



Scottish Biodiversity Duty Report 2018 – 2020

Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority

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Introduction

The Scottish Biodiversity Duty

The Scottish Government published [Scotland's Biodiversity: It's in Your Hands](#) 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](#). This update to the SBS reflects international commitments to the [Aichi Targets](#) and the [European Union's Biodiversity Strategy for 2020](#). 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](#) 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 Authority'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 primary 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 National Park Authority covers the period 2018-2020. 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 National Park Authority 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

The National Park Authority has just signed the Edinburgh Declaration with the unanimous support of the National Park Board.

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 20 millions of tonnes of carbon that would otherwise add to climate change. Likewise, our woodlands and forests store 2.5 million tonnes 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. Three key documents summarise our lead role as well as the roles of our partners.

- [National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023](#)
- [Wild Park](#)
- [Our 5-year Plan 2018-2023](#)

Barriers to effective Biodiversity Action

It is widely acknowledged that the Aichi targets have largely been missed globally and across Europe. In Scotland, despite many good actions such as significant increases in protected areas, great strides to cleaner air, water and a low carbon future and the recovery and return of several charismatic species, massive declines in terrestrial and marine biodiversity are still occurring. More needs to be done. In the National Park, several significant issues have hindered progress over the 2018-2020 reporting period. We aim to continue addressing these with the rural businesses and other partners in the National Park.

Agriculture

Agricultural support mechanisms funded by the state are often not well structured or targeted to support biodiversity and deliver gains. We still have some situations where livestock numbers cause direct damage to habitats in the Park and there are numerous catchments with diffuse pollution problems caused in part by agricultural activities. Existing control measures like GAEC are not effective in addressing these issues. AECS funding for agri-environment measures is limited and competitive with strict administrative requirements and insufficient geographical targeting and timeframes that are too short to achieve landscape-scale change. The inflexible parameters of the funding rules are built round process rather than outcome and prevent or deter many managers from applying for such funds. We aim to develop new approaches including embracing Rural Land Use Partnerships and smarter funding models that give farmers more capacity and encouragement to achieve biodiversity gains whilst running successful businesses and producing high quality food.

Invasive Species

Invasive non-native species are recognised as one of the key environmental threats facing the Park but there is no requirement and no encouragement to land owners in the great majority of situations to address them. There is no requirement on public sector land owners or statutory undertakers to address them. Nor is there stipulation in agricultural or forestry management requirements for state support that they should be tackled. They persist because they are tolerated and allowed to thrive. They are generally species that thrive in unmanaged spaces such as river banks, track verges or the transitions between woodlands and open ground. Consequently, they often fall into gaps between the eligibility criteria for available funding mechanisms. Statutory powers such as species control agreements are available but are very much seen as a tool of last resort. We aim to work with partners to make smarter and more coordinated use of the available mechanisms as well as working together on control and eradication programmes.

Forestry

Forestry grant support for management of native woodland and designated sites is often too prescriptive to work in practice in many situations we encounter. Much time and energy is taken up trying to find ways to fill gaps in the funding tool box. The eligibility criteria for funding doesn't sit well with the practicalities faced by some land managers. Invasive rhododendrons are one of the greatest threats to the woodland biodiversity of the National Park but the national targeting for their control prioritises places outside the Park. The Biodiversity Challenge Fund excludes any forestry or woodland management projects. Up-front costs to landowners of developing forestry proposals can be a deterrent to developing speculative applications and fears of cash-flow problems. We aim to continue our partnership work with Scottish Forestry and land owners to promote native woodland creation and management, as well as restructuring of productive forests to improve their biodiversity value.

Finances

Annual budgets for the National Park Authority and its many public sector partners, as well as for funds including Peatland ACTION and the Biodiversity Challenge Fund result in deadlines for project initiation and delivery that are driven by the financial year end. This takes no account of practical demands imposed by the seasons of the year and provides no certainty to allow effective forward planning or effective engagement with land managers. We are continuing internally, with Scottish Government and with other partners to explore mechanisms to allow more forward planning and forward commitment of funds to move beyond annuality whilst still retaining tight control of public money and tight budgets.

Successes

Key Achievements 2018 - 2020

National Park Partnership Plan 2018 – 2023

The National Park Partnership Plan was formally approved by Scottish Ministers and launched by Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, on 14th March 2018. The plan was developed following extensive public consultation and outlines conservation, visitor experience and rural development policies and actions for the next five years.

The National Park Authority 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 regular contact is maintained with partners to ensure coordination and focus on shared delivery. 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

Wild Park is the biodiversity action programme for Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park and is the main delivery vehicle for our nature conservation work. It sets out the key environmental threats to our natural environment and how, by working with our delivery partners and others, we intend to tackle these. This will allow habitats to recover, the wildlife which they support to thrive and ecosystems to become more resilient to climate change. This will in turn drive an even greater range of economic, cultural and other benefits for generations to come.

The Key Environmental Threats are:

- Human activities that lead to poor quality of some lochs and rivers, such as pollution and erosion from adjacent land use;
- Unsustainable levels of grazing from livestock and wild mammals, which reduces woodland and natural vegetation cover;
- Invasive, non-native species which have no natural control and displace native biodiversity;

- Climate change pressures which are rapidly changing the ancient patterns of nature.

Wild Park is also a long-term programme. We intend to focus for the coming years on the key threats which are currently having the biggest impact on our National Park. It will evolve as time goes on and will adapt to the dynamic environment in which we operate. It is a plan that we want people to know about, to value and to get involved in, and by doing so have a hand in shaping our collective natural legacy for the future.

In response to the Nature Crisis and inspired by the Edinburgh Declaration, we have begun to plan out ways to further develop Wild Park and achieve a step change on biodiversity work in the National Park.

Trees and Woodland Strategy

Our Trees and Woodland Strategy sets out our vision for how trees and woodlands in Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park are to be protected and enhanced over the next 20 years. Produced jointly by the National Park Authority and Scottish Forestry, the strategy will guide woodland enhancement and creation within the National Park to help meet important local and national targets that will deliver wider social and economic benefits, such as increasing the number of forestry sector jobs and encouraging community management or ownership of woodland.

There are seven strategic objectives:

- Increasing woodland cover to help tackle biodiversity loss and the global climate emergency.
- Improving woodland condition and diversifying woodland management.
- Protecting and enhancing the landscape.
- Maintaining and enhancing economic sustainability through forestry-related skills and business development.
- Promoting cooperative woodland management and creation as part of an integrated land management approach.
- Improving community empowerment and resilience through active engagement in woodland management.
- Encouraging and promoting public access to woodlands for recreation and improving people's quality of life.

The strategy is a key document to be used by landowners, land managers, residents and forestry professionals when formulating forestry proposals in the National Park. Its aims are being actively promoted through liaison with landowners and innovative approaches including a Research Fellowship with Scotland's Rural College to find out more about the decisions that landowners make in the National Park, what their constraints are for woodland creation and to identify impartial recommendations on what can be done in practice to overcome them.

National Park Authority 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 National Park Authority is given below. The [National Park Authority annual reports & accounts](#) expand on these actions.

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

SBS Key Step	SBS Key Step under each Outcome	Key Contributing Action
1.1	<p>Encourage and support ecosystem restoration and management, especially in catchments that have experienced greatest degradation</p>	<p>The National Park Authority has committed to enhancing our natural resources and ensuring that the natural environment is better managed to help mitigate and address the impacts of climate change.</p> <p>In the National Park Partnership Plan, one of the indicators of success is the increase of the number of designated sites in favourable condition - we prioritise our resources to improving the condition designated sites but we also help to facilitate management in buffer areas and areas where we believe will make the biggest impact.</p> <p>Wild Park – Poor Quality of lochs and rivers We continue to work in partnership with Fisheries Trusts, land managers and local communities to facilitate the delivery of our Water Quality Action Plan as set out in Wild Park Biodiversity Action Programme in all the major river catchments in the National Park.</p> <p>The Upper Tay INNS project continues to work in partnership with land managers and local communities to control the negative impact of INNS on riparian habitats on the catchment of the River Tay in the north of the National Park. Many colonies of invasive plants, in particular Japanese knotweed have been almost eradicated with continued annual monitoring to check for regrowth and many more are moving steadily towards the same state.</p>

		<p>We have continued to support ongoing project delivery in the Forth catchment, working in partnership with the Forth Fisheries Trust to control INNS, improve riverbank structure and enhance riparian woodland habitats. As with the Upper Tay, the continued annual targeting of riparian INNS has led to many colonies reducing to the extent that they are almost eradicated.</p> <p>We established an INNS control programme in East Loch Lomond and expanded upon control efforts on the Endrick Water in partnership with Lomond Fisheries Trust and supported the LLFT to successfully apply for Biodiversity Challenge Funding in 2020 to control all riparian INNS (ASC, GH, JK, and HB) on the Endrick and Blane.</p> <p>In partnership with the Goil Community Trust and Argyll Fisheries Trust, we have supported green bank revetments and riparian planting to protect the habitat and improve conditions for invertebrates and fish.</p> <p>Wild Park - INNS Rhododendron We continue to work in partnership to facilitate the delivery of Rhododendron Control as set out in Wild Park. We have carried out work in 12 locations to manage invasive rhododendron to protect native woodlands and other priority habitats to improve their condition and resilience to climate change.</p> <p>We have been working with National Park volunteers to remove rhododendron at priority sites adjacent to 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. We supported NatureScot in the removal of Rhododendron from the buffer zone around Cuilvona and Craigmore SSSI.</p> <p>Our contributions included funding through our National Park Grant Scheme and facilitating volunteers to assist with rhododendron removal, as well as direct land owner support in key locations i.e. adjacent to designated sites in priority areas. As part of the National Park Grant Scheme, Cormonachan Community Woodland received £5,000 to remove rhododendron.</p>
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1.2	Use assessments of ecosystem health at a catchment level to determine what needs to be done.	<p>Strathard Initiative</p> <p>The Strathard Initiative was launched in 2016 and aimed to create closer working relationships between NatureScot, FLS, SEPA and Stirling Council, along with other agencies and land owners, to influence how the land, forest and water within the Strathard area is managed.</p> <p>The purpose of the project is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>Partners have collated extensive baseline data on environmental and ecosystem health. This information, alongside other assessments is now available be used to determine land and water management options. Community engagement has also enabled trials for natural flood management techniques. As part of the Initiative, the use of leaky wood dams are being trailed for natural flood management, and consequent impacts on flow rates on rivers are being monitored.</p> <p>The Initiative has also led to collaboration with the communities in the strath to begin developing the Strathard Framework. It will set out a spatial plan for rural development and land use that combines community aspirations with policy objectives for conservation, recreation, tourism and development in the area, in a way that reflects its identity and sense of place</p> <p>Habitat Impact Assessments</p> <p>We have run training days for deer managers within the Park to learn the skills to carry out Habitat Impact Assessments of herbivore browsing in both Woodland and Upland habitats. The project will allow land managers to gather, browsing impact data, on a</p>
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		<p>maximum of three yearly cycles, to allow for informed decisions to be made herbivore density and management.</p> <p>Species Monitoring We continue with our programme of species surveys, such as farmland waders, black grouse and water voles that provides us with trend data to which we can measure the successes of land management practices, including habitat and predator management. This is carried out by NPA staff, delivery partners and volunteers.</p> <p>The above delivers: Big Step 1 - Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 2: Restoration of Native Woodlands - Priority Project 3: Restoration of freshwaters</p> <p>Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature - Priority Project 6: Taking Learning Outdoors</p> <p>Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water - Priority Project 10: Improving ecological connection - Priority Project 11: Sustainable Land Management</p>
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	<p>Wild Park We engaged over 52 organisations, including public bodies such as NatureScot, Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry, SEPA and local authorities in the delivery of Wild Park, our National Park Biodiversity Action Plan.</p> <p>Trees & Woodland Strategy Throughout the writing of the Trees and Woodland strategy and the consultation process we engaged with over 42 organisations, including Scottish Forestry, FLS and Nature Scot as well as individual private landowners & managers and eNGOs within the National Park. We also liaised closely with Scottish Forestry on forest design plans, plant health issues and woodland creation schemes.</p> <p>Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures - Woodlands:</p>

		<p>We continue to work in partnership to facilitate the improvement of our Woodland Habitats with land managers and have regular liaison with Scottish Forestry and NatureScot.</p> <p>The Great Trossachs Forest We worked with Scottish Forestry & The Great Trossachs Forest steering group partners RSPB Scotland, Woodland Trust Scotland and Forestry & Land 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.</p> <p>Strathard Framework The Strathard Framework is a project that works with multiple public bodies, land owners and managers, local businesses, visitor and user groups, developers, and the community. The aim of the Framework is to reach strategic agreements on topics such as infrastructure, development, local economy, tourism, climate change, land use, and species management. Within the Framework we have specifically highlighted the issues of natural flood management, native woodland creation, peatland restoration, water body quality improvement, herbivore management, and INNS control.</p> <p>Wild Park– Climate Change Pressures - Peatlands: In 2020, the NPA receives funding directly from Scot Gov and no longer through NatureScot, however our Peatland Officer continues to liaise closely with NatureScot staff to share experiences and knowledge (see key step 2.3).</p> <p>Wild Park – Unsustainable Herbivore Impacts: We work closely with NatureScot local and national staff on different steering and working groups (WDNA, Feral Goat Management Group, Rhododendron Working Group) and we are supporting consideration of the use of statutory powers where they are required to move progress along and to ensure that important habitats are protected and enhanced.</p> <p>The above delivers; Big Step 1 - Ecosystem Restoration</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 1: Restoration of Peatlands - Priority Project 2: Restoration of Native Woodlands - Priority Project 3: Restoration of freshwaters <p>Big Step 2 - Investment in Natural Capital</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 4: Securing economic and social benefits from, and investment in, natural capital <p>Big Step 4 - Conserving Wildlife in Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 8: Protected Areas in good condition <p>Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 10: Improving ecological connection - Priority Project 11: Sustainable Land Management
1.4	<p>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.</p>	<p>Transport Scotland & A82 & A83</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The upgrade of the A82 on north Loch Lomondside will inevitably impact on significant areas of native woodland and we have been promoting a strong approach to ensure that significant net gains in the extent of native woodland and the habitat quality of existing woodland are delivered as a part of the overall package. The landslip problem at the Rest & Be Thankful on the A83 has continued to worsen and we are participating in the evaluation of the route corridor options for the new road, advocating that Net Zero Carbon and Biodiversity Net Gain factor strongly in the decision-making process. We have also continued to encourage and facilitate the development of plans to establish 200ha of new native scrub woodland of low-growing tree species to help stabilise the slopes above the trunk road.</p> <p>Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (Draft)</p> <p>In September 2020, we submitted our draft Indicative Regional Spatial Strategy (iRSS) for Loch Lomond and The Trossachs National Park. It sets out our early thinking on</p>

		<p>the strategic issues and opportunities within the National Park and considers the potential linkages with adjoining areas. This draft strategy has not yet been consulted on and is intended only to set out current thinking and consideration of the strategic scale changes needed to support transition to net zero, green recovery and a more inclusive society.</p> <p>Greater Cononish Glen Management Plan This 30 year management plan is being implemented to deliver environmental benefits in the glen surrounding the Cononish Gold Mine and is funded by the operators of the gold mine - SGZ Cononish Limited (Scotgold). The key parties to the plan are the landowner (Cononish Estate); SGZ Cononish Limited (Scotgold); NatureScot; National Park Authority and Forestry and Land Scotland. The plan will deliver new native woodland, peatland restoration, landscape improvements and interpretational information on geodiversity and other natural heritage features. All of which will contribute to delivering the objectives in the NPPP.</p> <p>Other Contributing Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Park (see key step 4.4) • Strathard Initiative (see key step 1.2) • Live Park & supplementary guidance provision (see key step 3.2) • National Park Integrated Land Management Plans (see key step 5.1) <p>The above delivers;</p> <p>Big Step 1: Ecosystem Restoration Priority Project 1: Restoration of peatlands Priority Project 2: Restoration of native woodland Priority Project 3: Restoration of freshwaters</p> <p>Big Step 2 - Investment in Natural Capital Priority Project 4: Securing economic and social benefits from, and investment in, natural capital</p> <p>Big Step 4 - Conserving wildlife in Scotland Priority Project 8: Protected Areas in good condition</p>
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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.

SBS Key Step	SBS Key Step under each Outcome	Key Contributing Action
2.1	Encourage wide acceptance and use of the Natural Capital Asset index including 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	<p>Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures - Peatlands: Since the appointment of a NatureScot funded National Park Peatland ACTION Project Officer in June 2017, 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.</p> <p>Progress has been slowed by the annualised funding and lack of contractors, however so far we have facilitated putting on the road to recovery 334 ha of eroding and drained peatlands within five land holdings in the National Park. This included 31 km of drainage ditches blocked and 37 km of hags re-profiled. Further sites have been surveyed with more work planned in the future.</p> <p>This work aligns closely with our Board approved Mission Zero work on our emissions reduction activity for the NPA. The focus of this is to achieve net zero by 2030. As</p>

		<p>outlined within this context, when all emissions reduction activities have been undertaken, the NPA will prioritise undertaking climate and emission friendly activity in the NPA to compensate for our corporate emissions, such as the carbon sequestering activities of peatland restoration.</p> <p>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).</p> <p>Although in 2020 the National Park Authority received their funding straight from ScotGov, the annualised nature of funding has slowed progress with peatland restoration projects as timescales are already short due to weather and other land management activities. Contractor availability is also an issue, in order to combat this we have started conversations with experienced contractors to take on a local digger drivers as a sub-contractor to increase local knowledge and skills. This has happened at one of our sites this year (2020).</p> <p>In addition to the main restoration work programme, we have been undertaking removal of invasive rhododendrons and self-seeded Sitka spruce from two moorland sites and two lowland raised bog SSSIs where areas of deep peat and other high value habitats were at risk of degradation.</p> <p>The above delivers; Big Step 1 - Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 1: Restoration of Peatlands</p>
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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

SBS Key Step	SBS Key Step under each Outcome	Key Contributing Action
3.1	Provide opportunities for everyone to experience and enjoy nature regularly, with a particular focus on disadvantaged groups	<p>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.</p> <p>We want the National Park to be used by all groups of society. We continue to offer a travel grant to support those who wouldn't otherwise be able to visit and travel around the Park.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>During the pandemic, we have also seen a new demographic of people come to enjoy the National Park who might not be have visited before and who might not be as used to spending time in the outdoors. We have worked to support them by creating digital materials to help educate them about how to make the most of the National Park.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>In order to support this engagement with the outdoors, conservation and biodiversity, we deliver support in the following ways:</p> <p>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.</p>

		<p>Their engagement includes leading groups and events and liaising with the public visiting our sites and centres.</p> <p>Learning Resources We have created many online resources that are available to increase understanding of conservation priorities, whilst supporting the experiences and outcomes of the Curriculum for Excellence. We have published new Case Studies on Biodiversity and Climate Change to support National 4/5 and Higher Biology and Environmental studies.</p> <p>In addition to this, during the Coronavirus pandemic we have created a suite of digital materials for people to learn more about nature in the National Park through the 'Lochdown Learning' strand of our Lochdown campaign. This included learning about things like peatland through fun 'bog in a bottle' experiments and fact sheets on the flora and fauna found in the Park.</p> <p>Professional Learning We deliver Career Long Professional Learning (CLPL) training for teachers and leaders to build capacity and increase their confidence when engaging young people and those experiencing disadvantage with nature. Teachers and leaders can do this with the John Muir Award through our partnership with the John Muir Trust.</p> <p>Working in Partnership Much of the work we do to achieve this outcome is done in partnership with others, such as Forestry and Land Scotland, Scottish Forestry or NatureScot. We aim to work collaboratively to increase the opportunities for engagement with the National Park.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Outdoor Recreation Plan Our Outdoor Recreation Plan 2013-18 outlines commitments and intentions held by all stakeholders which will enhance outdoor recreation opportunities across Loch</p>
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		<p>Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. The plan remained the key delivery document for recreation delivery beyond 2018 whilst the new Active Park, Healthy People; Outdoor Recreation Delivery Plan was being developed. APHP will be adopted in June 2021. Both plans focus investment and energy into projects which deliver better provision for walking, cycling and other activities which respects, showcases and protects the landscape and biodiversity of the area. The themes for APHP are; Inclusion, Health and Well-being and Global Climate Emergency.</p> <p>Public Engagement Events Every year, we have run events in schools and in the community to engage the public about Invasive Non-native species and the affects they have on our native species and habitats, such as Rhododendron awareness day for families in the Trossachs, and speaking to Arrochar Primary School about Himalayan Balsam and Japanese Knotweed.</p> <p>Other Contributing Actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Park Learning Development Initiatives (see key step 3.4) • John Muir Award engagement in the National Park (see key step 4.5) <p>The above delivers; Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature - Priority Project 6: Taking Learning Outdoors</p>
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	<p>LIVE Park – our Local Development Plan (2017-2021)</p> <p>Through our local development plan we seek to safeguard and further biodiversity. The plan contains a number of policies which seek to protect and enhance biodiversity and we use supplementary planning guidance and communications such as blogs to raise awareness and share good practice.</p> <p>Monitoring of our Local Development Plan in 2018 and 2019 evidences how the Plan is being used to safeguard and enhance biodiversity. Examples of enhancements through development include the removal of non-native species, native tree planting,</p>

	<p>installation of bird and bat boxes and management of a wetland habitat. Training events were run internally to raise awareness and upskill planning team members.</p> <p>Callander Landscape Partnership</p> <p>In 2019, the three year delivery phase of the National Lottery Heritage funded landscape partnership project started in Callander. A community led project involving 15 partners, we are the lead public body for the project which is on track to deliver 19 projects in total by 2021 (extension has been submitted due to pandemic which seeks to extend this to 2022).</p> <p>Through Callander's Landscape Partnership we have engaged 428 people in natural heritage as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteer opportunities on projects that restore and manage woodlands, meadows and rivers; • Participants from hard to reach groups contributing to woodland and river focused activities; • General event participants (John Muir Awards and guided walks: salmon, bats, river, bush craft sessions, habitat box building, angling) <p>The programme is based on four thematic areas of activity including restoration of the area's natural and cultural heritage, exploration of the landscape, engagement and heritage. The project has delivered across these themes with enhancements to biodiversity achieved or on track to be achieved in various landscape habitats including woodlands, meadows, parklands and river corridors.</p> <p>Over the last eight months we have moved to provide digital content, with a series of lectures exploring the landscape, blog posts and ideas on how to engage safely with nature during the pandemic. A number of young people have been trained through our Modern Apprenticeship project, with two opportunities to complete Rural Skills apprenticeships and five with an emphasis on training local young people in outdoor and adventurous activity. View the Monitoring Report.</p> <p>Community Partnership</p>
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		<p>During 2018 and 2019, we continued to provide core funding to the Community Partnership, a charitable organisation that seeks to support Community Development Trusts and organisations to build and maintain good organisational capacity and skills to delivery projects. Through our NPPP monitoring we sought to track and monitor the types of projects that communities were leading on and delivering with many of these enhancing quality of places and life. See an example of how the community in Lochgoilhead restored a vacant area of land into a community garden.</p> <p>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, rhododendron control, designed landscape improvements, construction of a bird hide, and support for community woodland groups and Fisheries Trusts. From 2018/2019 to 2020/2021 the National Park Grant Scheme funded over £42,000 worth of biodiversity projects within the National Park.</p> <p>Tree Planting Grant Scheme In 2019, we developed a tree planting grant scheme and in its first year the scheme awarded £11,000 to 8 projects which planted trees in grazed fields, on field boundaries, in designed landscapes, increased riparian tree cover and funded a school orchard. The projects were undertaken by a wide variety of groups from estate owners, small agricultural holdings, a Rivers Trust and a school group.</p> <p>In 2020, the scheme has awarded £4500 to 3 projects which included agroforestry planting in grazed fields, increased riparian tree cover and planted montane woodland. The projects were undertaken by a variety of groups from a Forest Trust, small agricultural holdings. Several further schemes and up to £10,000 in further funds are being pursued in the remainder of this financial year with other groups including a Rivers Trust and a school group.</p> <p>The above delivers;</p> <p>Big Step 1 - Ecosystem Restoration - Priority Project 2: Restoration of Native Woodlands</p>
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		<p>- Priority Project 3: Restoration of freshwaters</p> <p>Big Step 2 - Investment in Natural Capital</p> <p>- Priority Project 4: Securing economic and social benefits from, and investment in, natural capital</p> <p>Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits</p> <p>- Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature</p> <p>Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water</p> <p>- Priority Project 10: Improving ecological connection</p>
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	<p>Many health and well-being opportunities were promoted and delivered through our Outdoor Recreation Plan (see key step 3.1) over this period. Moving forward we aim to strengthen our links with NHS providers and partnerships to explore social prescribing initiatives.</p> <p>Health Based Initiatives</p> <p>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.</p> <p>The above delivers;</p> <p>Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits</p> <p>- Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature</p> <p>- Priority Project 7: Developing Scotland’s natural health service</p>
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.	<p>National Park Outdoor Learning Programme</p> <p>From 2018, we increased our delivery of Wild Park themed engagement sessions to around 40% of our overall outdoor learning support. We continue to 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</p>

		<p>values. It supports delivery of National Park Partnership Plan such as raising awareness of Special Qualities and making a positive contribution to biodiversity and conservation in National Park.</p> <p>We have run a Junior Ranger programme in the National Park since 2015, now offering this to 4 schools and continue to increase the opportunities for local young people to actively contribute to conservation projects in the National Park through a weekend follow on programme.</p> <p>In November 2019, our teacher training programme Teaching in Nature, delivered in partnership with NatureScot was unconditionally re-accredited by the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) for another 5 years. Teaching in Nature supports teachers to build their confidence and capacity in using the National Park for outdoor learning.</p> <p>We annually support around 70 schools, and over 2,000 children to visit, learn and connect to the National Park.</p> <p>The Educational Travel Grant awarded funding to enable schools and groups to visit the National Park, including accessing Inchcailloch NNR.</p> <p>The above delivers;</p> <p>Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature - 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.	<p>Climate Change & Staff Engagement</p> <p>Since 2016 we have completed our annual Public bodies Climate Change reporting. Following on from this, in 2019 we reviewed progress on our first adopted Climate Change action plan which allowed us to record and review opportunities to reduce our environmental footprint, making improvements in areas such as Ranger patrol routes, waste (reduce, reuse, recycle), increase use of electronic communications and more sustainable transportation.</p>

		<p>In December 2019 our Board approved a slight shift in focus to mirror legislative requirements on public bodies, to focus more on our Mission Zero, our route map towards net zero as an organisation. The Board also approved that once we had confirmed our plans for the work of the National Park Authority towards net zero, we would move to the wider conversation about co-ordinating climate and net zero activity across the park as a place. This work is intrinsically linked with our nature priorities. The Net Zero Route Map and an ambitious commitment to achieve Net Zero by 2030 were approved by the Board in December 2020.</p> <p>We continue to operate an internal staff action group, our Climate Group, and have training available to all staff on climate awareness. We have initiated a staff engagement programme for Wild Park within our organisation and have organised a series of staff events, such as “lunch and learn” sessions and our Wild Park Officer speaking at Team Meetings.</p> <p>National Park Partnership Plan 2018-23 The accomplishments of the first year of our NPPP showed that a “Call to Action” was required if we were going to achieve our ambitious aims and meet the indicators of success that we set in with our delivery partners. More attention towards the challenges of woodland creation, improving the condition of designated site features and quality of water bodies will need further focus in the coming years</p> <p>Business in the Park Toolkit We have developed a toolkit for businesses in the Park which supports businesses to increase their contribution to the National Park and to promote sustainable green tourism. This was published in early 2019 and distributed to businesses Park-wide. The toolkit will be reviewed in Q1 2020/21 and will be subject to ongoing review by the Visitor Experience team.</p> <p>The above delivers:</p> <p>Big Step 2 - Investment in Natural Capital - Priority Project 4: Securing economic and social benefits from, and investment in, natural capital</p>
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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.

SBS Key Step	SBS Key Step under each Outcome	Key Contributing Action
4.1	Ensure that the management of protected places for nature also provides wider public benefits.	<p>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. A 3 Year Report was submitted to Scottish Government in 2020. This report looks at the impacts of byelaw implementation to date, along with the effects of the other supporting camping management measures and learnings gathered over the first three year. Following submission to the Scottish Government, Minister for Rural Affairs and Natural Environment, Mairi Gougeon, has endorsed the report and its recommendations.</p> <p>Wider Visitor Management Activity In 2020 as a response to increase in visitor pressures that were exacerbated by the COVID-19 response, a local partnership was formed and led by the NPA (the National Park Safe Recovery Action Group or NPSRAG) to find solutions to environmental, social and economic impacts. The NPSRAG focusses its activity around three work strands; Information and Engagement, Infrastructure and Services and Regulation and Enforcement. The partnership will continue into 2021 and link with the newly formed national Visitor Management Strategy Steering Group (VMSSG) led by Visit Scotland and reporting to Cabinet Secretary for the Rural Economy and Tourism, Fergus Ewing. The VMSSG has NPA representation as well as on its subgroups.</p> <p>The above delivers; Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature</p>

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.	<p>Wild Park – Unsustainable Grazing Impacts We attend all the collaborative deer management groups in the NP (5 traditional upland DMGs, 1 for the Loch Lomond Islands, 1 Deer Working Forum in Cowal, and 1 Land Management Forum in East Loch Lomond) and have offered our support where required.</p> <p>We were integral in the reformation of the East Lomond & Trossachs Land Management Forum which looks to tackle all types of land management in the area – along with the Inversnaid Rhododendron Biodiversity Challenge Fund (see key step 1.1) ensures that the ecosystems in that area are being enhanced and protected.</p> <p>We sit on the Steering Group for the Lowland Deer Management Pilot with Scottish Forestry and NatureScot staff and on the Steering Group for Wild Deer: A National Approach; using the knowledge and engagement at a national level we then translate that to the local level in the support we offer within the National Park.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>INNS Strategy We worked with NatureScot to develop a riparian INNS strategy to prioritise our resource and ensure that the control work we carry out is in collaboration with our delivery partners.</p> <p>Trees & Woodland Strategy The TWS was developed with Scottish Forestry and is aligned with the Forestry Strategy (see key step 4.4)</p> <p>Other Contributing Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve (see key step 5.4) • Steering group member of The Great Trossachs Forest Project (see key step 1.3) <p>The above delivers; Big Step 1 - Ecosystem Restoration</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 1: Restoration of Peatlands - Priority Project 2: Restoration of Native Woodlands <p>Big Step 4 - Conserving Wildlife in Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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.	<p>Contributing Action:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures - Woodlands (see key step 1.3) • Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures - Peatland (see key step 2.3)
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.	<p>Trees & Woodland Strategy</p> <p>This strategy sets out a clear, ambitious vision for how trees and woodlands are to be protected, enhanced and used within Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park. It is a key document to inform and offer direction and guidance to all those involved in tree planting and management proposals in the National Park.</p> <p>The 20-year strategy will enable trees and woodlands to play a key role in tackling the climate emergency and biodiversity crisis in the National Park.</p> <p>The strategy covers all scales and types of woodland management from small-scale tree planting for landscape and amenity to farm woodland, native woodland and productive conifer schemes of all sizes. It will help deliver both Scottish Government and National Park priorities relating to climate, biodiversity and sustainable development.</p> <p>31% of the National Park is currently covered by woodland of which a quarter is native woodland. This is above the current woodland extent for Scotland of 18%, but well below the European Union’s average of 38%. Our native woodlands are of global importance for nature, including rare temperate rainforests and the most southerly remnants of Scotland’s ancient Caledonian pine forests.</p> <p>This strategy also guides local implementation of the new national Scotland’s Forestry Strategy 2019-2029, help to achieve national native woodland creation targets of 3,000-5,000 ha per year and, importantly, lead to our National Park Partnership Plan target of an additional 2,000 ha of woodland expansion by 2023.</p>

		<p>A key priority is enhancing and increasing native woodland within the National Park. This will help us to achieve our National Park Partnership Plan outcomes by improving woodland biodiversity.</p> <p>Wild Park</p> <p>Wild Park 2020 was launched in 2014 and we completed a mid-term review of the plan in 2018. The review included progress on the projects, the original Wild Challenges and 25 year outcomes and highlighted that a step toward facing 4 key environmental threats would have the most impact to the habitats and species within the National Park.</p> <p>These Key Environmental Threats are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor quality of Waterbodies • Invasive non-native species • Unsustainable grazing impacts • Climate change pressures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor Quality of Waterbodies <p>We worked with Forth Rivers Trust to plant riparian trees on stretches of the River Balvaig and Larig in Balquhiddel Glen to help with woodland connectivity but also, in time, to increase the shading in the river and to reduce water temperatures.</p> <p>We worked with communities groups in the Goil catchment to improve riparian habitat by controlling INNS, tree planting and green banking (bank stabilisation).</p> <p>Our Ranger Teams lead rare fish education projects in schools looking at species including powan and lamprey for which the Park is a stronghold.</p> <p>We supported FLS to trial Natural Flood Management measures, such as leaky debris dams in a catchment in Loch Ard Forest.</p> <p>We worked with MCS and Beachwatch to carry out beach cleans.</p> <p>FRT worked with Drumardoch Estates to fence the Leny Burn and plant riparian trees with a long term aim of reducing water temperature as part of the CLP (see 3.2).</p> <p>A series of additional “fish in classroom” sessions were funded through the CLP and the establishment of the Rivers Centre. The Rivers Centre holds genetically relevant stock to (a) safeguard the Teith’s fish diversity and its tributaries (b) to provide education opportunities to the public. Finally, a group of volunteers and Modern</p>
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		<p>Apprentices have received Redd survey training and are undertaking annual surveying on behalf of the Callander Landscape Partnership.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive non-native species We run and support delivery partners to control invasive non-native species throughout the National Park. We continue to work in partnership with Forestry and Land Scotland, the River Forth Fisheries Trust and NatureScot on water vole conservation in the Trossachs area of the National Park which involves the control of non-native North American mink. We continue to work in partnership with Saving Scotland's Red Squirrels to reduce the number of Grey Squirrels in the natural range of the Red Squirrel. We have worked with NatureScot to control rhododendron in or next to designated sites, such as Cuilvona & Craigmore SSSI and on Inchmoan SSSI. We work with Fisheries & Rivers Trusts to control riparian INNS, such as Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed, Japanese knotweed and American skunk cabbage. A total of 220 sites in Upper Tay, East Loch Lomond and NPA managed sites been checked and controlled for Riparian INNS by NPA Staff alone between 2018 and 2020. Unsustainable grazing impacts We continue to engage and train land managers in understanding the impacts of herbivores, both wild and domestic, on upland and woodland sites and we have supported a number of projects that help to reduce herbivore impacts on designated habitats, such as Pollochro Woods and Edinchip Woods, both SSSIs. We worked with NatureScot to set up the East Loch Lomond Land Management Forum which was the last area in the National Park without collaborative herbivore management. Climate change pressures The target set out in the National Park Partnership Plan 2018-2023 is an ambitious 2,000 ha of woodland expansion by 2023. This includes both new native and productive woodlands. Supporting and encouraging land managers in the National Park to sensitively expand woodland cover is a priority in the National Park Partnership Plan, with a key focus on improving connectivity of existing native woodland and scrub habitats – particularly in the uplands, along hillside burns, and also waterside woodlands on the banks of rivers, burns and lochs in the lowland areas of the National
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		<p>Park. Over 2018 and 2019, 416 ha of woodland have been created. Figures for 2020 are not available at time of reporting, though further creation is underway.</p> <p>As with the woodland expansion, we set an ambitious target of 2,000 ha of peatland restored. This project looks to restore the peatland habitat which has been drained or damaged and will help ensure these areas remain as long term carbon sinks which will help to reduce carbon emissions into the atmosphere. These fragile habitats are also important for wildlife (see key step 2.3 for full details).</p> <p>As well as our Tree and Woodland Strategy (see key step 4.4) and our Peatland Restoration projects (see key step 2.3) we have run a Tree Planting Grant Scheme which looks to fund small scale projects, such as riparian planting, agro-forestry or designed landscapes (see key step 3.2).</p> <p>The above delivers:</p> <p>Big Step 1 - Ecosystem Restoration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 1: Restoration of Peatlands - Priority Project 2: Restoration of Native Woodlands - Priority Project 3: Restoration of freshwaters <p>Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature <p>Big Step 4 - Conserving Wildlife in Scotland</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 9: Conservation of priority species <p>Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 10: Improving ecological connection <p>Big Step 6 - Marine and Coastal ecosystems restored</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Priority Project 12: Increase environmental status of our seas
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

		<p>Within Wild Park, we seek to increase people’s understanding of the biodiversity of the National Park both in the land managing community and the wider general public (see key step 4.4).</p> <p>National Park Volunteer Programme We have a National Park Volunteer programme which engages people as Volunteer Rangers, Practical Conservation Volunteers, or Young 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.</p> <p>The National Park Volunteer Programme currently has 243 registered volunteers, delivering around 16,500hrs 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.</p> <p>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 The Education and Volunteering team and other provider organisations to support participation in the John Muir Award. Since the start of the partnership, over 11,500 John Muir Awards have been delivered within the National Park.</p> <p>Land Manager Training Days Every year we run training days for land managers on different topics that tie in with Key Environmental Threats (see key step 4.4) – examples of these are: herbivore impact assessment training days for deer managers to understand browsing in woodlands, diffuse pollution for farmers around a designated water body, and visits to natural flood measure in Loch Ard Forest with Forestry & Land Scotland.</p> <p>Land Management Network</p>
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		<p>In 2018, the Land Management Network which was set up as a digital network for the purpose of sharing advice and best practice amongst private landowners to help encourage conservation projects. There are currently 65 subscribers.</p> <p>Ranger Winter Projects During the summer months our Ranger Service is predominately involved with visitor management activities, during the winter they help to coordinate many different conservation projects, such as leading groups of volunteers in rhododendron control, removing natural regen from blanket bog and litter picks in sensitive habitats.</p> <p>The above delivers; Big Step 3 - Quality Greenspace for health and education benefits - Priority Project 5: More people experience and enjoy nature - Priority Project 6: Taking Learning Outdoors</p>
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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

SBS Key Step	SBS Key Step under each Outcome	Key Contributing Action
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.	<p>Live Park, Supplementary Guidance and Planning Guidance Through 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.</p> <p>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.</p>

		<p>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 continue to provide pre-application ecological advisory service for a number of run-of-river hydro scheme applications and are working with applicants to ensure landscaping conditions use predominantly native planting. Housing developments within the National Park have landscaping to improve habitat connectivity and the National Park are currently working on peat management and landscape conditions for a large gold mine development at Tyndrum (see key step 1.4).</p> <p>Changing The View and VISTA Projects SSEN Transmission were successful in obtaining funding to remove 7.5km of overhead line and 25 transmission towers between Derrydaroch and Crianlarich near Glen Falloch, and between Sloy Dam and Sloy Power Station - https://www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/news-views/articles/2020/7/loch-lomond-and-trossachs-national-park-vista-project-gets-green-light-from-ofgem/ Further VISTA projects in the Park are still under consideration and running in conjunction with remedial and replacement pylon works. These landscape-focussed works facilitate greater enjoyment and appreciation of nature in locations important for recreation, notably access routes to popular Munros and the West Highland Way</p> <p>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; 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.</p> <p>SLE Members Forum</p>
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		<p>In 2018 in partnership with SLE, we run 4 forums a year with the primary purpose to bring together SLE Members and National Park Authority staff in order to develop a meaningful two-way process for positive engagement and discussion.</p> <p>Litter and Waste Prevention Strategy 2020 - 2023 The National Park Authority's Litter Prevention Strategy was approved in September 2020 and outlines our approach to preventing litter and flytipping through the three themes of engagement, infrastructure and enforcement. Priority actions derived from the Strategy will be agreed through engagement with stakeholders and implemented by the Park Authority and the partners with a responsibility for litter across the Park. It places waste prevention at the heart of its approach, outlining the need to tackle litter as a symptom of the wider global climate emergency, and not in isolation. We also ran media campaigns "Love it like a Local" to urge people who visit the National Park to take their litter home.</p> <p>The above delivers; Big Step 2 - Investment in Natural Capital - Priority Project 4: Securing economic and social benefits from, and investment in, natural capital</p> <p>Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water - Priority Project 11: Sustainable Land Management</p>
5.2	<p>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.</p>	<p>Glen Dochart Waders Project We continue to support the land managers in Glen Dochart by monitoring the wader populations to see how the habitat improvements (funded through AECS) have affected the wading bird populations in that area and in 2020 in partnership with RSPB begun a 10 year review of the project to understand the key pressures and how we can move the project forward. This is due for completion in Spring 2021.</p> <p>Feedback from some of the land managers involved in these projects has shown that the prescriptive format of AECS have made the schemes unworkable for the farm and they have then not wished to continue into another round of the scheme/ project. The "one size fits all" approach for the Agri-Environment Schemes does not work and the</p>

		<p>National Park Authority welcome the work that is being done on the POBAS pilots to based payments on outcomes.</p> <p>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 in Ross Park with funding from the Tree Planting Grant Scheme.</p> <p>Parklands is one of the 21 projects within Callander Landscape Partnership (see key step 3.2) and aims to restore the designed landscape of Leny at the gateway to Callander’s town using match funding from HLF and SRDP. Parkland trees, new fencing and restoring the original dykes are being delivered in partnership with the landowner.</p> <p>Other Contributing Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Land Management Plans (see key step 5.1) <p>The above delivers; Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water - Priority Project 11: Sustainable Land Management</p>
5.3	Support ‘High Nature Value’ farming and forestry.	<p>Callander Landscape Partnership Callander Landscape Partnership’s meadows project, is unique within the area and is restoring a wet hay meadow situated at the head of the Teith. Transects established by Plant Life are being monitored annually to show a move towards more favourable wildflower and grass species. A prescribed management regime, also agreed in consultation with Plant Life, uses a mowing and grazing system to recover the meadow to a species rich and diverse hay meadow by 2022.</p> <p>Other Contributing Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees & Woodlands Strategy (see key step 4.4) & Specialist Advisory Service (see key step 5.7) • Integrated Land Management Plans (see key step 5.1) <p>The above delivers;</p>

		<p>Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water - Priority Project 11: Sustainable Land Management</p>
5.4	<p>Put in place the management necessary to bring Scotland's protected areas into favourable condition and improve the ecological status of water bodies</p>	<p>RSPB Loch Lomond Reserve At Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve, we have continued our partnership with RSPB Scotland and NatureScot to take forward the management of the reserve for biodiversity as a part of the Loch Lomond NNR. RSPB's management has significantly improved the habitat quality of pastures and wetlands for a wide range of species, as well as continuing to take forward careful improvements to visitor provision on the reserve. These are improving its value as a place for engaging with nature whilst ensuring that the habitats and species on the reserve are protected.</p> <p>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 key step 1.3)</p> <p>Other Contributing Actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures – Peatland (see key step 2.3) • Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures - Woodland (see key step 1.3) <p>The above delivers; Big Step 5 - Sustainable Management of land and Fresh Water - Priority Project 11: Sustainable Land Management</p>
5.5	<p>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.</p>	<p>Flood Risk Management Plans We have been involved in the trialling of natural flood management techniques in the Strathard Initiative (see key step 1.2).</p> <p>We have also explored options for progressing natural flood risk management plans in the Lomond catchment but have not been able to gather sufficient funding to take forward any studies.</p>

5.6	Restore and extend natural habitats as a means of building reserves of carbon and to help mitigate climate change.	Other Contributing Actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures – Peatland (see key step 2.3) • Wild Park – Climate Change Pressures - Woodland (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.

SBS Key Step	SBS Key Step under each Outcome	Key Contributing Action
6.1	Adopt a Scottish Marine Plan and develop regional marine plans to aid balanced decision-making in the marine environment.	We have continued to participate in the Clyde Marine Planning Partnership and have contributed to the production of the pre-consultation draft of the Clyde Regional Marine Plan, along with an interim Sustainability Appraisal, including Strategic Environmental Assessment. The draft Plan and interim SA-SEA were out for consultation between 18th March and 27th May 2019.
6.2	Establish a coherent network of Marine Protected Areas, promoting sustainable use and conservation.	No specific actions in this reporting period.
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.	Our NPA volunteers (see key step 4.5) annually carry out 4 marine litter picks at the same time as litter monitoring (see key step 6.7). This is part of a coordinated national survey led by the MCS and the data contributes towards strategy development and provides lobbying foundation for environmental legislative change such as banning

		plastic cotton buds and plastic bag charges. This activity is generally managed and led by our ranger service.
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.	Our NPA volunteers (see key step 4.5) help with surveying the marine litter at the head of Loch Long at Arrochar - we aim for 4 times per year coordinating specifically with the Beachwatch activities in September, the type of litter and quantity is recorded.
6.8	Improve understanding of how coastal ecosystems are likely to adapt to climate change and develop appropriate strategies for coastal zone management.	No specific actions in this reporting period

SBS Chapter 7. Measuring progress

OUTCOME: A framework of indicators that we can use to track progress.

SBS Key Step	SBS Key Step under each Outcome	Key Contributing Action
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.	<p>Wild Park The National Park Partnership Plan and the biodiversity action plan Wild Park includes indicators of success to track progress being made on the programmes of work (see key step 4.4).</p> <p>Callander's Landscape Partnership CLP also has a broad range of indicators and targets, many of which relate to biodiversity in-line with the complex system of funding that underpins the programme.</p>

		Achievements dovetail with the NPA's monitoring processes and reporting cycle and will add value to existing core work (see key step 3.2).
7.2	Work more closely with the growing number of volunteers to develop our understanding of the changing state of nature.	Other Contributing Actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild Park – Volunteers, John Muir Award engagement and Land Manager Engagement (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.	No specific actions in this reporting period.
7.4	Publish a terrestrial habitat map for Scotland.	Not applicable