

Marine project aims to bring back oysters to the Forth

A project to reintroduce seagrass meadows and oysters in the Firth of Forth has been launched today.

ScottishPower Foundation has made its biggest ever grant to allow the work to get underway, while improving the environment and also tackling climate change.

Restoration Forth will make the first award from its Marine Biodiversity Fund created to mark the year that COP came to Scotland of up to £600,000 over three years.

The project will be managed by WWF the independent conservation organisation in partnership with scientists, charities and local community groups all working to design a blueprint.

Seagrass provides important habitat for marine life and oyster reefs which were once found in the Forth in abundance, remove pollutants and provide sanctuary for an array of marine life.

It is hoped that by restoring these two species the coastal and marine environment of the Forth will be improved in this nature based solution to climate change. The project will also create opportunities for local people to reconnect with the sea.



Pictured: Diver Richard Lilley PHOTO Ian Georgeson
Melanie Hill, Executive Officer and Trustee of the ScottishPower Foundation, said: "We're really excited that Restoration Forth is the first project supported by our Marine

Biodiversity Fund. With COP26 about to get underway, the climate emergency is very much at the forefront of all our thoughts and there is no time to waste.

“This project – supported by the biggest-ever grant awarded by the Foundation – is a great example of how we can take action now to restore our coastal habitats. Thriving marine environments are crucial if we are to tackle the biodiversity and climate crises and Restoration Forth will allow us to make a positive impact in partnership with local people and communities, who are at the heart of the Foundation’s work.

“A large part of our funding will go towards developing a skills development programme for local communities to protect their restored coastal environment. This incredible work in the Firth of Forth will provide a blueprint for restoring ecosystems through a collaborative community approach.

“It has the potential to be used as a model for marine biodiversity restoration projects across Scotland and around the world, ensuring the Foundation will help create a positive climate legacy for years to come. That’s exactly what we wanted to achieve when we created our new fund and why we’re so proud to work with so many esteemed partners to help turn this project from a vision into a reality.”

Ricardo Zanre, WWF’s Ocean Restoration Programme Manager **said:** “Coastal habitats like seagrass meadows and oyster reefs are vital to a thriving marine environment but across the UK we’ve seen their steep decline over the last century. This is a concerning loss in so many ways – for the homes they provide for marine life, their value in absorbing carbon dioxide and improving water quality and their importance as heritage for coastal communities. The Forth is an amazing example of a place where local communities working to restore coastal habitats can not only help to bring back these benefits, but also to strengthen the connection between nature and community. We’re hugely grateful to the

ScottishPower Foundation for sharing this vision and their support in helping to achieve it”

ScottishPower Foundation’s grant is the first funding contribution towards the £2.4 million total cost of the project, which aims to restore up to four hectares of seagrass and 10,000 oysters per year by the end of 2024.



Pictured: Lyndsey Dodds (WWF Ocean Recovery Manager), Melanie Hill (ScottishPower Foundation Executive Officer and Trustee)
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