



Keeping our seas healthy, productive and diverse

Scottish Ministers have confirmed thirty new Nature Conservation Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) in Scotland's seas to conserve some of our most important marine wildlife, habitats and geodiversity.

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment, Richard Lochhead, announced the MPAs at the end of July. Scotland's seas "are among the richest in Europe", he said, adding that the MPAs will "enhance our marine environment so that it remains a prized asset for future generations."

The announcement is a significant milestone for our marine team who have worked closely with Marine Scotland and marine users, such as the fishing industry, to ensure that the way in which these MPAs have been selected is a model of best practice.

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Biodiversity conference

If you are interested in monitoring biodiversity change then make your way along to the 2014 Biodiversity Science Conference. Titled 'Protecting Scotland's Biodiversity: Monitoring in Action' it takes place on 2 and 3 October at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh.

The conference will focus on monitoring and understanding biodiversity change. Monitoring is at the heart of achieving the 2020 targets for Scotland's biodiversity and allows us to measure progress, target action and plan for the future.

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Medal Routes go mobile

The Commonwealth Games may be over, but work continues to deliver a long term physical activity legacy from the Games.

SNH is one of the funding partners for Medal Routes, a Ramblers Scotland initiative that really built up momentum in the run-up to the Games. Medal Routes provides information on local walking routes, and encourages people to progress from a 15-minute bronze medal route to the 60-minute gold medal route.

The recently launched Medal Routes app now allows you to find and walk hundreds of Medal Routes across the country using your mobile device. You will gain virtual medals for every walk that you complete and you can challenge your friends on a leader board. You can even create your own wonderful walking routes to share with the Medal Routes community online.

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Families celebrate at Tentsmuir

In July the popular Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve celebrated its 60th anniversary.

Over 160 children joined visitors celebrating the reserve's birthday. A host of activities were on offer including storytelling sessions, sand art and burying a time capsule complete with a range of SNH publications.

Tentsmuir National Nature Reserve came into being back in 1954 when the then Nature Conservancy Council purchased 92 acres of coastal land. By 1962 the reserve had been extended to 1249 acres and it hasn't looked back since.

In that time there has been continual change to the landscape and wildlife at Tentsmuir. From 1987 to 1998 almost 112 metres of dune were washed away, whilst 2013 saw the first pair of breeding sea eagles feeding around the reserve.

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New finds

The rare Irish Lady's Tresses Orchid has just been discovered on the island of Rum National Nature Reserve. Fifty two spikes of this nationally scarce species have been found in meadows near Kinloch Castle.

In Europe this small, attractive and easily overlooked orchid, with its distinctive spiral columns of white flowers, is only found at a few sites in western Scotland and Ireland. First recorded in Scotland in 1921, relatively little is known about its ecology, although it appears to like growing in damp, grazed pastures similar to the site on Rum.

The grounds of Battleby House near Perth have also produced a rarity; an insect species associated with deadwood. This latest find was the fly species *Homalocephala biumbratum* discovered by Graham Rotheray of the National Museums of Scotland, who identified the adults as they emerged.

This is the second time that Battleby House grounds have produced a rare deadwood insect; in 1998 Battleby was one of the sites at which a deadwood fly species new to science lists – *Palloptera anderssoni* – was discovered.

Ben Nevis survey

Climbers are taking part in the most detailed on Britain's highest mountain – Ben Nevis.

The mountain, and some of its satellite hills, provide exceptional habitats for rare arctic-alpine flora. The three-year initiative will involve 10 experienced climbers and two climbing botanists. They will conduct a roped-access botanical survey of the 125 hectares that make up the steep north face of the Ben.

These particular cliffs offer one of the few opportunities left in the British Isles to search for arctic-alpine species in locations that remain unexplored by scientists.



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Tarbh-shìolag na Mallachd!

'S iomadh snámhadair no neach-grunnachaidh ann am Breatainn is Èirinn a tha ann an cunnart as t-samhradh bho iasg puinnseanta a tha beò anns an tràigh-shìolag air na tràighean mòra gainmhich againn. Bidh an tarbh-shìolag beò anns a' ghainmhich, leis na trì biorain bheaga air a dhruim agus a dhà shùil na h-aon rudan a tha rim faicinn. Ma sheasas neach casruisgte air na biorain, bidh e a' fulang pian mòr airson grunn uairean a thide no eadhon làithean. 'S e uisge teth an aon thuasgladh oir tha am puinnsean na phròtain, ach thathar a' moladh brògan a bhith ort anns an tràigh-shìolag airson na biorain a sheachnadh buileach glan. Tha trì ainmean Gàidhlig eile air an iasg – tarbh-nimhe, nathair-ghainmhich agus bioran deamhnaidh. Chan eil gin dhiubh ga mholadh!

The lesser weever fish has four Gaelic names, all of which are distinctly unpraiseworthy. They translate approximately as 'bull of sandeels', 'poisonous bull', 'sand snake' and 'devilish spine'. The fish lies buried in the sand in the lowest part of the shoreline, and below low-water mark (the 'sandeel shore' in Gaelic) on sandy beaches, with only its eyes and dorsal spines exposed. If you stand on one without footwear, you will suffer intense pain that can last for hours, or even days. The poison is a protein which can be destroyed by pouring very hot water over the foot, but the best 'first-aid' is to wear shoes when swimming or paddling in the very lowest reaches of sandy beaches throughout the British Isles.

[Lugh tuilleadh / read more >>>](#)

NEWS IN BRIEF

– GREENSPACES GIVE US THE FEEL GOOD FACTOR : A new SNH report highlights key findings from surveys that relate to people's attitudes to greenspace in Scotland. The findings illustrate that people who regularly visit their local greenspace are more likely to feel healthy. However, the report also found that less than half of us visit our local greenspace or the wider outdoors once a week or more.

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– PEATLAND ACTION NOW : The last round of our Peatland ACTION scheme closes on 1 September. Funding is available for projects which restore, enhance and manage peatlands and the ecosystems services which they provide. If you have a project idea that you'd like to discuss please email peatlandaction@snh.gov.uk and a member of the team will get back to you.

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– MÌORBHAIL NAM BEANN / BLAS FESTIVAL : Scottish Natural Heritage has jointly commissioned a new version of Duncan Ban McIntyre's famous nature poem 'Moladh Beinn Dobhrain / In Praise of Ben Dorain'. The poem will be the focus of a new bi-lingual work using music, words and images to explore the relationships between the people, culture and nature. You can catch a performance on 5, 6, 8 or 9 September at Strathy, Eden Court Inverness, Lochcarron or Raasay respectively.

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