purpose of the project is:* To apply an ecosystem services assessment framework to identify integrated land management solutions to delivery for ecosystem health and flood risk management
* To engage with the community and land managers to identify local priorities, opportunities and solutions to deliver multiple benefits for environment and society.
* To foster a joined up partnership approach to support delivery of these objectives.
* To identify and trial sustainable and resilient land and water management measures.

Partners have begun to collate baseline data on ecosystem health. This information, alongside other assessments will be used to determine land and water management options. Community engagement has also enabled trials for natural flood management techniques. **The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 5 Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water Project 10 – Providing ecological connection** **Habitat Impact Assessments**We have been liaising with four of the five Deer Management Groups within the Park to discuss potential collaborative projects to carry out Habitat Impact Assessments of deer browsing. The project will allow land managers to gather, browsing impact data, on a maximum of three yearly cycles, to allow for informed decisions to be made herbivore density and management. To date this project has been taken up by Inveraray and Tyndrum Deer Management Group. We have pledged to support the five year project carrying out Upland Habitat Impact Assessments across their area. We are also part funding AECS applications for a handful of holdings which will include Habitat Impact Assessment as one of their options.**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 1 Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 2 – Restoration of Native Woodlands****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 5 Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water Project 11 – Sustainable Land Management** |
| 1.3 | Government and public bodies will work together towards a shared agenda for action to restore ecosystem health at a catchment scale across Scotland | **Wild Park 2020**We engaged over 52 organisations, including public bodies such as SNH, FCS, SEPA and local authorities in the delivery of Wild Park 2020, our National Park Biodiversity Action Plan. [Read more here](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wildpark/). Wild Park 2020 is also discussed in greater detail under section 4.4. **Wild Park 2020 Woodland Habitat Network Wild Challenge**: We continue to work in partnership to facilitate the delivery of our Woodland Habitat Network Wild Challenge Action Plan as set out in Wild Park 2020. We also have regular liaison with Forestry Commission Scotland (FCS) and SNH on delivering improved woodlands.We worked with FCS & The Great Trossachs Forest steering group partners RSPB Scotland, Woodland Trust Scotland and Forest Enterprise Scotland to improve the condition and connectivity of our woodland network across the 160 square kilometre project area providing a connected area of native woodland stretching from the eastern shores of Loch Lomond to the outskirts of Callander as well as improving the ecological quality of a range of moorland and upland habitats. . In addition to further educational, volunteering and woodland establishment work including montane scrub woodland planting, a notable highlight in this report period was that the project area won the formal accolade a being recognised as a new National Nature Reserve, making it at that time, the largest NNR in the U.K.We also liaised closely with FCS on forest design plans, plant health issues and woodland creation schemes.**Strathard Project**The Strathard Project is applicable to this key step, please see section 1.2.**Wild Park 2020 Mountain Bogs Wild Challenge:**This wild challenge is applicable to this key step, please see section 2.3.**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 1 Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 2 – Restoration of Native Woodlands** |
| 1.4 | Establish plans and decisions about land use based on an understanding of ecosystems and take full account of land use impacts on the ecosystem services that underpin social, economic and environmental health. | **Transport Scotland & A82 & A83** Design for current and future construction works on the A82 and A83 involved close collaborative work with Transport Scotland and their contractors to protect the biodiversity interests.In 2017, National Park Officers attended a summit on the A82 upgrade in Crianlarich to speak directly to the Transport Minister on our priorities for the route. These priorities included tourism, recreation and environmental issues and opportunities within the National Park as well improving its role as a vital transport artery for Argyll & North-West Scotland.**Other Contributing Actions:*** Wild Park 2020 [Read more here](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wildpark/).
* Strathard Project (see key step 1.2)
* Live Park & supplementary guidance provision (see key step 3.2)
* National Park Whole Farm & Estate Plans (see key step 5.1)
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| **SBS Chapter 2. Natural Capital** **OUTCOME: Natural resources contribute to stronger sustainable economic growth in Scotland and we increase our natural capital to pass onto the next generation.** |
| 2.1 | Encourage wide acceptance and use of the Natural Capital Asset indexincluding a comparable measure for the marine environment. | No specific actions in this reporting period.  |
| 2.2 | Use this index to influence decision-making and market-based approaches, so that wider monetary and non-monetary values for ecosystems are recognised and accounted for. | No specific actions in this reporting period. |
| 2.3 | Undertake a major programme of peatland conservation, management and restoration | **Wild Park 2020 Mountain Bogs Wild Challenge:**Funded through the Scottish Government’s Green Stimulus Fund we undertook desk-top and ground-truthing surveys of the extent and condition of the peatlands within the Park. We have been working with land managers to take forward restoration projects on our degraded peatlands to enhance their value as important habitats and stores for carbon and floodwaters. This has evolved following the launch of the national ‘Peatland ACTION’ programme. We have helped facilitate four peatland restoration projects on the park, prior to our appointment of an SNH funded National Park Peatland ACTION Project Officer in June 2017. We have also assisted in hosting a successful demonstration day at one of these sites, in partnership with International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Scottish Land & Estates (SLE). So far we have facilitated the restoration of 62Kms of drainage ditches and 292Has of eroded peatland within five land holdings in the National Park with more work planned in the future.**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 1 Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 1 – Restoration of Peatlands** |
| **SBS Chapter 3. Biodiversity, Health and Quality of life** **OUTCOME: Improved health and quality of life for the people of Scotland, through investment in the care of green space, nature and landscapes**  |
| 3.1 | Provide opportunities for everyone to experience and enjoy nature regularly, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups | We have an ongoing programme of outdoor learning and engagement for all with the special qualities of the National Park. As part of our education and inclusion programme we aim to promote outdoor learning in the National Park as a way to raise awareness of, and a connection to the natural world.We want the National Park to be used by all groups of society. During this reporting period we have had a focus on supporting those experiencing disadvantage across the central belt of Scotland. We continue to offer a travel grant to support those who wouldn’t otherwise be able to visit and travelling around the Park.We have specifically targeted media aimed at groups that do not typically visit the National Park, and have ensured that video and imagery represents a broader audience including disabled and ethnic minority visitors. This will help harder to reach audiences identify with outdoor experiences. We have also been working with mobility groups who have introduced new facilities that have opened up outdoor adventure experiences to visitors with limited mobility.In order to support this engagement with the outdoors, conservation and biodiversity we deliver support in the following ways:**Direct support - Ranger Service and Engagement Team**Our Ranger Service and Engagement Team work at the front line, raising awareness of our natural heritage and promoting responsible enjoyment of the National Park. Their engagement includes leading groups and events and liaising with the public visiting our sites and centres. **Learning Resources**We have created many [online resources](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/how-we-can-help/outdoor-learning/education-resources/) that are available to increase understanding of conservation priorities, whilst supporting the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence.**Professional Learning**We deliver Career Long professional learning training for teachers and leaders to build capacity and increase their confidence when engaging young people and those experiencing disadvantage with nature.**Working in Partnership**Much of the work we do to achieve this outcome is done in partnership with others, such as FCS or SNH. We aim to work collaboratively to increase the opportunities for engagement with the National Park. In addition every year the National Park Authority brings together a programme of Events and Activities, which during this reporting timescale, has included conservation and biodiversity aims as a priority theme. Our [Outdoor Recreation Plan](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/rr-content/uploads/2016/07/ORP_exec_summary.pdf) 2013-18 outlines commitments and intentions held by all stakeholders which will enhance outdoor recreation opportunities across Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. The plan has achieved much to date with over £2.5M being invested into recreational facilities across the Park, such as active links, mountain footpaths, scenic routes and kayak trails.**Other Contributing Actions*** National Park Learning Development Initiatives (see key step 3.4)
* John Muir Award engagement in the National Park (see key step 4.5)
* Your Park (see key step 4.1)

**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – More people experience and enjoy nature****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 6 – Taking Learning Outdoors** |
| 3.2 | Support local authorities and communities to improve local environments and enhance biodiversity using green space and green networks, allowing nature to flourish and so enhancing the quality of life for people who live there | **Community Partnership**As part of [Live Park](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/what-we-do/rural-development/live-park/) (our local development plan) and community development activities, we held charrette events and supported community-led action planning delivered by [Community Partnership](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/how-we-can-help/communities/the-community-partnership/) (funded by the National Park) within local communities to identify local community aspirations. Following these events we:* Instigated further discussion with the Callander community, local authorities and other stakeholders and were successful in gaining HLF funding to develop a funding application to deliver the Callander Landscape Partnership; this development phase is underway with a delivery phase application to be submitted in March 2018.
* We have supported a number of Community Development Trusts and groups within the National Park with biodiversity advice and through our 2015/16 Community Grant Scheme develop spaces including community gardens, woodlands and open space with help from National Park Rangers.
* Supported community engagement activities to support the Strathard Project (see key step 1.2).
* Facilitated the initial development of a Friends of Balloch Country Park Group.

**National Park Grant Scheme**We have supported communities to enhance biodiversity in their local area through our National Park Grant Scheme Projects which have been funded include small scale native woodland planting, hedgerow restoration, rhododendron control, community-led riparian INNS control, and support for community woodland groups. From 2014/2015 to 2016/2017 the National Park Grant Scheme funded over £115,000 worth of projects within the National Park. **The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 2 Investment in natural Capital - Priority Project 4 – Natural Capital****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – More people experience and enjoy nature** |
| 3.3 | Build on good practice being developed by the National Health Service (NHS) and others to help encourage greenspace, green exercise and social prescribing initiatives that will improve health and wellbeing through connecting people with nature | Many health and well-being opportunities were promoted and delivered through our Outdoor Recreation Plan (see 3.1) over this period. Moving forward we aim to strengthen our links with NHS providers and partnerships to explore social prescribing initiatives.**Health Based Initiatives**We continue to support the Loch Lomond and The Trossachs Countryside Trust to deliver the walk in the Park healthy activity programme, linked to NHS referrals. The programme has grown greatly during this reporting period. The initiative now has over 40 volunteer walk leaders which host nine walks or activities a week across five communities within the National Park.**The above delivers;** **SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 7 – Developing Scotland’s natural health service** |
| 3.4 | Increase access to nature within and close to schools, and support teachers in developing the role of outdoor learning across the Curriculum for Excellence. | **National Park Outdoor Learning Programme**We have increased our delivery of outdoor learning, linking Learning for Sustainability with Wild Park themed engagement. We work in partnership with the John Muir Award which is one of the National Parks key educational initiatives to connect people with the National Park, to encourage care, respect and conservation values. It supports delivery of National Park Partnership Plan such as raising awareness of Special Qualities and making a positive contribution to biodiversity in National Park.We have run a Junior Ranger programme in the National Park since 2015 and continue to increase the opportunities for local young people to actively contribute to conservation projects in the National Park. Our teacher training programme Teaching in Nature, delivered in partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage, received the Professional Recognition Award for Outdoor Learning from the General Teaching Council for Scotland. Teaching in Nature has supported over 30 teachers to build their confidence and capacity in using the National Park for outdoor learning. We annually support around 80 schools, and over 1,500 children to visit, learn and connect to the National Park. The Educational Travel Grant awarded funding to enable schools and groups to visit the National Park, including accessing Inchcailloch NNR.**The above delivers;** **SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – More people experience and enjoy nature****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 6 – taking learning outdoors** |
| 3.5 | Encourage public organisations and businesses to review their responsibilities and action for biodiversity, and recognise that increasing their positive contribution to nature and landscapes can help meet their corporate priorities and performance. | **Climate Change & Staff Engagement** Since 2016 we have completed our annual Public bodies Climate Change reporting. Following on from this, in 2017 we drafted our Climate Change action plan which allows us to record and review opportunities to reduce our carbon footprint, making improvements in areas such as Ranger patrol routes, waste (reduce, reuse, recycle), increase use of electronic communications and more sustainable transportation. We have initiated a staff engagement programme for Wild Park 2020 within our organisation and have organised a series of staff events (two site visits, a ‘cake and learn’ and a workshop).**Business in the Park Toolkit**We are developing a toolkit for businesses in the Park which supports businesses to increase their contribution to the National Park and to promote sustainable green tourism. |
| **SBS Chapter 4. Wildlife, habitats and protected places** **OUTCOME: The special value and international importance of Scotland’s nature and geodiversity is assured, wildlife is faring well, and we have a highly effective network of protected places.** |
| 4.1 | Ensure that the management of protected places for nature also provides wider public benefits. | **Camping Management Byelaws**Following the introduction of the East Loch Lomond Byelaws in 2013, the National Park Camping Management Byelaws were introduced in 2017. The purpose of the byelaws is to improve the quality of the visitor experience along lochshores, encourage responsible enjoyment and protect fragile lochshore habitats.**The above delivers;** **SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – more people experience and enjoy nature** |
| 4.2 | Align habitat restoration on protected areas with national goals for improving ecosystem health, with local priorities determined at the catchment or landscape scales. | **Deer Management Groups** We have been asked by SNH to attend the initial meetings of the Cowal Deer Working Forum and the West Lomond DMG and have offered our support where required. We have been integral in the initial meetings of the reformation of the East Lomond & Trossachs DMG. We will continue to work with voluntary Deer Management Groups so that formalised deer management covers the majority of the National Park and that public benefits are met whilst delivering sustainable deer management.**Other Contributing Actions:*** RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve (see key step 5.4)
* Steering group member of The Great Trossachs Forest Project (see key step 1.3)

**The above delivers;** **SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 4 Conserving Wildlife in Scotland - Priority Project 8 – protected areas in good condition** |
| 4.3 | Integrate protected areas policy with action for wider habitats to combat fragmentation and restore key habitats. | **Contributing Action:**Woodland Network Wild Challenge (see key step 1.3) |
| 4.4 | Develop a wildlife management framework to address the key priorities for sustainable species management, conservation and conflict issues, including reintroductions and invasive non-native species. | **Wild Park 2020** Wild Park 2020 was launched in 2014. We are currently carrying out our mid-term review of the plan which started in 2017 and is due to be completed in 2018. The review will include progress on the projects, Wild Challenges and 25 year outcomes and will highlight priority areas which we the NPA and our partners will focus on over the remainder of the plan period and in line with the new National Park Partnership Plan (2018-2023).For more information on progress of our Wild Challenges please see 1.1, 1.3 and 2.3The plan also includes a Species Action Programme which highlights UK BAP Species of Conservation Concern and UKBAP Priority Species which have been identified in the National Park. The National Park Partnership Plan 2012-17 contained highlighted priority species that are most under threat and highlights a few species in particular for conservation management: wading birds, Greenland white-fronted geese, black grouse, red squirrel, powan, salmon and water vole. See1.1. Progress on key priority species see below:* **Trossachs Water Vole Project**

We continue to work in partnership with FCS, the River Forth Fisheries Trust and SNH on water vole conservation in the Trossachs area of the National Park which involves the control of non-native North American mink. Water voles are thriving and continuing to expand into new areas throughout the Trossachs and wider area. National Park volunteers continue to support surveys to track the continued expansion of the water voles, whilst also re-visiting all the known sites. This project also contributes to our People and Nature Programme (see under key step 4.5)In 2017 the Trossachs Water Vole project was awarded runner-up spot in the Nature of Scotland Awards Species Champion Category. * **Red Squirrels Wild Challenge**

We continue to work in partnership with Saving Scotland’s Red Squirrels to facilitate the delivery of our Red squirrel Wild Challenge Action Plan as set out in Wild Park 2020. 2017 survey results are positive with populations of red squirrel remaining stable, with red squirrels starting to appear in previously abandoned areas. The results indicate that the south-east of the Park is now predominantly a red-only zone. For more information please see [here](https://scottishsquirrels.org.uk/news/article/2017-squirrel-survey-reveals-scotlandrsquos-red-squirrels-are-holding-on-strong/).This Wild Challenge also contributes to our People and Nature Programme (see under key step 4.5)* **Black Grouse Wild Challenge**

We continue to work in partnership to deliver our Black Grouse Wild Challenge Action Plan. Notable achievements have been developing and agreeing with partners a map of priorityexisting and potential expansion areas for black grouse in the Park to inform targeting of advice and funding.We have also increased opportunities for volunteers to get involved in black grouse conservation in the Park, especially lek monitoring and surveying and this is being built on for 2018. We have agreed on-going conservation management for black grouse beyond 2016 with two land managers within the current Callander Black Grouse Project area by supporting successful SRDP applications.For more information please see [here](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/what-we-do/conservation/land-management/our-work-in-action/black-grouse-project/). This Wild Challenge also contributes to our People and Nature Programme (see under key step 4.5)* **Barn owl monitoring**

This project is ongoing and continues with monitoring of the 50 barn owl boxes across the National Park. This project was originally funded by the National Park Natural Heritage Grant Scheme (now the National Park Grant Scheme). In 2017 40% of the barn owl boxes in the project were found to contain eggs or chicks with 63 chicks ringed. * **Glen Dochart Wader Project**

We have continued to work in partnership to support land managers in Glen Dochart to continue habitat management for farmland wading birds. Three out of the original four holdings have entered into new SRDP contracts in 2016. National Park staff and volunteers continue to monitor breeding populations of 5 priority species across the wider project area. These are lapwing, redshank, snipe, curlew and oystercatcher. Throughout the monitoring period, a steady increase in the population of wading birds has been observed. More information on the project can be found [here](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/what-we-do/conservation/land-management/our-work-in-action/glen-dochart-wading-birds-project/).* **Bumblebee monitoring**

We have worked with the Bumblebee Conservation Trust and partners to increase the coverage of BeeWalk surveys in the National Park to contribute to the Scottish Pollinator Strategy. These surveys will be undertaken by National Park Volunteers, contributing to our People and Nature Programme (see under key step 4.5) More information on the project can be found [here](http://www.beewalk.org.uk/).**Other Contributing Actions**:* Mountain Bog Wild Challenge (see under key step 2.3)
* Woodland Habitat Network Wild Challenge (see under key step 1.3)
* Glen Dochart Waders Project (see under key step 5.2) [Read more here](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/wildpark/).

**The above delivers;** **SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 – Quality greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – More people experience and enjoy nature****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 4 Conserving Wildlife in Scotland - Priority Project 9 – Conservation of priority species** |
| 4.5 | Involve many more people than at present in this work and improve our understanding of the poorly known elements of nature. | **Wild Park 2020 People and Nature Programme**This programme within Wild Park 2020 seeks to increase people’s understanding of the biodiversity of the National Park. **National Park Volunteer Programme**We have a National Park Volunteer programme which engages people as Volunteer Rangers and Conservation Volunteers. They provide valuable extra resources to work with the public, schools and groups to raise awareness of natural heritage and to carry out countryside maintenance, conservation work and wildlife surveys such as surveys for water voles, red squirrels, black grouse and INNS.National Park Volunteer Programme currently has 218 registered volunteers, delivering around 14,000hrs of volunteering each year, and we aim to expand this each year. We have actively sought to recruit volunteers from protected characteristic groups, involving people who may not have been aware or able access volunteering in the past.**John Muir Award engagement in the National Park** We have developed a strong partnership with the John Muir Trust. The project joint funds a part time member of staff to work across the National Park, alongside rangers and other delivery organisations to support participation in the John Muir Award. Since the start of the partnership, almost 7000 John Muir Awards have been delivered within the National Park.**Wild Park 2020 Forum event**On 20th June 2016, the first Wild Park 2020 Forum event was held at National Park Headquarters. The event was aimed at Wild Park 2020 project partners and wider stakeholders, including community groups and land managers with the objective of increasing awareness of, and celebrating nature conservation work being delivered across the National Park. An evening session to engage stakeholders with the National Park Partnership Plan (2018-2023) was also delivered, focussing on Conservation and Land Management issues, opportunities and priorities for action.A total of 26 delegates attended from a wide range of organisations. These included Forestry Commission Scotland, SRUC, RSPB, River Forth Fisheries Trust, John Muir Trust, Cormonachan Woodlands Association, Luss Estates Company and Marine Conservation Society. **The above delivers;** **SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 – Quality greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5 – More people experience and enjoy nature****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 3 – Quality greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 6 – taking Learning Outdoors**  |
| **SBS Chapter 5. Land and freshwater management** **OUTCOME: Nature is faring well, and ecosystems are resilient as a result of sustainable land and water management** |
| 5.1 | Promote an ecosystem approach to land management that fosters sustainable use of natural resources and puts biodiversity at the heart of land-use planning and decision-making. | **Live Park, Supplementary Guidance and Planning Guidance** Through [LIVE Park](http://www.lochlomond-trossachs.org/park-authority/what-we-do/rural-development/live-park/) and the delivery of the Natural Heritage Planning Service we have ensured that all rural developments take account of the Parks natural capital and ecosystem services.The Local Development Plan has three overarching policies with strategic principles for development which ensure that there is sustainable development addressing the requirement to protect and enhance the natural environment. Sixteen policies specific to the Natural Environment clarify the criteria that must be met in order to protect our natural environment and to gain planning permission.Various documents have been produced to accompany the Local Development Plan to assist with protecting species, enhancing habitats and protecting ecosystem services. These include Design and Placemaking Supplementary Guidance and Renewable Energy Planning Guidance. We have provided an outstanding pre-application ecological advisory service for a significant number of run-or-river hydro scheme applications, housing developments and are currently working on another application for a large gold mine development at Tyndrum. **Changing The View and VISTA Projects** The Scottish & Southern Energy and Scottish Power-led “[Changing The View](http://sse.com/newsandviews/allarticles/2016/09/proposals-to-reduce-the-visual-impact-of-transmission-network-progress/)” and “VISTA” projects have progressed steadily with Park Authority assistance. The projects look at technically feasible options for mitigating the landscape impacts of major power transmission lines in the National Park have been reviewed. A workshop was hosted in at Park Headquarters in May 2017 for the purpose of SSE and Scottish Power to provide feedback to wider stakeholders.**Integrated Land Management Plans** Working with land managers, we have developed a number of Integrated Land Management Plans (previously Whole Farm and Whole Estate Plans) with the aim of improving business’s environmental sustainability by maximising their ability to deliver ecosystem services and other public benefits as part of their business operations. Outcomes from these cover many different aspects such as: farm diversification (a planning application for a new campsite); renewable energy technologies (the installation of a biomass boiler); natural flood management (riparian tree planting); and habitat restoration (programmes of work to improve the biodiversity on the holding, securing funding from Agri-Environment Climate Scheme and Forestry Grant Schemes and the control of invasive non-native species).**Scottish Government’s National SRDP** **Roadshow**The National Park hosted one of the Scottish Government’s National SRDP Roadshow events in Balloch. The event was well-attended by rural businesses and agents from in and around and the Park, which gave us the opportunity to emphasise Park priorities and the importance of SRDP in their delivery.**Landowner Lunch Forum**In 2017 we hosted our first successful land owner lunch forum in partnership with Scottish Land & Estates (SLE), and we chose to use the first session to invite comments and discussion on the draft of the new NPPP.**Hill Farming Conference**In collaboration with Argyll Farmer’s Forum, National Farmers Union Scotland, Cairngorms National Park and Scotland’s Rural University College Hill and Mountain Research Centre Kirkton, we supported a two-day Hill Farming Conference on Wednesday 31st September and Thursday 1st October 2015.**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 2 – Investment in Natural Capital - Priority Project 4 – Natural Capital****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 5 – Sustainable management of land and freshwater - Priority Project 11 – Sustainable land management** |
| 5.2 | Ensure that measures taken forward under the Common Agricultural Policy encourage land managers to develop and retain the diversity of wildlife habitats and landscape features. | **Glen Dochart Waders Project**Specialist advice to secure SRDP funding and additional support through the Natural Heritage Grant Scheme enabled habitat improvements for farmland wading birds in Glen Dochart and we are monitoring how this improves the bird populations in that area. See 4.4**Designed Landscapes**We worked successfully with landowners of some of the Park’s historic designed landscapes to restore characteristic features such as parkland tree planting and drystane dyke restoration. Funded partly through our Natural Heritage Grant Scheme. **Other Contributing Actions**:* National Park Whole Farm & Estate Plans (see key step 5.1)
* Black Grouse Wild Challenge (see key step 4.4)

**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 5 – Sustainable management of land and freshwater - Priority Project 11 – Sustainable land management** |
| 5.3 | Support ‘High Nature Value’ farming and forestry. | **Other Contributing Actions**:* Trees & Woodlands advice & planning service (see key step 5.7)
* National Park Integrated Land Management Plans and Whole Farm & Estate Plans( see key step 5.1)
* In partnership with Farm Advisory Service Scotland, Scotland’s Rural University College and their Hill and Mountain Research Centre Kirkton Farm, we have supported a series of workshops to highlight biodiversity on hill farms as well as woodland creation and improvement opportunities.

**The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 5 – Sustainable management of land and freshwater - Priority Project 11 – Sustainable land management** |
| 5.4 | Put in place the management necessary to bring Scotland’s protected areas into favourable condition and improve the ecological status of water bodies | **RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve**At Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve, we have helped RSPB Scotland to undertake a landscape appraisal and capacity assessment of the reserve, as well as assisting with the repair and replacement of key bridges on the site that allow for improved levels of habitat management. This has helped provide the necessary baseline to ensure that landscape character and quality are maintained and enhanced as an integral part of the management of conservation and visitor experience on the site.**The Great Trossachs Forest**We are a partner in The Great Trossachs Forest National Nature Reserve which aims to create a large-scale forest for the benefit of wildlife and people. The project was launched in 2009 and aims to help wildlife to adapt to climate change and demonstrate what partnership can achieve. See also 1.3 above **The above delivers;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 5 – Sustainable management of land and freshwater - Priority Project 11 – Sustainable land management** |
| 5.5 | Ensure that biodiversity and ecosystem objectives are fully integrated into flood risk management plans, and restore wetland habitats and woodlands to provide sustainable flood management.  | **Flood Risk Management Plans**We have worked with SEPA and other Responsible Authorities to produce three flood risk management plans for communities within the National Park. We have also looked at measures to safeguard and improve the ecological status of water-bodies in the Park. We have also been involved in the trialling of natural flood management techniques in the Strathard Project (see 1.2). We are also highlighted in the Local Flood Risk Management Plan for the Clyde and Loch Lomond to lead on a natural flood management study, in partnership with West Dunbartonshire Council, Argyll and Bute Council and Stirling Council. The purpose of this is to further investigate the potential benefit for runoff control in areas surrounding Loch Lomond. |
| 5.6 | Restore and extend natural habitats as a means of building reserves of carbon and to help mitigate climate change. | **Other Contributing Actions**:* Mountain Bogs Wild Challenge (See key step 2.3)
* Woodland Network Wild Challenge (See key step 1.3)
 |
| 5.7 | Provide clear advice to land and water managers on best practice. | **Specialist Advisory Service**We have a team of specialists who are able to provide advice on trees and woodlands, ecology, water environment, landscape, land management and natural heritage planning issues within the National Park. |
| **SBS Chapter 6. Marine and Coastal** **OUTCOME: Scotland’s marine and coastal environments are clean, healthy, safe, productive and biologically diverse, meeting the long-term needs of people and nature.** |
| 6.1 | Adopt a Scottish Marine Plan and develop regional marine plans to aid balanced decision-making in the marine environment. | The Clyde Marine Planning Partnership (CMPP) was formally established in February 2016 by a number of the members of the Core Group of the Firth of Clyde Forum including some of those who served as members of the Steering Group of the Clyde Scottish Sustainable Marine Environment Initiative. We are members of this group. |
| 6.2 | Establish a coherent network of Marine Protected Areas, promoting sustainable use and conservation. | The Loch Goil and Loch Fyne Marine Protected Areas have now been established within the National Park. |
| 6.3 | Collate information on the location and sensitivity of priority marine features, and make this information available to support their protection. | No specific actions in this reporting period. |
| 6.4 | Achieve good environmental status for Scottish seas. | No specific actions in this reporting period. |
| 6.5 | Bring Common Fisheries Policy fish stocks to levels consistent with Maximum Sustainable Yield wherever possible, and take account of biodiversity in managing inshore fisheries. | No specific actions in this reporting period. |
| 6.6 | Implement a rapid-response framework to prevent colonisation of new invasive species in Scotland’s seas and islands. | No specific actions in this reporting period. |
| 6.7 | Improve the monitoring of the marine environment to identify changes and guide progress towards the above outcomes. | Not applicable. |
| 6.8 | Improve understanding of how coastal ecosystems are likely to adapt to climate change and develop appropriate strategies for coastal zone management. | **Sea level Rise and Storm Surge in the Firth of Clyde.**We helped commission a study into the impacts of sea level rise and storm surges due to climate change in the Firth of Clyde including a case study focussed on the Holy Loch. This report has now been published and will be a key piece of baseline information for the Clyde Marine Plan.**The above helps deliver;****SBS Big Steps for Nature Step 6 – Sustainable management of marine and coastal ecosystems - Priority Project 12 – Increase environmental status of our seas** |
| **SBS Chapter 7. Measuring progress****OUTCOME: A framework of indicators that we can use to track progress.** |
| 7.1 | Put in place a programme of work to measure progress towards the 2020 outcomes, so that we can track progress and deal with problems. | **Wild Park 2020**The second edition biodiversity action plan Wild Park 2020 includes indicators of success to track progress being made on the programmes of work. The Wild Park 2020 mid-term review is progressing steadily with a target of completing the review by the end of May 2018.  |
| 7.2 | Work more closely with the growing number of volunteers to develop our understanding of the changing state of nature. | **Other Contributing Actions** * People and Nature Programme
* National Park Volunteer Programme (see key step 4.5)
* John Muir Award engagement in the National Park (see key step 4.5)
 |
| 7.3 | Develop and support the Scottish Biodiversity Information Forum to bolster the collection and wider use of biodiversity data in Scotland. | **Habitats and Species Audits**No specific actions in this reporting period. |
| 7.4 | Publish a terrestrial habitat map for Scotland. | Not applicable |