



Scottish
Environment
LINK



A Manifesto for Nature and Climate

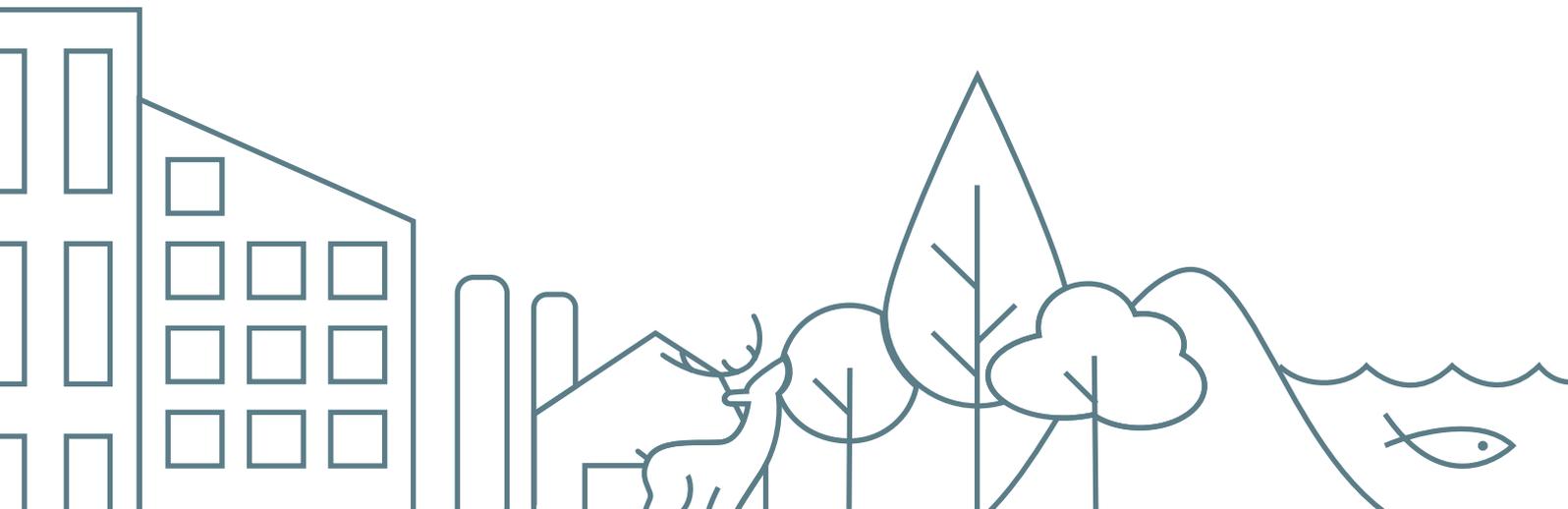


A Manifesto for Nature and Climate

Nature is in crisis. Human activity is driving dramatic declines in wildlife and habitats at rates never seen before. The impacts of climate change are also increasing the pace of change. The scale and urgency of what is required to deliver real improvements for people and nature mean we need to see bold ambition from Scotland's decision makers.

At the same time the Covid-19 crisis has revealed nature's importance as a lifeline for many, sustaining people's wellbeing during the most challenging of times. Scotland's global image has long been based on its stunning environments and iconic wildlife - this has been brought home with new appreciation for many during lockdown, along with abrupt changes that revealed unequal access to nature across society. There is common agreement that the 'old normal' wasn't working for many of us - or the environment - and there is a clear demand for a transformational green recovery from the pandemic that builds a prosperous economy centered around people and nature. Investing in nature can be a solution; improving people's wellbeing while sustaining our planet for future generations.

This election is vital. It will put in place the Scottish Government and Parliament that need to take us halfway to meeting Scotland's ambitious 2030 climate target as well as taking effective steps to drive nature's recovery.





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The next Scottish Government must commit to delivering:



A Nature Network for Scotland

delivering bigger, better, more joined up sites for nature and creating links for wildlife and habitats. The way we currently manage land is squeezing wildlife and habitats into smaller, fragmented patches. A Nature Network is a strategic, long term approach to manage, restore and enhance Scotland's landscapes by joining up and expanding areas protected for nature while delivering co-benefits for people, for example through green corridors and enhancing nature-rich greenspaces in our towns and cities.



An ambitious Environment Act

that includes legally-binding targets for nature's recovery. Ambitious legislation is needed to set targets to clean up our air, soils, seas and rivers, with policies to deliver the recovery of Scotland's natural habitats and to increase biodiversity. The next Scottish Government must also take steps to enshrine the human right to a healthy and safe environment in legislation.



A plan for ocean recovery

where at least 30% of Scotland's seas are highly protected (of which at least a third is fully protected) from extractive activities by 2030, with new policies and legislation where necessary underpinning a world-leading climate and nature-friendly fishing industry. This should include binding targets to end over-fishing, eliminate bycatch and setting a presumption against trawling and dredging in a significant part of Scotland's inshore water.



Sufficient funding to address the nature and climate emergency.

Scotland's publicly-funded environment agencies and research institutes need increased funding to investigate, understand, advise and provide evidence on ways to enhance Scotland's environmental protections, while new models to leverage private investment are required for a green recovery.



Legislation and policies to decarbonise and build a Circular Economy

with large-scale investment to meet climate targets and restore nature, moving beyond the 'take-make-waste' economic model and focusing on reducing our environmental impact including tackling single-use plastics.



Future farming with nature at its heart

and funding arrangements to support this. All farmers, crofters and land managers should contribute to achieving the protection, restoration and enhancement of Scotland's biodiversity and landscapes by 2030 through a new post-EU subsidy system. New legislation must be brought forward in the next Parliament to set up a new funding system for farmers, crofters and land managers to underpin climate- and nature-friendly farming with sustainable business and community benefits.



Protections for our peatlands,

including implementing a ban on peat extraction and sale for horticultural use, as well as a ban on burning of peatlands. We support the introduction of a licensing regime for muirburn in Scotland's uplands during the next parliament.



Regional Land Use Frameworks by 2023,

with input from a wide range of stakeholders to set out regional land use priorities and funding requirements.



A new Deer (Scotland) Act

to bring deer management into the 21st century, making the most of Parliament's powers to manage unsustainable numbers and contribute to meeting climate and nature goals.



At least 50% of all woodland expansion with native species

and at least 10% delivered through natural regeneration. The expansion and restoration of Scotland's native woodland provides a route to decreasing carbon emissions while providing long-term positive outcomes for nature.



An end to wildlife crime

by fully resourcing a full-time Wildlife Crime Investigation Unit within Police Scotland to investigate wildlife persecution and enforce protections.



Protections for our freshwater habitats and species,

including by limiting development on floodplains to give more space for our rivers and coasts to move naturally and regenerate habitats.

To read the full Scottish Environment LINK manifesto please visit:

<https://www.scotlink.org/publication/manifesto-2021/>

Scottish Environment LINK is the forum for Scotland's voluntary environment community, with 40 member bodies representing a broad spectrum of environmental interests with the common goal of contributing to a more environmentally sustainable society.

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Registered Headquarters:
13 Marshall Place, Perth, PH2 8AH

Advocacy Office:
Dolphin House, 4 Hunter Square, Edinburgh, EH1 1QW

