



11 August 2023

To all Scottish Party Leaders

This summer we have seen unprecedented extreme global weather events with devastating impacts on people and wildlife. Extreme heat, dangerously warm seas, and out of control wildfires are causing havoc globally. Nature, too, is struggling, and climate change is adding to the pressures typified by the devastation of Avian Influenza, which has had a significant impact in Scotland. The impacts of climate change and nature loss are increasingly visible in our lives and are having a direct economic impact, such as through food prices inflation.

The environment is of significant concern to people across Scotland. Opinion polling shows that 92% of people living in Scotland say the environment is important to them personally, and 82% say they are concerned about the threat of climate change and human activity to Scotland's natural environment. The public are right to be concerned: without significant action now, we will live through increasing disruption to our lives and face escalating impacts on food production and human health.

As leading environmental organisations, between us have more than 0.5 million supporters in Scotland, we are deeply concerned that our political leaders are not responding to the intertwined nature and climate crises with the urgency required. The status quo is not sustainable. Yet we have seen key environmental commitments shelved or delayed, and increasing signals that differing views on environmental policy will be exploited for electoral purposes or treated as disposable.

All parties committed to strengthening environmental protection and restoration at the last Scottish election. Scotland - as a wealthy country, as an early industrialiser and as one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world - has a moral obligation to show leadership. There are opportunities in this parliament to deliver meaningful progress. We call on you all to reaffirm your commitment to the health of our planet - our life support system - by working together to rapidly support measures to reduce emissions in line with statutory targets agreed by this parliament, and halt and reverse nature loss.

Acting decisively now will demonstrate to Scotland's people and our future generations our collective commitment to a just transition into a future worth living.

We are calling on all political parties to support increased ambition in reducing climate emissions; ambitious legal targets for nature restoration, aligned with the Global Framework on Biodiversity, and delivered through a well-resourced Biodiversity Strategy; a reformed system of agriculture and forestry funding that delivers for climate, nature and people; urgent progress delivering enhanced marine protection in line with international best practice; and the drastic reduction in our consumption of raw materials.

The business case for tackling climate change and nature loss has never been clearer. The enormous economic risk of our current environmental trajectory is increasingly recognised,



including by the Office for Budget Responsibility. Investing now is better and cheaper than the alternative, and as well as improving our national resilience, government leadership can unlock future investment and economic benefits through the transition.

As political leaders, the public expects you to deliver on your own party commitments and to work together in the interests of our shared future. Your actions today will determine whether future generations, and the public today, will thank you for your courage and foresight in doing enough to reach a net zero, nature positive Scotland in a just and equitable way.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you, as Party Leader, to discuss how we tackle the climate and nature emergency.

Yours sincerely

Anne McCall, Director RSPB Scotland

Jo Pike, CEO, Scottish Wildlife Trust

Alastair Seaman, Director, Woodland Trust Scotland

Kat Jones, Director APRS

Alison Lomax, Director, Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust

Kate Elliot, Chair, Scottish Countryside Rangers' Association

Alistair Whyte, Head of Plantlife Scotland

Kathy Wormald, CEO, Froglife Trust

Clare Cavers, Senior Project Manager, Fidra

Kit Stoner, CEO, Bat Conservation Trust

Dave Windle, Chair, North East Mountain Trust

Logan Steele, Communications Secretary, Scottish Raptor Study Group

David McKay, Head of Policy, Soil Association Scotland

Philip Long, CEO, National Trust for Scotland

Deborah Long Chief Officer, Scottish Environment LINK

Shiavli Fifield, Chief Officer, Environmental Rights Centre Scotland

Eddie Palmer, Chair, Scottish Badgers

Steve Micklewright, CEO, Trees for Life

Gracie Bradley, Director, Friends of the Earth Scotland

Susan Davies, Chief Executive, Scottish Seabird Centre

Gus Jones, Convener, Badenoch & Strathspey Conservation Group

Tim Coleshaw, Chair, British Dragonfly Society

Tony Gent, CEO, Amphibian and Reptile Conservation

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