

**NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE**

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**INVEREWE GARDEN FIND CAUSES A FLUTTER**

It draws visitors from all over the world but the National Trust for Scotland's famous Inverewe Garden has attracted a very special caller - a Scallop Shell moth. Rare to Scotland, the moth has been found for the first time on the Trust's 54-acre Wester Ross property which is a haven for a host of other wildlife.

The Scallop Shell was identified by local biologist and county moth recorder, Dr Barry Blake, who has worked with the trust since 2011 to survey and learn about the value of Inverewe to moth conservation.

Prior to 1970 the Scallop Shell moth had been recorded only in two areas of Scotland, in Tayside and near Edinburgh. However experts believe the species is on the move northwards, likely to be as a result of climate change.

The first record for Wester Ross was in 2016 when a Scallop Shell moth was found in the wooded grounds of a Gairloch hotel, the most northerly sighting to date. In 2020, a further four were recorded, one from the same hotel and the other three from a garden in Gairloch. And this year, five specimens were logged - including the very first for the Inverewe Estate.

All the sites have the damp woodland and scrub environment favoured by the species. The Trust is delighted that the garden and estate, which it carefully manages on behalf of the nation, is playing such an important role in biodiversity and is now home to the beautiful Scallop Shell. The intricately patterned moth features an array of thin, zig-zagging lines across its wings, resembling the ruffled shell of the mollusc after which it is named.

Martin Hughes, Operations Manager at Inverewe and Corrieshalloch Gorge, said: "It's fascinating to see new species discover the wonderful diverse habitat that is Inverewe. A huge thank you to Barry Blake for his hard work and diligence. Recording changes in the habitat at Inverewe is invaluable as we face the challenges of climate change."

The estate's diversity encourages a wide range of species of moth, favouring both the cultivated areas and the more natural habitats. During the period that Dr Blake has been monitoring at Inverewe, a number of interesting and locally scarce species have been recorded including the Coast Dart and V-pug.

The estate also supports species considered nationally vulnerable such as Anomalous and Garden Tiger. In the last 50 years the overall abundance of moths in the UK has decreased by around 33 per cent. The decline, which is reflected in many other insect species, is a major cause for concern given their vital role in pollination.

Experts believe the varied and well-managed habitats of Inverewe Gardens and the wider 2,000-acre estate will offer a haven for many range-changing moth species over the coming years, helping to contribute to understanding these migrations.

**ENDS**

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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.

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