

**MEDIA RELEASE: NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND
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Learn to love nature's little pests **Charity highlights how midges can help Scottish wildlife flourish**

Midges are the biting beastie with a reputation for being a real pest for campers, hillwalkers and picnics in the park. With midges in season over the summer months, and the female biting midges arriving in June, there's no avoiding them and experts at a conservation charity are calling on people to appreciate these small flies for the important role they play in Scotland's ecosystem.

Rule Anderson works for the National Trust for Scotland as a Ranger at Kintail, West Affric and the Falls of Glomach. Rule comes face to face with swarms of midges every day and he's learned to love the insect for the crucial role they play in the food chain – here, he explains why he's hoping for a summer full of sunshine and midges.

“At no bigger than 1mm to 2mm, these teensy insects could go unseen if it wasn't for their swarming. They swarm in their millions and provide an important food supply for spiders, fish, other predatory insects, pipistrelle bats and birds such as swallows.

“Plants also benefit from midge season with species like the insectivorous sundew and butterwort trapping the insect inside with their sticky glands and leaves, which allows them to decompose and provide nutrients for the plants.

“Cold weather keeps midges at bay and they don't take flight during heavy rain or wind, meaning that when we have prolonged spells of bad weather – there can be a disastrous consequence on the species that heavily rely on them.

“I'm as wary of the dreaded midge as the next person – but for the sake of our wildlife, I'll have my midge hood to hand, in the hope that this summer is a buzzing one.”

The Scottish Highlands offers Scotland's wildest countryside experience with exceptional mountain scenery with sharp mountain peaks, lochs and glens. The Trust cares for the landscape at Kintail, West Affric and Falls of Glomach which offer the chance to explore the great outdoors and discover wildlife. The Trust is urging anyone planning to visit to check the latest opening information on www.nts.org.uk before travelling, as some properties have different opening patterns this summer.

The website also contains information for visitors on the safety measure that will be in place for visits - <https://www.nts.org.uk/stories/what-to-expect-when-visiting-our-places>.

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Notes to Editors

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'.