



NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND MEDIA RELEASE

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IMAGE – *Rhododendron ponticum* at Fyvie Castle, Aberdeenshire: <https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/EL8k8d>

PROJECT WIPEOUT COMES TO THE NORTH EAST OF SCOTLAND

The National Trust for Scotland's effort to eradicate invasive plants is focusing on the North East of Scotland this autumn.

A team of contractors are removing *Rhododendron ponticum*, a non-native species which has been starting get out of control on the conservation charity's historic estates of Aberdeenshire, crowding out other plant species. Traditionally grown as cover for game birds such as pheasant and partridge, the plants are out-growing their original intention.

The removal work is part of Project Wipeout, the conservation charity's push to eradicate invasive plants, including Japanese Knotweed, American Skunk Cabbage and *Rhododendron ponticum*, at a number of its sites across Scotland, and is funded by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Work has initially focused in the North and West of Scotland where the largest areas of this plant tends to dominate. Now attention has turned to other parts of the country, with activity starting in Aberdeenshire. The first two properties that will be targeted are Crathes and Fyvie. It is hoped that the project will give native woodland flora the chance to flourish once again, as well as removing this invasive plant as it has started to dominate in certain places.

Chris Wardle, Gardens and Designed Landscape Manager for Aberdeenshire and Angus said: "The North East is known for its magnificent castles and estates but unfortunately *Rhododendron ponticum*, although pretty, brings with it a host of problems from pushing out native wildlife to harbouring certain diseases. It is starting to become dominant in certain locations. By removing it we are doing our bit for natural habitats as well as protecting the wider landscapes and woodlands to ensure they are great resources for nature, as well as recreation for our members and supporters."

He added: "As the climate changes and shifts, now is the time to act to avoid larger problems in the future."

Head of Charities at People's Postcode Lottery Laura Chow said: "It's fantastic that players of People's Postcode Lottery are supporting the National Trust for Scotland's important work to protect and restore Scotland's native species, making them great habitats for wildlife and beautiful places for people too."

Project Wipeout covers National Trust for Scotland sites spanning Scotland - from Brodie Castle near Inverness to Culzean Country Park in Ayrshire.

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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 more than 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.

Support the National Trust for Scotland and help them protect the places we all love. Become a member at www.nts.org.uk.

People's Postcode Lottery

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