

Minister for Environment and Climate Change
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In 2014 Scotland Welcomes the World



5 August 2014

Dear Rob

I am delighted to inform you that the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy (SBS) Report to Parliament 2011-2013 is being laid in Parliament today. It will be published shortly afterwards on the Scottish Government and SNH websites.

The report highlights many success stories for Scottish biodiversity, and addresses how people in Scotland engage with the natural world. It reflects a shift in approach to an increased focus on ecosystems and their functions and also working in partnership to coordinate joint action. You will be aware, also, that the policy context and legislation has changed to create a more supportive environment for biodiversity.

There are a lot of positives to celebrate, for example, people's involvement, increases in terrestrial birds, improvements in river quality and associated habitats and species. However, some significant challenges remain and are likely to continue, for example, some sea bird species have experienced decline and, as you will be aware, we are striving to support terrestrial bird species and to restore Scotland's peatlands, which support a wide range of species.

The SBS Delivery and Monitoring Group are already tackling these challenges and are developing a Route Map to identify our key work in meeting the aims of the SBS. They have also established a suite of ecosystem health indicators to reflect the condition of natural assets, their functional quality, and their capacity to sustain both.



As chair of the Scottish Biodiversity Committee, I am absolutely committed to doing everything I can to meet our ambitions for biodiversity. We need to build on all the good work by the many organisations and individuals who have contributed to action over the last three years and continue our collective effort to ensure biodiversity is seen as an important component of Scottish life.

I hope that you and you fellow Committee members will find the Report of interest.

Kindest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Wheelhouse', with a large, stylized initial 'P'.

PAUL WHEELHOUSE