

Agenda Item	18
Report No	EDI/53/19

HIGHLAND COUNCIL

Committee: Environment, Development and Infrastructure

Date: 15 August 2019

Report Title: Species Champions – Update

Report By: Director of Development and Infrastructure

1 Purpose/Executive Summary

1.1 This report briefs Members on the take-up of the relaunched Species Champions initiative.

2. Recommendations

2.1 Members are asked to:

- i. note the report;
- ii. confirm Species Champions; and
- iii. promote their chosen species and develop links with relevant body/s

3 Implications

3.1 Resource – None. No additional officer resources are available to facilitate the initiative beyond the administration of the Species Champions List (**Appendix 1**) and initial introductions with organisations that promote and conserve each species. It will be for members to develop a relationship with the species representative and to champion the cause of their chosen species.

3.2 Legal – There are no legal implications.

3.3 Equality – none

3.4 Climate Change/Carbon Clever – as well as habitat loss and predation from invasive species, many species on the list are threatened directly or indirectly by climate change. Some of these species are important for local economies, such as the Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout, whilst others provide important habitats, including willow species that form alpine scrub. The Species Champions initiative is a response, in part, to these pressures and it is an opportunity for Members to raise awareness of climate change, and the impact it has had on some of our most important species.

- 3.5 Rural issues – many of the species have a close association with the Highlands and are the basis of wildlife tourism.
- 3.6 Other risks - none

4 Background

- 4.1 The Species Champion initiative seeks to create a strong connection between a Member and one or more of our most threatened species (see **Appendix 1**). The Member will become an advocate for their chosen species and champion its cause when opportunities arise.
- 4.2 The Species Champions initiative, which lost traction following the loss of the Council's biodiversity officers through voluntary severance, was relaunched in May 2019 at the request of Members.
- 4.3 In light of the Climate Change and Ecological Emergency declared by the Council on 9 May 2019, the relaunch of the Species Champions initiative is very timely. The initiative seeks to raise the profile of key species identified through the Biodiversity Action Plan as at risk from one or a combination of factors, including climate change, habitat loss, persecution, pollution and predation.
- 4.4 The Species Champions initiative will assist the Council in fulfilling its statutory biodiversity duty and will be included in the next Biodiversity Duty Report for Scottish Ministers, due in 2022.
- 4.5 Members should be aware that, at the present time, resources are available to facilitate the initiative through the administration of the species allocation spreadsheet and initial introductions with organisations that promote and conserve each species. Members are asked to forge links and relationships with representatives.

5 The Species Champions Initiative

- 5.1 The Species Champion initiative will raise the profile and boost public awareness of species found across the Highlands. The initiative focuses on those species that are currently struggling to survive in a changing environment and are at significant risk of declining numbers leading to unviable populations and in some cases possible extinction.
- 5.2 Many of these species are synonymous with Highland identity and attract visitors from across the world. Many, however, are not as well known; they may not be conventionally photogenic or they lack the charisma of many of the larger iconic species. But, they are just as important with some endemic to small pockets of the Highlands, found nowhere else on earth. This is an opportunity to give these species a platform, raise their profile and highlight the fundamental role they play in maintaining Highland's unique biodiversity. The initiative seeks Champions for all the species identified in **Appendix 1** across the spectrum – from Golden Eagles and Wildcats to Splendid Waxcaps, Rusty Bog Moss and Northern February Red Stoneflies.
- 5.3 The initiative also seeks to highlight the many and complex issues faced by both the species and its habitat, whether as a consequence of climate change, habitat loss or predation by non-native species, and bring their plight to the attention of a wider and more diverse audience.

- 5.4 Species Champions will raise the species and issues that may affect it or its habitat in relevant Council debates and public meetings ensuring that the species is not forgotten and can be properly considered in Council decision making.
- 5.5 Species Champions will develop a relationship with the society, organisation or local group that promotes the species or is actively involved in its conservation. It is hoped that this will give the Councillor the opportunity to actively participate in conservation efforts. Species Champions may also be asked by the species' society or organisation to comment on issues affecting their species or include their comments in press releases. This relationship has been particularly beneficial for the Red Kite (RSPB) and the Great Yellow Bumblebee (Bumblebee Conservation Trust).

6. Highland Council Species Champions

- 6.1 19 Members have kindly signed up to champion 21 species from the Wild Atlantic Salmon to Pine Hoverfly and Wildcat. Species Champions are listed below:

6.2

Member	Species
Alasdair Christie	Adder
Alex Graham	Red Squirrel
Allan Henderson	Sea Trout
Andrew Baxter	Mountain Ringlet and Northern Dart
Andrew Jarvie	Juniper
Andrew Sinclair	Hen Harrier
Bill Lobban	Pine Hoverfly
Bill Lobban	Mountain Hare
Biz Campbell	Black Grouse
Callum Smith	Slow-worm
Craig Fraser	Solitary bee
Craig Fraser	Bottlenosed Dolphin
Glynis Sinclair	Small Blue and Dingy Skipper
Gordon Adam	Red Kite
Ian Cockburn	Grey Partridge
John Bruce	Capercaillie
Ken Gowans	Wild Atlantic salmon
Liz MacDonald	Harbour Porpoise
Margaret Davidson	Golden Eagle
Muriel Cockburn	Mountain Mason Bee
Struan Mackie	Wildcat
Trish Robertson	Minke Whale

- 6.3 Members will note that many other species remain without a Champion - the full list is included as **Appendix 1**. If a Member is interested in becoming an advocate for one or more species and championing their cause during the course of their duties please email andrew.puls@highland.gov.uk.

7 Next Steps

- 7.1 All Members already signed up to a species will be provided with the contact details of the primary organisation/s that work for that species. It will then be for Members to cultivate the relationship with the species representative.
- 7.2 A press release will be prepared in due course.

Designation: Director of Development and Infrastructure.

Date: 27 June 2019

Author: Andrew Puls, Acting Environment Manager

Appendix 1: Species Champions List

Group	Species Champion	Common Name	Latin Name	Distribution	Main Issue(s)
Amphibian		Common Toad	Bufo bufo	L	Habitat
Amphibian		Great Crested Newt	Triturus cristatus	L	Habitat
Bat		Brown Long-eared Bat	Plecotus auritus	W	Development of old buildings with complex roofs.
Bee		Great Yellow Bumblebee	Bombus distinguendus	L	Habitat
Bee		Moss Carder-bee	Bombus muscorum	L	Habitat, food sources
Bee	Muriel Cockburn	Mountain Mason Bee			
Bee	Craig Fraser	A solitary bee	Andrena marginata	L	Habitat
Beetle		Violet Oil Beetle	Meloe violaceus	W	Habitat
Bird		Common Scoter	Melanitta nigra	L	Uncertain, but possibly predators e.g. Mink, Climate Change, or change in food supply
Bird		Corncrake	Crex crex	L	Habitat
Bird	Margaret Davidson	Golden Eagle	Aquila chrysaetos	W	Habitat, illegal persecution
Bird	Andrew Sinclair	Hen Harrier	Circus cyaneus	L	Grouse moors and predators
Bird		Twite	Carduelis flavirostris subsp. bensonorum/ pipilans	L	Habitat
Bird	Biz Campbell	Black Grouse	Tetrao tetrix subsp. britannicus	W	Habitat, deer fencing
Bird		Eurasian Curlew	Numenius arquata	W	Habitat
Bird	Ian Cockburn	Grey Partridge	Perdix perdix	L	Habitat
Bird		Manx Shearwater	Puffinus puffinus	Small Isles	Rat predation in certain colonies.
Bird		Northern Lapwing	Vanellus vanellus	L	Habitat
Bird		Red Grouse	Lagopus lagopus subsp. scotica	W	Habitat, co-existence with other species
Bird		Ring Ouzel	Turdus torquatus	W	Habitat, possibly climate change, research underway.

Bird		Wood Warbler	<i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	L	Habitat
Bird	John Bruce	Capercaillie	<i>Tetrao urogallus</i>	L	Habitat, disturbance, deer fencing
Bird		Corn Bunting	<i>Emberiza calandra</i>	L	Habitat
Bird		Puffin	<i>Fratercula arctica</i>	L	Food
Bird	Gordon Adam	Red Kite	<i>Milvus milvus</i>	L	Indirect persecution
Butterfly		Chequered Skipper	<i>Carterocephalus palaemon</i>	L	Habitat management
Butterfly		Large Heath	<i>Coenonympha tullia</i>	W	Habitat
Butterfly		Pearl-bordered Fritillary	<i>Boloria euphrosyne</i>	L	Habitat
Butterfly	Glynis Sinclair	Small Blue and Dingy Skipper	<i>Cupido minimus</i> and <i>Erynnis tages</i>	L	Habitat
Butterfly	Andrew Baxter	Mountain Ringlet and Northern Dart	<i>Erebia epiphron</i> and <i>Xestia alpicola</i> subsp. <i>alpina</i>	L	Habitat
Butterfly		Marsh Fritillary and Narrow-bordered Bee Hawk-moth	<i>Euphydryas aurinia</i>	L	Habitat management
Cetacean	Craig Fraser	Bottlenosed Dolphin	<i>Tursiops truncatus</i>	L	Offshore development, food supply
Cetacean	Liz MacDonald	Harbour Porpoise	<i>Phocoena phocoena</i>	W	Offshore development, food supply
Cetacean		Killer Whale	<i>Orcinus orca</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas
Cetacean	Trish Robertson	Minke Whale	<i>Balaenoptera acutorostrata</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas
Cnidarian		Tall Sea Pen	<i>Funicularina quadrangularis</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance
Dragonfly		Northern Damselfly	<i>Coenagrion hastulatum</i>	CNPA	Habitat
Fish	Ken Gowans	Wild Atlantic salmon	<i>Salmo salar</i>	W	Habitat, climate change
Fish		Basking Shark	<i>Cetorhinus maximus</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, Tourism +/-
Fish	Allan Henderson	Sea Trout	<i>Salmo trutta</i>	W	Habitat, climate change
Fungi		Hazel Gloves	<i>Hypocreopsis rhododendri</i>	L	Habitat, woodland management
Fungi		Splendid Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe splendidissima</i>	L	Habitat management
Fungi		Crimson Waxcap	<i>Hygrocybe punicea</i>	L	Unimproved but cropped grassland management

Fungi		White Stalkball	<i>Tulostema niveum</i>	L	Habitat management
Fungi		Soil Fungus	<i>Scutellospora dipurpurescens</i>	W	Habitat/ woodland management. Provides phosphate to Bluebells
Insect		Fonseca's Seed Fly	<i>Botanophila fonsecai</i>	L	Habitat
Insect		Narrow-headed Ant (and the other 3 sp of Wood Ants)	<i>Formica exsecta</i>	L	Habitat
Insect		Northern February Red (stonefly)	<i>Brachyptera putata</i>	L	Water quality, forestry impacts, abstraction
Insect		Upland Summer Mayfly	<i>Ameletus inopinatus</i>	L	Habitat, climate change
Insect	Bill Lobban	Pine Hoverfly	<i>Blera fallax</i>	CNPA	Habitat management
Mammal		Eastern Atlantic harbour seal/ common Seal	<i>Phoca vitulina</i>	W	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance
Mammal		Water Vole	<i>Arvicola amphibious</i>	W	Mink, habitat
Mammal		West European Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	W	Habitat
Mammal		Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	L	Habitat
Mammal	Bill Lobban	Mountain Hare	<i>Lepus timidus</i>	W	Habitat, culling for tick control
Mammal	Alex Graham	Red Squirrel	<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>	L	Habitat, threat from Grey Squirrel colonisation
Mammal	Struan Mackie	Wildcat	<i>Felis silvestris</i>	L	Habitat, legitimate predator control
Mollusc		Flame Shell	<i>Limaria hians</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance
Mollusc		Freshwater Pearl Mussel	<i>Margaritifera margaritifera</i>	L	Illegal persecution
Moss		Rusty Bog Moss	<i>Sphagnum fuscum</i>	W	Habitat management
Moss		Green Shield Moss	<i>Buxbaumia viridis</i>	L	Deadwood management
Moth		Netted Mountain Moth / Small Dark Yellow Underwing	<i>Macaria carbonaria</i> / <i>Anarta cordigera</i>	L	Habitat management
Moth		Argent and Sable	<i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>	W	Habitat management

Moth		Dark Bordered Beauty	<i>Epione vespertaria</i>	L	Habitat
Moth		Barred Tooth Striped	<i>Trichopteryx polycommata</i>	L	Habitat
Plant		Dwarf Birch	<i>Betula nana</i>	W	Habitat management
Plant		Eelgrass	<i>Zostera</i> spp.	Sheltered E coast Firths	Habitat management
Plant		Highland Saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga rivularis</i>	L	Habitat management
Plant	Andrew Jarvie	Juniper	<i>Juniperus communis</i>	W	Habitat management
Plant		Lesser Butterfly Orchid	<i>Platanthera bifolia</i>	L	Habitat management
Plant		One Flowered Wintergreen	<i>Moneses uniflora</i>	L	Habitat management
Plant		Scottish Primrose	<i>Primula scotica</i>	Caithness	Habitat management
Plant		Twinflower	<i>Linnaea borealis</i>	Ancient Pinewoods	Habitat management
Plant		Whortle-leaved Willow	<i>Salix myrsinites</i>	Alpine Scrub Zone	Habitat management, climate change
Plant		Woolly Willow	<i>Salix lanata</i>	Alpine Scrub Zone	Habitat management, climate change
Plant		Downy Willow	<i>Salix lapponum</i>	Alpine Scrub Zone	Habitat management, climate change
Plant		Alpine Sibbaldia	<i>Sibbaldia procumbens</i>	L	Habitat management, climate change
Red algae		Common Maërl	<i>Phymatolithon calcareum</i>	W	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance
Red algae		Coral Maërl	<i>Lithothamnion corallioides</i>	L	Marine Protected Areas, habitat disturbance
Reptile	Alasdair Christie	Adder	<i>Vipera berus</i>	L	Habitat management
Reptile		Common Lizard	<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	W	Habitat management
Reptile	Callum Smith	Slow-worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	L	Habitat management

Spider		Strawberry Spider	Araneus alsine	L	Habitat management
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