

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 12 OCTOBER 2021

Image one (© National Trust for Scotland) Raleigh International Re:Green volunteers and image two (© Dave Ashton) rare Northern Emerald dragonfly, where high res versions can be downloaded here: <https://we.tl/t-jWJVwCHccF>



Conservation charity anticipates a flutter from rare dragonfly project

The National Trust for Scotland has created a new habitat at Balmacara Estate in Wester Ross which will allow the rare Northern Emerald dragonfly to flourish.

The conservation charity's team at Balmacara Estate and its Highland Conservation Volunteers donned their wellies last week, in partnership with Raleigh International Re:Green volunteers to dig out several bog pools at Loch Achaidh na h-Inich.

The Northern Emerald dragonfly (*Somatochlora arctica*) has been spotted breeding on the estate at one remaining pool and the addition of new bog pools will provide new habitat for the species population to expand into.

Prior to digging, the conservation charity's Senior Natural Heritage Advisor Jeff Waddell surveyed Collie Mhor Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) to determine the best location for the pools. The rare Northern Emerald has specific habitat requirements, including acid peat bog pools and floating sphagnum moss to allow them to breed successfully.

Jeff explained: "It was fun, productive and rewarding to work with National Trust for Scotland volunteers to create some much-needed breeding pools for the rare Northern Emerald dragonfly at the Trust's Balmacara property last week. Without this work, its habitat would disappear here, as

natural processes mean the fen would become covered in trees and too dry for the species to breed causing it to become extinct at this site. This wetland habitat is part of a site of special scientific interest designated as a safe haven for these amazing insects.

“A huge thanks to NatureScot for permitting this work, British Dragonfly Society for advice and for all the volunteers that support the Trust’s vital nature conservation programmes.”

The volunteer groups used an assortment of hand tools, spades and colanders to dig out and clean the pools, working through all weathers to create the perfect habitat for this rare species to flourish.

During the next stage of the project, the Trust will closely monitor the pools over the next few seasons where surveys will be conducted to determine whether Northern Emeralds are occupying the new habitat, and if there are any signs of breeding.

The National Trust for Scotland preserves and maintains many of the country’s most loved places and spaces. For more information on National Trust for Scotland projects and properties, visit www.nts.org.uk.

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Editor’s Notes:

The National Trust for Scotland is the conservation charity that over 90 years has saved, maintained, and shared many of the country’s most loved places, rich with history, heritage, nature, and culture. The charity celebrates Scotland’s heritage and with almost 100 places in its care, there’s a place for everyone to love.

The National Trust for Scotland relies on the support of its members and donors to carry out its important work of caring for the natural and built heritage that people from Scotland and across the world all love, ensuring its future for everyone to enjoy.

From coastlines to castles, art to architecture, wildlife to wildernesses, the National Trust for Scotland protects the national and natural treasures we all love. Support the National Trust for Scotland and help them protect the places we all love Become a member at www.nts.org.uk.

We would be grateful if, when referring to the National Trust for Scotland that our name is not shortened to ‘the National Trust’. We are an independent organisation, separate from the National Trust. The National Trust for Scotland is commonly shortened to NTS or ‘the Trust’.



Raleigh International

Raleigh International exist to ignite youth-led action that creates solutions to the world’s most urgent problems. They support young people by connecting them with the skills, networks,

platforms and experiences to lead action on the change they demand. For more information please visit: raleighinternational.org.