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NATIONAL TRUST FOR SCOTLAND CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF POSITIVE IMPACT ON NATURE CONSERVATION

- **Scotland's largest conservation charity celebrates 10th anniversary of funding support from players of People's Postcode Lottery**
- **£900k raised by players of People's Postcode Lottery in 2023/24 and £3.4m since 2014 to support nature conservation projects.**
- **Funding confirmed for new season in 2024/25 to support projects in Fair Isle, Aberdeenshire, Arran, Glencoe, Perthshire and Scottish Borders**

The National Trust for Scotland is celebrating the 10th anniversary of funding raised by players of [People's Postcode Lottery](#) and the positive impact it has made to nature conservation at the special places in its care across the country.

Scotland's largest independent conservation charity benefited from £900k last year, thanks to support by players of People's Postcode Lottery, who have raised over £3.4m since 2014. Further funding confirmed for 2024/25 through the Postcode Earth Trust will support conservation work across a variety of different habitats including coastal and marine areas, peatlands, wetlands, woodland, and eight National Nature Reserves cared for by the Trust.

Players' funding has supported the Love Our Nature project since 2022, which aims to enable the charity to protect and promote the wildlife, nature and landscapes in its care. One of the main projects to benefit this year is the Fair Isle Demonstration and Research Marine Protected Area (DR MPA), in partnership with other eNGOs and government agencies. The funding has supported research as part of the first ever community led project of its kind in the country, coordinated by a new Project Officer, Katie Cubbon from NatureScot.

Working on the Fair Isle DR MPA, which aims to better understand the island's natural heritage by observing and measuring the health of its marine environment, was the perfect opportunity for Katie to continue her love affair with island life having grown up on the Isle of Man and subsequently setting up home in the Orkney islands. Fair Isle DR MPA research will help to establish impactful conservation measures to safeguard Fair Isle's aquatic habitats, their species and the sustainability of the island's community.

Katie said: "My role involves spending time in Fair Isle and working with the community and other stakeholders to develop and oversee new and current research projects that will help us to learn more about the marine environment surrounding Fair Isle. Some of the current and on-going projects that have taken place so far, thanks to the support provided by players of People's Postcode Lottery through the National Trust for

Scotland's Love our Nature project, include the Fair Isle inshore fish survey, benthic habitat and species distribution modelling, and cetacean and seabird monitoring projects.

"These projects contribute to a greater understanding of the distribution and health of species and habitats within the Fair Isle DR MPA. While it is too soon to draw any definitive conclusions from the early stages of baseline data collection, the initial research findings highlight the need for more, longer-term species monitoring work to be carried out. Further research fieldwork will take place this summer with technology used to monitor species and habitats on the seabed alongside tagging seabird species to observe their behaviour."

"The valuable contribution by players of People's Postcode Lottery to support these research projects will help us to ensure the longevity and sustainability of these marine environments for the future. This research contributes to the wider conservation work carried out by the National Trust for Scotland to care for, protect and share Scotland's rich natural heritage for everyone."

Some of the other projects to receive a funding boost this year include species and habitat monitoring projects as part of the National Trust for Scotland's Plan for Nature. Montane Willow regeneration at Grey Mare's Tail, re-establishing wetlands in Aberdeenshire, work to control invasive non-native species in Arran, new interpretation at Corrieshalloch Gorge, Glencoe and Glen Rosa, and employing seasonal staff at Grey Mare's Tail, Killiecrankie and Ben Lawers.

Ali MacLeod, National Trust for Scotland's Head of Fundraising, said: "Love our Nature is a diverse programme of core and new activity and projects across the Trust's wild places and National Nature Reserves, which has increased our capacity to deliver our conservation and engagement objectives, meaning we can do more for people, nature and the special places in our care. The invaluable support by players of People's Postcode Lottery has allowed us to trial new approaches, learn, build knowledge, create momentum, and expand conservation projects to other nature sites. Funding for the new season alongside the continued generosity of our members and supporters will enable our charity to enrich these places of extraordinary beauty and support our work to protect and enhance these important natural assets to provide access to nature, beauty and heritage, for everyone, now and in the future."

To mark the 10th anniversary of the valuable contribution made by players of People's Postcode Lottery, the National Trust for Scotland has highlighted the impact the support for its Love our Nature project has made. Since 2022 alone, this has included:

- Expansion of engagement activity across the wild places and National Nature Reserves in the Trust's care by supporting employment of 17 members of staff, including nine rangers at the reserves, who engage with visitors about conservation practices to protect various species and habitats, while ensuring responsible and sustainable access.

- Conservation grazing at Ben Lawers National Nature Reserve with cattle used to improve the habitat and biodiversity at the reserve by grazing and churning up the soil to encourage seed dispersal to promote natural regeneration of mountain woodland and scrub.
- Access improvements with the construction of new footpaths and interpretation at Corrieshalloch Gorge: Gateway to Nature, near Ullapool
- Opportunities to test new approaches, learn and build knowledge which has enabled the Trust to leverage funding from other stakeholders and supporters including a new boat at St Abb's Head to assist with seabird and seal monitoring during breeding season at the important seabird colony
- Supporting the Scottish Landscape Alliance, an advocacy group raising awareness of the importance of Scotland's landscapes to climate resilience, biodiversity, economic performance, and public health and wellbeing.

The impact made by historical projects supported by People's Postcode Lottery include tackling over 40 hectares of non-native invasive plant species across Trust places; regenerating over 2,028 hectares of Scotland's native habitats including Caledonian Pinewoods and protection of rare species of flora including green shield moss, twin flower and montane willow at Mar Lodge Estate, near Braemar; planting over 40,000 trees to regenerate 27 hectares of native upland birch woodland at the foot of Goatfell on Arran; and improving access and creating new all-ability trails and playparks at Culzean Castle in South Ayrshire and creating opportunities to learn traditional skills like carpentry and construction for young offenders, school children, community groups and volunteers by building a nature hide in the grounds of Crathes Castle in Aberdeenshire.

Head of Charities at People's Postcode Lottery, Laura Chow, said: "It's amazing to see the scale of the impact made by our players to support important conservation work being carried out by organisations like the National Trust for Scotland to help protect our important habitats and wildlife. By playing together and winning together, People's Postcode Lottery players are having a positive impact on Scotland's breathtaking landscapes and the nature that call them home for the benefit of everyone."

The Love Our Nature project supports the National Trust for Scotland's vision to care for, protect and share Scotland's nature, beauty and heritage for everyone, as outlined in its 10-year strategy, launched in 2022. For more information on the National Trust for Scotland, visit www.nts.org.uk.

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Notes to editors

About Fair Isle Demonstration and Research Marine Protected Area (DR MPA)

Fair Isle is a small island (768 hectares) within the Shetland Isles. It is roughly equidistant between Shetland and Orkney and around 40km from any neighbouring land. It hosts a

small population of circa 50 persons, which has remained stable since 1954, when ownership of the island passed to the National Trust for Scotland.

Decades of declining natural resources – primarily seabird and inshore fish populations – prompted initial concern from the local community in the late 1980s, who felt a continuing sense of powerlessness in implementing their own decisions around how to maintain their local marine resource. Of particular concern to islanders was the steep decline in their (traditionally abundant) visiting seabirds. Seventeen species breed on Fair Isle and, in the 1980s and 1990s, around 250,000 birds would be present in summer. By 2010, this had declined to a little over 100,000. This was, and remains, of high concern to islanders due to the high footfall in tourism that the presence of this wildlife encourages. Without the attraction of rich and diverse wildlife, the economy of the island is highly threatened.

The Fair Isle DR MPA was designated in November 2016 under the Marine (Scotland) Act 2010 and is the only current DR MPA in Scotland. The site is a third-party proposal, which was submitted by the community group the Fair Isle Marine Environment and Tourism Initiative (FIMETI) in 2011, having been developed by FIMETI and the Fair Isle community, alongside a range of partners. The Fair Isle DR MPA was, in many ways, the culmination of many years of effort from FIMETI to establish some means of recourse or local intervention into the management of the island's adjacent marine resources. In 2018 FIMETI dissolved and a new community organisation, the Fair Isle Marine Research Organisation (FIMRO), was formed in Fair Isle. FIMRO are responsible for overseeing community conservation activity and managing elements of the Fair Isle DR MPA Project Officer's role.

DR MPAs have the potential to be a powerful vehicle for community-led marine protection in Scotland. They are a relatively untested form of marine management, and thus there is a vast, as yet untapped, potential in their application and impact. Understanding the process of, and the lessons learned from, Scotland's only DR MPA is therefore of vital importance.

*Fauna and Flora International, 2021. A Case Study of Demonstration & Research Marine Protected Area development in Scotland. FFI, Edinburgh, UK. p.13.

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.