

Government launches consultation on biodiversity

The newest government consultation seeks views on a range of measures aimed at accelerating the pace and scale of efforts to tackle the biodiversity crisis,

The government wants to expand protected areas, improve condition and connectivity, support nature-friendly farming, fishing and forestry; and recover and protect vulnerable and important species. [Read the consultation document here.](#) It is open until 14 December 2023.

This includes the first 5-year Biodiversity Delivery Plan which contains a large number of wide-reaching actions with draft frameworks setting out the Vision and Principles that will underpin delivery of the commitment to protect 30% of Scotland's land for nature by 2030, and to create nature networks across Scotland. The Biodiversity Strategy was published in draft in December 2022 setting out the goals of halting biodiversity loss by 2030 and reversing any declines by 2045.

The consultation also has proposals to develop a framework for statutory nature targets and sets out proposed changes to national parks legislation to strengthen the leadership role of National Parks in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises whilst continuing to focus on welcoming visitors and supporting local communities and businesses. And it appears that National Parks do not always have to be in the countryside.

The government says the consultation will ensure people from across different interest groups have the opportunity to ask questions, provide their ideas and help develop the framework to deliver a nature-positive, net zero Scotland.

Biodiversity Minister Lorna Slater said: “We are at a tipping point for nature – it is in decline across the globe with around 1 million species already facing extinction. In Scotland alone, we have seen a 24% decline in abundance of wildlife since 1990; if we don’t take urgent action, nature in Scotland will continue to decline and important species will be lost forever.

“This week we have published our Programme for Government which recognises that the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss are global challenges of unprecedented proportions. Restoring nature will reduce carbon emissions, and tackling the climate crisis is essential if we are to prevent extinctions. We must be both Net Zero and Nature Positive.

“A nature-positive Scotland creates great opportunities that will benefit people and communities throughout the country and particularly in rural areas. We want to work with everyone – with local government, local communities, organisations and environmental experts – to protect our precious natural environment for future generations.”



Lorna Slater the Minister for Biodiversity visited Saughton Park to announce Further action to tackle the biodiversity crisis. PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

“We are especially keen to hear the views of the stewards of our land and seas – farmers, gamekeepers and fishers who have the knowledge and skills to drive the transformation that is needed.”

NatureScot Chair, Colin Galbraith said: “Nature is in crisis, and we need to take urgent action now. This consultation is an opportunity for everyone to get involved in tackling the crisis in our natural world. We want to hear from the land managers, farmers and crofters already working to support and enrich wildlife, as well as from people in rural and urban communities who seek a fair and just transition to a nature-rich future for all. Now is the time to speak up for nature; to tell us what your priorities are for the future – we are listening.”



Colin Galbraith Chair NatureScot – The Minister for Biodiversity visited Saughton Park to announce Further action to tackle the biodiversity crisis. PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter

Saughton Park

Saughton Park is described by the council as “one of Edinburgh’s hidden jewels.” The 34 acre park underwent an extensive restoration project from 2014 to 2018 with funding from The National Lottery Heritage Fund, Scottish Government, Sustrans and other sources. Large areas of the park were redesigned and are now maintained with nature in mind. The Royal Caledonian Horticultural Society, a very active Friends group and other community volunteers have created biodiverse-friendly sites including a wildflower meadow, orchard area, pond and community garden.

Edinburgh Nature Network

Since 2019, The City of Edinburgh Council together with the Scottish Wildlife Trust have undertaken work to develop the

Edinburgh Nature Network. Saughton Park is an important part of the Edinburgh Nature Network, sitting on the Water of Leith greenspace corridor and offering opportunities to enhance biodiversity through connecting nearby greenspaces either directly, or through a 'stepping stone' approach.

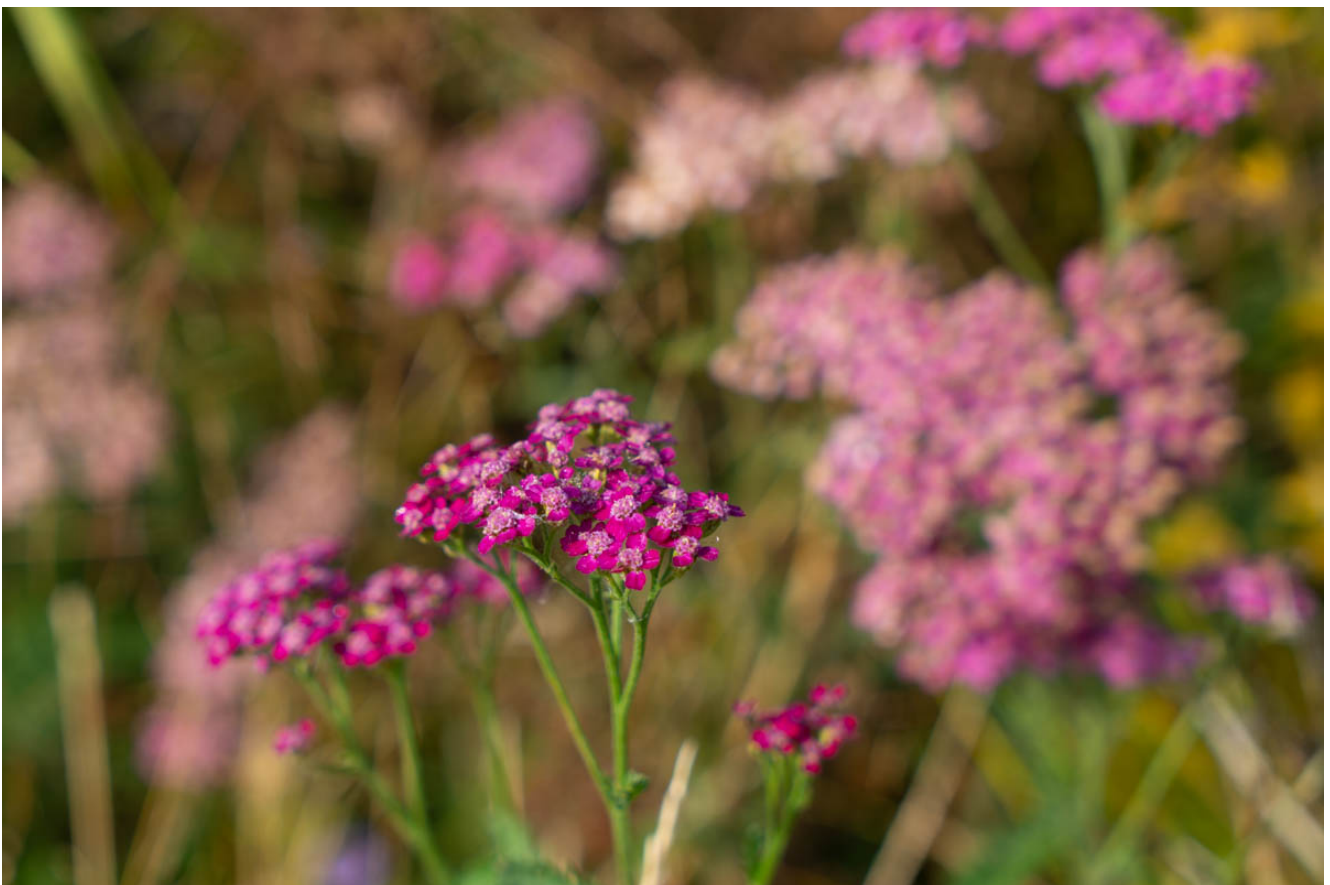
Edinburgh Nature Network is the first Nature Network to be developed in Scotland. It is a long-term strategic approach to manage, restore and enhance the urban landscape of Edinburgh. It highlights opportunities to take action across the city, using natural solutions to address the threats of biodiversity loss and climate change. Its development was led by the City of Edinburgh Council and Scottish Wildlife Trust as part of the Thriving Green Spaces project.



Minister for Biodiversity visited Saughton Park to announce Further action to tackle the biodiversity crisis. PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter



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Sarah Bennett Friends of Saughton Park Minister for

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Shona Nelson Friends of Saughton Park Minister for Biodiversity visited Saughton Park to announce Further action to tackle the biodiversity crisis. PHOTO ©2023 The Edinburgh Reporter



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