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**RARE ‘ARCTIC WAVE DANCER’ FLY DISCOVERED DANCING ON THE EDGES OF MAR LODGE ESTATE**

* **One of Britain’s rarest species has been discovered at the National Trust for Scotland’s Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve.**
* **The endangered fly species *Wiedemannia simplex*, or Arctic Wave Dancer, named for its lochside courtship displays, is found on just three sites in the Cairngorms and nowhere else in the UK.**
* **The Arctic Wave Dancer is a research priority species in the Trust’s Plan for Nature.**

The National Trust for Scotland team at Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve is celebrating the discovery of a rare and threatened fly species affectionately known as the Arctic Wave Dancer (*Wiedemmania simplex*) at a new site on the reserve.

This tiny ice age relic can only develop in cold, deep, and pure water, making the Cairngorms’ high-altitude lochs a suitable home for the species. During its short adult life span in the summer months, it can be found clinging to the verges of rocks and displaying its unique courtship dance and waterproof abilities against the waves lapping against lochside boulders. A search for the species by entomologist Iain MacGowan, Entomology Research Associate at the National Museums of Scotland, and Trust staff in July 2024 found the Arctic Wave Dancer dancing on the edges of Lochain Uaine and its granite boulders, 950m high in the shadow of Ben Macdui, where it has never been recorded before.

The three lochs in the Cairngorms, two of which are on the conservation charity’s Mar Lodge Estate, are the only known sites for the Arctic Wave Dancer in the UK, with its next nearest populations in the arctic regions of Finland, Norway and Russia. The species was initially rediscovered by Iain MacGowan at Loch Avon in 2018 and in 2020 it was discovered for the first time by MacGowan at Loch Etchachan on the Mar Lodge Estate.

Due to the specific cold water temperatures required for the species to thrive, the Arctic Wave Dancer is one of the species most at risk from climate change and is one of the Trust’s research priority species in its [Plan for Nature](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nts.org.uk%2Fwhat-we-do%2Fwildlife%2Fplan-for-nature&data=05%7C02%7Ccommunications%40nts.org.uk%7Ca39dc2f0f3744bf2182d08dd518d41a6%7C36fd58d4efb342ec8c476b59854eddae%7C0%7C0%7C638756389368225907%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=m2dfWX%2Bti%2FWXZjDlvDKstRQug44c90JEv%2BHth9iOCjU%3D&reserved=0). This discovery highlights the range of habitats and species in its care and highlights its role in protecting and conserving wildlife in the country’s changing natural environment, through targeted conservation efforts, including habitat restoration and monitoring programmes.

Andrew Painting, the National Trust for Scotland’s Conservation Officer at the Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve, said: “The Arctic Wave Dancer lives in about as remote and challenging an environment as you can find in Scotland, so finding it at a new site was a wonderful surprise, and is a testament to the hard work and skill of dedicated entomologists like Iain MacGowan. Our charity is responsible for protecting the nature in our care and the discovery of one of Britain’s rarest species at Mar Lodge Estate is evidence of nature’s resilience and the importance of our conservation work. Every species we protect is a step towards safeguarding Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage for everyone.”

Entomologist Iain MacGowan said: “Although it's small, this fly is of enormous importance to the Cairngorms and the wider British Isles. Living on only a few of the high-altitude lochs, it is on the front line when it comes to meeting the challenge of climate change. Finding it at its highest-level site, 950m at Lochan Uaine, will hopefully ensure that the populations will be better able to withstand the effects of a warming climate. We must continue to monitor this iconic species and carry out further surveys of other potential sites.”

Launched in 2024, the Trust’s Plan for Nature outlines its ambitions for conserving the nature in its care and will play an important part in delivering government commitments for nature, including the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy, and tackling the nature and climate crises.

The Plan for Nature supports the National Trust for Scotland’s vision to provide access and enjoyment of Scotland’s nature, beauty and heritage for everyone, as outlined in its 10-year strategy, launched in 2022. For more information about the Mar Lodge Estate National Nature Reserve, visit the [National Trust for Scotland](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.nts.org.uk%2Fvisit%2Fplaces%2Fmar-lodge-estate&data=05%7C02%7Ccommunications%40nts.org.uk%7Ca39dc2f0f3744bf2182d08dd518d41a6%7C36fd58d4efb342ec8c476b59854eddae%7C0%7C0%7C638756389368239939%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiIwLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMiIsIkFOIjoiTWFpbCIsIldUIjoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=YnBgHsj89bXDBfFkxS6mmDvOwOLg6ExKeJ6Bw1TZZrg%3D&reserved=0) website.

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**Editor’s Notes:**

**Images:** [https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740@N04/v95mWcFaE9](https://www.flickr.com/gp/133918740%40N04/v95mWcFaE9)

**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](http://www.nts.org.uk/). The National Trust for Scotland is a charity registered in Scotland, Charity Number SC 007410.