



10 July

## TRESHNISH ISLES JOIN NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND

Conservation charity the National Trust for Scotland has confirmed today that the Treshnish Isles have joined the portfolio of special places in its care.

The Treshnish Isles are a group of eight uninhabited islands and many more skerries, located in the Inner Hebrides to the west of Mull. The entire archipelago is a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and the islands are known for their distinctive silhouette in the seascape – especially Bac Mor or the Dutchman’s Cap. In summer many of the islands are covered in rich grasslands and abundant wildflowers. They are also internationally significant as a nesting site for many seabird species including guillemots, razorbills, puffins, kittiwakes, fulmars, shags and skuas.

The marine environment surrounding the islands is part of the Sea of the Hebrides Marine Protected Area due to the presence of basking sharks and minke whales. Bottlenose and common dolphins, as well as grey seals, are also found there.

The islands were in the possession of King Haakon of Norway until 1249 and have a history of habitation from the Iron Age. They contain the protected archaeological remains (scheduled monuments) of two medieval chapels, a 15th-16th century castle and an 18th century barracks, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century frequently featured in the work of important Scottish artists F.C.B. Cadell and S.J. Peploe.

The Treshnish Isles have been in the care of The Hebridean Trust since 2000 and were transferred to the National Trust for Scotland this month. The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA has supported this acquisition, continuing a strong tradition of American support for conservation in this part of Scotland.

The announcement comes as Chief Executive Philip Long OBE marks his third anniversary with the charity. Mr Long took on the role at the height of the covid pandemic which impacted severely on the National Trust for Scotland’s ability to provide access for visitors, carry out conservation work and raise funds. The launch of the charity’s 10-year strategy - ***Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*** - in March 2022 was described as a ‘fresh start’ for the conservation charity which, since 1931, has been responsible for the conservation and protection of some of Scotland’s most special places, including the islands of Staffa, Pabbay, Berneray, Mingulay, Canna and of course the dual World Heritage Site of St Kilda. Now the charity has taken on the care of the Treshnish Isles, contributing to its objective to enrich Scotland’s protected heritage.

National Trust for Scotland Chief Executive, Philip Long OBE, said: “The National Trust for Scotland is privileged to take on the role of protecting the beautiful Treshnish Isles, which have such a long human history and are so rich in natural habitats and wildlife. I am delighted that our charity is playing this important role and adding these precious islands to the many already in our care.

“Uninhabited islands are invaluable as havens for wildlife and as places of great natural beauty. Looking after them is a great responsibility, which we are proud to undertake, and which, as an independent charity, is only made possible thanks to the generosity of our members and supporters.

“Building on the work of the Hebridean Trust, our experts will focus on ensuring that the Treshnish Isles are conserved and protected now and for the future, and that people can share in their nature, beauty and heritage.”

Chair of the Hebridean Trust Mike Stanfield said: “For over twenty years, the Hebridean Trust has been proud to act as guardians for these special islands. The focus for the Hebridean Trust has now shifted towards community projects on Tiree and so we are very pleased that the National Trust for Scotland has agreed to take the Treshnish Isles into their care for the nation.”

Caroline Clark, Director for Scotland, The National Lottery Heritage Fund said: “Thanks to National Lottery players we supported the Hebridean Trust to take ownership of the Treshnish Isles to secure their future for nature and the community. We are delighted that the isles will now pass to the stewardship of the National Trust for Scotland who bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience to continue to care for this beautiful environment. Earlier this year we launched our 10-year strategy Heritage 2033, at the heart of it is our vision for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. We know that aligns closely with the National Trust for Scotland’s own strategy *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*.”

The National Trust for Scotland has launched a new fundraising appeal in support of its conservation work on the islands and islets in the charity’s care across the country. Donations will help the Trust’s teams carry out bird and wildlife counts, maintain biosecurity standards to keep wildlife safe, undertake archaeological and building surveys, and do more work to engage visitors. To donate, visit [www.nts.org.uk/islands](http://www.nts.org.uk/islands).

Reflecting on his time at the National Trust for Scotland so far, Mr Long added: “When I joined the National Trust for Scotland as Chief Executive, I could not have imagined the circumstances that we would find ourselves in, due to the impact of the global pandemic. At that time, our charity was fundraising for survival but thanks to our very generous supporters and help from the Scottish Government, we emerged from the pandemic in a more positive place and ready to look ahead.

“Last year, we launched our 10-year strategy, *Nature, Beauty & Heritage for Everyone*, and already we’re delivering ambitious projects that will stabilise and improve the condition

of our estate and enrich Scotland's protected heritage. Just some of the examples include restoring the interiors of Holmwood, Alexander 'Greek' Thomson's finest extant domestic design in Glasgow; designing and creating an innovative and sustainable parterre garden at Pitmedden Garden in Aberdeenshire, inspired by the long history of the garden's design; and continuing to restore peatlands at Mar Lodge Estate, the UK's largest National Nature Reserve, which helps to contribute nature-based solutions to addressing the climate crisis.

"This year, we are making great progress on projects thanks to our supporters, with the re-opening of the House of the Binns in Linlithgow after extensive repair and refurbishment and the opening of our new Gateway to Nature facilities at Corrieshalloch Gorge National Nature Reserve. We are delighted now to add the Treshnish Isles to our charity's long list of places we are proud to care for on behalf of all.

"We continue to live in a very uncertain world with many challenges and believe the Trust, with its responsibility for the care of so much of what is precious in Scotland, has an ever-greater role to play in people's lives. And so, we are looking forward to setting out further ambitions as we plan for our centenary in 2031."

**ENDS**

#### **Notes to editors**

Accompanying high resolution imagery can be downloaded here:

<https://bit.ly/NTSTresh>.

For more information, imagery or interview requests please contact Muckle Media on [nts@mucklemedia.co.uk](mailto:nts@mucklemedia.co.uk) or call 0131 228 9713.

#### **About the Treshnish Isles**

Eight main islands make up the Treshnish Isles - the largest is Lunga. The others are Cairna Burgh Beag, Cairna Burgh Mor, Fladda, Sgeir an Eirionnaich, Sgeir an Fheoir, Bac Mor, Bac Beag.

#### **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.

**About the National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA & Scotland's islands**

The National Trust for Scotland Foundation USA is delighted to support the acquisition of the Treshnish Isles, continuing a strong tradition of American support for conservation in this region of Scotland. The Hebridean islands of Staffa, Pabbay, Berneray, and Mingulay were all gifted to the National Trust for Scotland through bequests from the US, and NTSUSA recently has made significant contributions to work on Canna and Iona. With more than 20 million Americans claiming Scottish ancestry, NTSUSA is committed to garnering international support to protect Scotland's heritage and natural beauty now and for future generations. Find out more about their work at: <https://ntsusa.org/>