

OFFICIAL

# Biodiversity Report 2020



**POLICE**  
SCOTLAND  
Keeping people safe  
POILEAS ALBA

SCOTTISH POLICE  
AUTHORITY

# Introduction

Part 1 of the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 and Part 5 of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 require public bodies to provide a report every three years on the action they have taken to further the conservation of biodiversity in Scotland. In doing so, they should provide evidence by way of strategy and documentation and within the context of United Nations Environmental Programme Convention on Biological Diversity. Both Police Scotland and its governing body the Scottish Police Authority (SPA) are required to report on their respective organisations' performance in relation to Public Body Biodiversity Duty. For this particular report, Police Scotland reports publicly on both its own and the SPA's behalf with regard to this Duty.

## About the Scottish Police Authority

The Scottish Police Authority (SPA) has a statutory responsibility under the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012 to maintain and support the continuous improvement of policing in Scotland, and to ensure that Police Scotland is equipped to meet changing needs, expectations and demands both now and in the future. The Authority is also responsible for the delivery of Forensic Services to both policing and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, and for ensuring that its governance and corporate responsibilities are carried out to the standards expected of a major public body. The Authority is responsible for the estates and assets of policing and is the employer of all officers and staff - a workforce of more than 22,000 police officers and staff, with an annual budget of £1.1 billion. The SPA aims to increase public trust and confidence in the policing of Scotland in the way it carries out its functions and through the quality of its governance arrangements.

## About Police Scotland

By operational area, Police Scotland has the largest geographical coverage of any service in the UK, with responsibility for policing a landmass 78,772 km<sup>2</sup>. By number, Police Scotland is the 2nd largest force in UK with over 17,000 serving officers operating from over 200 locations across the country.

The mission of Police Scotland is contained within Section 32 of the Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012. The policing principles are that the main purpose of policing is to improve the safety and well-being of persons, localities and communities in Scotland, and that the Police Service, working in collaboration with others where appropriate, should seek to achieve that main purpose by policing in a way which is accessible to, and engaged with, local communities, and promotes measures to prevent crime, harm and disorder.

Our organisation's community-focused role within society ensures that our commitment to reducing our impacts on the environment, and the biodiversity within it, revolves around providing a safer and fairer society for current and future generations. We believe that embedding sustainable development within our practices, can ensure that future generations have access to the same, or more resources than are currently available. Additionally, the disparity between those who experience the impacts of the degradation, and those causing it, is against our organisations core values and we are focussed on addressing this.

# National context

## Scotland's natural capital

Scotland is a small country in terms of landmass but displays a variety in environmental features and conditions which is disproportionate to its size. We have 18,000 km of coast with unique environments. In addition we have over 700 islands located around our coast which are home to the majority of the seabird populations of Europe. We have expanses of prime agricultural land in the south west, central and north east areas of the mainland as well as upland grazing pasture, peatland, moorland and mountainous regions in the Grampians and West Highlands. Our climate is temperate with a moderate temperature variation throughout the year from average lows of 6°C in winter to average highs of 25°C in summer.

Scotland has 462,263 km<sup>2</sup> sea and ocean within its Exclusive Economic Zone limit. This is one of the most biologically productive marine zones in the world. However, over fishing, sea bed destruction through trawling and climate change has caused depletion of key fish stocks and destruction of cold water coral reefs.

The conditions of land, sea and climate as well as the marked influence of human activity has shaped the biodiversity of Scotland that we now see. In order to protect

our biodiversity we have established 1,422 Sites of special scientific interest. These sites are selected due to rare, unique or threatened status of the geology, flora and fauna and comprise about 12% of Scotland's landmass. We also have 75 Local Nature Reserves, 6 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, 2 National parks and 8,000 monuments of historic and natural heritage. Currently Police Scotland chair the Scottish Heritage Crime Group that has a remit to prevent damage to and protect Scotland's heritage and cultural property.

Police Scotland's relationship with and responsibility to the environment is professional; in terms of our stated operational responsibilities to prevent and detect crime, including wildlife and environmental crime. However, we also have an organisational responsibility in that we as a Scottish public body are mandated by law to conserve biodiversity, to act in as sustainable a way as possible and to report on our actions to do so. We are one of the few public sector organisations with a nationwide coverage and so our responsibility to protect biodiversity ranges across the total variety of different environments Scotland has. This means that we need to tailor our biodiversity work to meet the needs of specific habitats and species across the country.

# Our responsibilities towards biodiversity – operational

## Rural Crime

Police Scotland chairs the Scottish Partnership Against Rural Crime (SPARC), a multi-agency partnership involving 16 key and diverse organisations such as Scottish Government, Scottish Land & Estates, National Farmers Union (Scotland), Forestry Commission and Historic Environment Scotland. SPARC collectively works together to tackle rural crime, with particular interest to the ever-increasing threat posed by serious organised criminal gangs throughout Scotland. SPARC coordinates a strategically focused and sustained approach to empowering communities regardless of demographics and geographical location to ensure Scotland's rural communities and environments are safe places to live, work and visit. This includes activities such as providing crime prevention advice to those living, working and enjoying Scotland's rural communities and environments as well as support for intelligence gathering and enforcement activity.

In April 2019, SPARC launched a three year strategy to reduce the number and impact of rural crimes across 7 key themes.

These being

- Poaching and coursing
- Agricultural equipment theft
- Fuel theft
- Crimes against livestock
- Heritage crime
- Equestrian incidents
- Fly tipping

Whilst much of the above list relates to acquisitive crime; poaching, coursing and fly tipping have a direct impact on biodiversity of rural areas. Working in conjunction with Local Authorities we have developed local Partnership Against Rural Crime groups as a way of preventing these crimes from happening.

## Wildlife Crime

Wildlife Crime is any act that is made illegal in Scotland under legislation with regard to certain birds, animals and plants including their habitats, both on land and at sea. Wildlife Crime poses significant harm to the targeted species, as well as the communities who rely on these plants and animals for employment and tourism. Wildlife Crime attracts a high level of interest and concern from local and national communities, with the impacts of some crimes being far-reaching.

There are currently six specific Wildlife Crime priorities in Scotland (and in the UK):

1. Birds of prey (raptor) persecution
2. Badger persecution
3. Bat persecution
4. Freshwater Pearl Mussels exploitation
5. CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) (Illegal Trade)
6. Poaching and coursing

Whilst these are our priorities, Police Scotland also regularly combat a wider spectrum of wildlife crimes such as damage to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), disturbance of cetaceans, the illegal use of traps and snares, illegal taxidermy and illegal shellfish collection.

Police Scotland continues to work with a range of partner agencies to prevent and detect Wildlife Crimes. Police Scotland's National Portfolio Lead for Wildlife Crime is managed at Detective Chief Superintendent level from Specialist Crime Division. This individual is supported by a dedicated (full time) Detective Sergeant (who performs the role of Scottish Wildlife Crime Coordinator) and a Detective Constable (funded directly by the Scottish Government).

Each Local Policing Division has its own Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer (WCLO). WCLOs work closely with the core Specialist Crime team. They have responsibility for coordinating local operational activity and act as a single point of contact for partners. WCLOs receive training in key legislation and are relied upon to provide colleagues with specialist advice and assistance.

Police Scotland's continuing commitment to tackling Wildlife Crime can be further evidenced by the long-term secondment of officers to the National Wildlife Crime Unit and the Loch Lomond & Trossachs National Park, respectively.

# End Wildlife Crime.

**Keep your eyes open;  
report any suspicious activity.**



**For more information on how to report Wildlife Crime  
visit [www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)**

 @PoliceScotland  PoliceScotland



## Environmental Crime

Police Scotland works with a range of agencies in investigating incidents of environmental crime committed on Scottish land. This extends beyond fly tipping to deliberate or accidental releases of toxic substances into the environment by individuals or organisations. These are obviously serious crimes that can have

extremely damaging consequences for the health and wellbeing of humans and well as other organisms in the affected area. Through working with the Scottish Environmental Protection Agency, we will identify and advocate for the prosecution of anyone or any organisations that commits these crimes.

# Our responsibilities towards biodiversity - organisational

In addition to its statutory responsibilities to prevent and detect environmental crime, Police Scotland recognises its own responsibility to the environment and biodiversity as set out in law. The following provides an overview of the work that is being undertaken by the organisation to improve conserve and improve biodiversity on its own land and across the wider environment.

## Work already underway at our Mounted Branch (Blairfield Farm)

### Hedgerows

The majority of hedgerows onsite are unmanaged and are made up of a variety of woody species providing an ideal habitat for nesting birds and other wildlife. The hedgerows also provide shelter and nesting opportunities for both woodland and farmland birds and act as an important wildlife corridor, helping animals travel safely through neighbouring farmland.

### Natural Land

We have set aside an area of land that is left unmanaged so that it can enable the establishment and colonisation of a variety of native animal and plant species, including tall grasses, wildflowers and tussock grasses. This set aside land provides a vital habitat and food source for many insects and small mammals.



### Ponds

Within the set aside area of land we have a pond that is made up of shallow margins, which provide a vital habitat for various plant and animal species. Its distance from the main buildings ensures wildlife can thrive and the pond provides the perfect habitat for amphibians, such as frogs and newts, as well as a variety of aquatic plants. Additionally, the pond attracts many insects, such as water skimmers and dragonflies, which provide a valuable food source for local wildlife



We are actively looking for opportunities to further enhance the biodiversity at Blairfield Farm through a number of actions, including changing our plant and land management practices to prioritise the conservation of species, habitats and food sources for wildlife. We are also looking to adopt some new good practice conservation activities, such as setting up wildlife stacks which create new habitats to support onsite species. We are also looking for opportunities to attract new species to the site through the addition of man-made habitats, such as bird boxes and bat boxes, on and around site buildings.

## Strategic Work

Police Scotland is in the process of developing its new Environmental Sustainability Strategy. This Strategy will set out the work we intend to undertake to reduce our own environmental impact through reduction in resource use, energy and waste production. In doing so we will assist in the national effort to improve our global and national environments which in turn will help to conserve biodiversity.

Our new Strategy will also include plans for conservation and improvement of biodiversity on our own premises and we will publish further information on this in the coming year. This will take the form of a policy statement on biodiversity that will state the following

- Our responsibility to biodiversity on our own land as well as the wider Scottish environment
- A range of practical measures across our sites that we will implement over the phase of the policy
- A commitment to raise awareness and knowledge of staff and the communities we serve
- A commitment to report on our biodiversity work in conjunction with our other internal reporting processes
- Key performance indicators that will evidence that our work is having a positive impact on biodiversity.

## Practical work

As part of our strategic approach we intend to establish a network of green champions and leaders across our workforce. We envisage that these colleagues will oversee a range of environmental projects relevant to their particular locations. We intend to work with them on improving biodiversity through small site based projects including the following:

### Audit and evaluation

- Biodiversity audit of our sites – our sites are located across the country from Shetland to Coldstream. These different environments will play host to different plants and animals. By undertaking an audit of flora and fauna we can begin to understand how we can support and improve local species diversity in the short and long term.

### Species and habitat conservation

- Bird boxes – installing bird boxes can help provide shelter and protection to small garden birds in winter and during nesting seasons. In addition to this, providing appropriate food can also help birds survive winter seasons.
- Insect hotels – can provide habitat for insects, particularly in more sterile environments such as paved grounds or car parks. This can help to re-establish insect colonies, providing a food source for birds, small mammals and larger insects.
- Bee hives – establishing beehives across our sites can help to protect these pollinator species that are in decline across the world. We will work with local experts to establish hives and provide training in order to for us to maintain these in-house long-term.
- Hedgehog protection – we will take steps to provide safer habitats for hedgehogs by establishing hedgehog houses and changes to how we maintain our grounds.

- Red squirrel protection – in our locations where red squirrels are present, we will work with relevant agencies to assist in their protection and also help by establishing plants and trees that provide food sources.
- Wildflower meadows – where possible, we will plant wildflower gardens with native plant species to help sustain pollinating species such as bees and butterflies.
- Tree planting/preservation – we will undertake tree planting schemes where possible on our own land and also as part of wider community projects that are currently underway.
- Sponsoring species – we will use our charitable and volunteer work to provide resource to other groups involved in preserving species and habitat in Scotland and beyond.

### Grounds maintenance

- Exotic species control and removal – we will review our control of exotic species on our grounds and take action to control or remove these plants where necessary. This includes, giant hogweed and rhododendron. Japanese knotweed is dealt with separately as a controlled waste.
- Hedgerows – establishing and maintaining hedgerows to provide cover, foraging and travel corridors for animals.
- Compost bins – implement compost bins to use our own organic waste as fertiliser for our grounds.
- Litter picks – Litter is classed as environmental blight and presents a danger to wildlife by being mistaken for food or causing animals to become entangled and physically harmed by it. In addition litter may also damage and pollute plants and soil as it decomposes. We will establish regular litter picks on our land and in the communities we serve to help reduce these threats to biodiversity.

### Awareness and Communication

Awareness raising and communication will be a key feature of our new Environmental Strategy and so will be part of how we encourage staff to participate in our activities related to biodiversity. We will do this in the following ways:

- Small Action – Big Impact campaign – our on-going campaign will be used to raise the profile of our biodiversity work by creating branded information, roadshows and targeted events.
- Green network – we will establish a network of volunteers across our sites and depts. who are keen to identify and/or implement biodiversity projects as well as provide updates on these projects.
- Police Scotland intranet – will be used to highlight our work and encourage further uptake from staff.
- 3rd party networks – we will work with our partners in all sectors to gain and share knowledge about improving the biodiversity of the land that we manage and the wider environment.
- Reporting – we will include information on our biodiversity activity within our established reporting system as well as in our annual Climate Change Report.

## Monitoring

This aspect of our work will be included in our overall monitoring and reporting system for our Environmental Sustainability Strategy. This process will be based on the ISO 14001 Standard for monitoring reporting of Plan – Do – Check – Act. Please see below.



