



7 September 2023

CATTLE JOIN NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND TEAM AT BEN LAWERS FOR CONSERVATION PROJECT

- **Cattle introduced as part of conservation grazing project to improve habitats and biodiversity.**
- **The National Nature Reserve, near Loch Tay, Perthshire, will host a herd of 28 Luing cattle.**
- **Conservation grazing supported by NatureScot which has funded the trial project at the National Nature Reserve**

A herd of 28 pedigree cattle has joined the National Trust for Scotland team at Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve as part of a trial project to improve the habitats and biodiversity of this important landscape.

The group of Luing cattle has temporarily set up home on the nature reserve at Ben Lawers, one of eight National Nature Reserves cared for by the conservation charity, as part of the trial taking place over the summer. The reserve near Loch Tay, Perthshire, is protected and shared by the National Trust for Scotland to provide access to nature, beauty and heritage for everyone.

The cattle, owned by local farmers Peter and Maj McDiarmid, have established themselves on the lower slopes of Beinn Ghlas, and will be closely monitored throughout the trial, which uses GPS technology in the animal's collars to help the team manage where they graze at the reserve.

Helen Cole, National Trust for Scotland Property Manager at Ben Lawers, said: "We are thrilled to welcome the cattle to the National Nature Reserve here at Ben Lawers and are excited at the prospect of seeing the effect their grazing has on designated habitats on this highly significant reserve.

"By using GPS collars, we can target where the cattle graze in the hope this will not only benefit open habitats but also promote natural regeneration of mountain woodland and scrub which we have been restoring here for over 30 years. The cattle churn up the soil as they move around the reserve which encourages seed dispersal and natural regeneration of the different plant species that call this special place home."

The project aligns with the National Trust for Scotland's vision to provide access to nature, beauty and heritage for everyone, outlined in our strategy that was launched in

2022. Conservation grazing supports its goals to improve the condition of its estate and enable nature to flourish.

Helen continued: "We are incredibly grateful that this project has received over £113k in funding from the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund, managed by NatureScot, to enable us to carry out this work. This funding alongside additional support from players of People's Postcode Lottery and the continued generosity of our members and supporters, enables us to continue to care for, protect and share Scotland's natural heritage now and for future generations to enjoy."

NatureScot funding has enabled the Trust to leverage further support from its supporters including People's Postcode Lottery, whose players have now raised a total of over £2.5m for the National Trust for Scotland to support its work to enrich and protect Scotland's natural heritage, since 2014.

The Ben Lawers conservation grazing project follows a similar approach used by a successful project at the Trust's Threave Estate in Castle Douglas, near Dumfries. As part of the Threave Landscape Restoration Project, the team used the same pioneering GPS technology to monitor and remotely track their cattle activity via smartphone to reduce the chance of over-grazing.

The conservation project at Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve is one of many projects contributing to the National Trust for Scotland's 10-year *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone* strategy, launched in 2022. The project supports its conservation objectives, to stabilise and improve the condition of its estate, enable nature to flourish and enrich Scotland's protected heritage.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland and the National Nature Reserves in its care, visit www.nts.org.uk.

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Editor's notes:

About the National Trust for Scotland

Established in 1931, the National Trust for Scotland is Scotland's largest conservation charity and cares for, shares and speaks up for Scotland's magnificent heritage.

Over the last 90 years the Trust has pioneered public access to and shared ownership of some of the most magnificent buildings, collections and landscapes in Scotland. It cares for more than 100 sites, from ancient houses to battlefields, castles, mills, gardens, coastlines, islands, mountain ranges and the plants and animals which depend upon them.

In March 2022 the National Trust for Scotland launched *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, its ten-year strategy which sets out the ambitions of the charity over the coming decade. From speaking up for Scotland's heritage which doesn't have a voice, to

improving the lives and wellbeing of people across the country, and responding to the climate and biodiversity crisis, the Trust will build on its work in recent years to grow its impact and conserve and restore more of Scotland's heritage, as it moves towards its centenary in 2031.

Scotland's largest membership organisation, the National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work.

For more information on the National Trust for Scotland visit www.nts.org.uk.

The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.