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PROSPECT OF PROTECTING NATURAL HERITAGE HELPS NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND STRENGTHEN ITS TEAM

- **Seasonal rangers, an ecologist and a seabird and marine ranger will enhance National Trust for Scotland's conservation work at eight National Nature Reserves**
- **Funding raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery helps conservation charity to employ and retain staff with the knowledge and expertise to assist with conservation projects**
- **People's Postcode Lottery Love Our Nature project confirmed support for 2023/24 for National Trust for Scotland conservation projects**

A strong desire to protect Scotland's landscapes and wildlife and a natural affinity to the places in its care has conservation specialists coming back year on year to help the National Trust for Scotland in its mission to provide nature, beauty and heritage for everyone.

Vital projects undertaken by Scotland's largest conservation charity at its eight National Nature Reserves (NNR) will benefit from the prior knowledge and experience of staff, including seasonal rangers, an ecologist and seabird and marine ranger, who are returning to the National Trust for Scotland for its summer season, with eight seasonal conservation roles supported with funding from the Love Our Nature project by People's Postcode Lottery.

The staff, both returning and new recruits, will advance the charity's species monitoring, habitat restoration and regeneration work, that is made possible thanks to generous supporters, alongside additional funding from Postcode Earth Trust, thanks to players of People's Postcode Lottery, who have now raised more than £1.1 billion for thousands of charities and local good causes. This includes 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.

Funding from the Love Our Nature project by People's Postcode Lottery has been confirmed for 2023/24 that will support conservation and infrastructure projects such as new footpaths and interpretation at Corrieshalloch Gorge, improved monitoring and research equipment for studying seabird colonies on St Kilda, and a new boat at St Abb's Head to enhance seabird and seal monitoring, in addition to supporting conservation roles. This funding has also enabled the Trust to unlock and receive funding from a wider supporter base, for which it is very grateful.

The ability to contribute to the National Trust for Scotland's seasonal conservation work is an important motivation for returning staff members. Seabird and Marine Ranger Craig Nisbet returns to St Kilda for his third season on the distant islands, after working in the rather more exotic climes of the Seychelles. Craig said: "My work on St Kilda for the National Trust for Scotland is massively inspiring and living in this incredible location is an honour and a privilege. Seabird conservation has never been as important as it is now, with our populations facing multiple threats to their survival, most notably as a result of the recent avian influenza outbreak internationally. Playing a part in developing a greater understanding of these threats will help to improve conservation measures that can be taken to benefit seabird populations now, and in the future."

Lewis Donaghy will be lending his expertise to plant life monitoring at Ben Lawers after monitoring mountain flora and fauna in Corrour for the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland and tree planting for the Knoydart Forest Trust. Lewis commented: "Having worked previously as the Seasonal Ecologist at Ben Lawers in 2021, I wanted to continue my career in conservation and ecology at the National Trust for Scotland. It puts conserving and improving its properties at the forefront of what it does, and I was excited to work for an organisation that protects landscapes to better serve wildlife and people. Botany is my main interest and being offered this role provides an opportunity to develop this passion even further, through studying and monitoring the rare mountain plants. The job focuses on conservation efforts, and I have a strong desire to contribute to them and hope that I can provide information that will help to sustain and grow the rare mountain assemblage of plants in this incredible location."

Jordanna Kitching returns to St Abb's Head in her role as Engagement Ranger to build engagement with local schools and assist with wildlife monitoring, after spending time at the rugged coastal headland nature reserve in 2022. Jordanna said: "The National Trust for Scotland is an inclusive and supportive organisation that fosters positive change, and I am motivated by this to inspire others to interact positively with the world around them. I am so excited to be returning to St Abb's Head and this season promises to be jam packed with an exciting range of events and outreach activities that aim to share the amazing nature, wildlife and history that we have at the reserve with the public."

Alongside Craig, Sue Loughran continues her role as Ranger on St Kilda. James McGurk joins Lewis, continuing his role as Seasonal Ranger at Ben Lawers after working at St Abb's Head during the winter months. Engagement ranger Lindsay Warner continues in her role at Glencoe while Emily Wilkins continues as Ranger on the island Staffa, joined by new member of staff Louise King – all thanks to the support provided by players of People's Postcode Lottery.

Philip Long OBE, Chief Executive of the National Trust for Scotland, said: "We're grateful for the continued, generous support for our conservation charity by players of People's Postcode Lottery who have helped support a wide variety of important conservation projects at our places since 2014. From the eradication of invasive plant species to managing biosecurity of seabird colonies on our remote islands, our charity's work has been greatly enhanced by this additional funding and has helped leverage further

support from our donors, as well as vital funding from our members and wider supporters to protect and care for our country's natural heritage across the length and breadth of Scotland.

"We have worked tirelessly to help improve biodiversity and reduce the impacts of climate change for the wildlife that call our National Nature Reserves home, from the seabirds on the distant island archipelago of St Kilda, 41 miles off the coast of the Outer Hebrides, to the seals on the beach under the rugged coastal headland of St Abb's Head, near the Scottish border. We are incredibly proud of the work we have done so far but there is still much more to be done. People's Postcode Lottery's Love Our Nature project, supports our vision outlined in our 10-year strategy to provide access to nature, beauty and heritage, for everyone, and helps us achieve our conservation objectives, to stabilise and improve the condition of our estate, enable nature to flourish and enrich Scotland's protected heritage."

Head of Charities at [People's Postcode Lottery](#), Laura Chow, said: "We're thrilled that our players are able to support the return of experienced seasonal staff to continue the crucial conservation work taking place at the National Trust for Scotland's National Nature Reserves. These spectacular locations are key in the efforts to tackle the climate crisis by safeguarding the natural habitats of wildlife and the flora and fauna for future generations to enjoy."

The Love Our Nature project supports the National Trust for Scotland's vision to deliver Nature, Beauty and Heritage for Everyone. The project is one of many contributing to its 10-year strategy, launched in 2022, and 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 or 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.