HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS ENVIRONMENT FOUNDATION

5 YEAR REVIEW
2020–2025

CONTENTS

OPPOSITE: Cal major interviewing fisherman Bally Philp as part of the Our Ocean podcast; © James Appleton.

COVER PHOTO: Rebecca Lewis from Buglife delivering a 'Guardians of Our Rivers' workshop at the June 2024 HIEF Steering Committee Gathering.

FOREWORD

It feels somewhat surreal to be writing this introduction as it really does not feel like five years since the launch of the Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation (HIEF). Back in October 2020, the world felt like a very different place as we began to emerge from the COVID pandemic and the multiple restrictions which went with that.

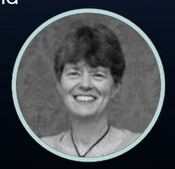
Perhaps though, a potential silver lining from that time, was the opportunity to re-connect with the nature on our doorsteps and a temporary easing in the pace of life for many. As the impacts of the twin climate and biodiversity crises we currently face become increasingly obvious and hard to ignore, those connections are more important than ever.

Protecting native species; restoring ecosystems; tackling environmental threats; and empowering communities are the four key themes running through over 80 different grassroots, community-led environmental projects HIEF has supported over our first five years.

The selection of projects in this review highlights the breadth and scope of work which local communities are involved in, whether they are making tangible differences to the places they know and love or contributing to wider, policy and advocacy changes which could lead to wider, systemic changes. Nature-based solutions, championed by the people most directly affected represent a huge source of hope for the future.

In our first five years, HIEF has raised around £1.5 million to support these communities (£1 million directly and an additional £500,000 through collaborations with other funders). Whilst this has enabled many projects, there remains a significant and growing need for further funding and support.

If you would like to help us support more inspirational people and projects, please get in touch.



SALLY MCNAUGHT
Executive Director, HIEF

Quinag in the evening light.; © Alastair James.

Celebrating 5 Years of HIEF

Caledonian Club, London
5th November 2025

We were delighted to hold our 5th Birthday Celebration event on the 5th November at the Caledonian Club, London.

Over 80 guests joined us to celebrate the achievements of our first five years. Between launching at the end of 2020 and the end of 2025, HIEF supported over 80 grassroots projects working with local communities to protect and restore nature in the Scottish Highlands & Islands.

A highlight of the night for all was hearing from our guest speaker, Alastair Fothergill OBE, esteemed producer and director of nature documentaries such as Planet Earth.

Throughout the event, guests enjoyed whisky and botanical-spirit based cocktails courtesy of Nc'nean, an independent, organic whisky distillery on the Morvern peninsula on the west coast of Scotland.

Grateful thanks to all our corporate sponsors, raffle and auction supporters and guests for helping to make the event such a success.

HOW WE WORK

TOP: Young people at COAST (p.27); **BOTTOM**: Peatland restoration at Bac-Dubh.

OUR VISION

Throughout the Highlands and Islands, biodiversity decline has been halted and there are clear signs of recovery.

OUR MISSION

To supercharge bottom-up efforts to protect and restore nature throughout the Highlands and Islands.

OUR APPROACH

National efforts to protect and restore nature are gaining momentum, but there are significant gaps, and community groups often end up tackling challenges and pioneering solutions in their local environments. One of the greatest barriers to delivering these locally-focused solutions is the availability of funding.

The Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation (HIEF) partners with local communities to protect, restore and regenerate the natural beauty, biodiversity and ecosystems of the Scottish Highlands and Islands for the benefit of nature and people.

We build relationships with trusts and foundations, individual philanthropists, and corporates interested in supporting our work. Donations to HIEF are pooled into a ‘disbursement pot’ which funds three grant rounds annually.

We meet prospective grantees early to discuss project feasibility and guide them through the application process. Grant decisions are made following review by expert advisors and the HIEF Steering Committee, with grants usually ranging from £5,000 to £20,000.

We celebrate successes and network with other local champions to help them replicate and tailor projects to their local context. We raise awareness of projects and partner with other funders to lever additional funding.

2020–2025

AT A GLANCE

FUNDS AWARDED
£1,024,533

EXTRA FUNDS LEVERED
£537,826

GRANTS AWARDED
82

MEDIAN GRANT
£14,270

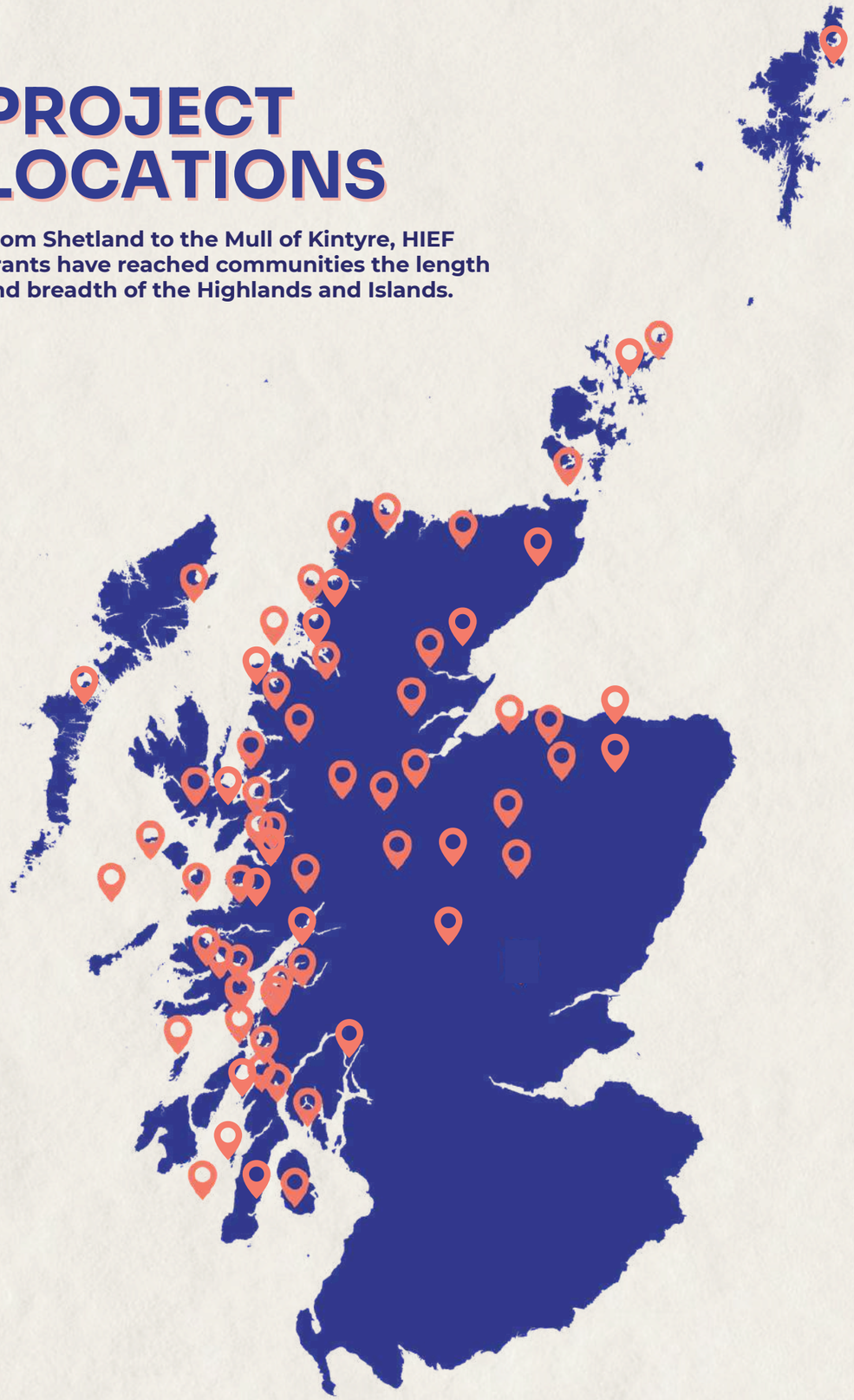
Rather than despair and do nothing it is amazing how individuals and community groups are coming together and the role of HIEF in pump priming this, mentoring groups, and developing new networks is having a real impact. It is both exciting and a privilege to see this commitment achieving real results for people, nature and the wider environment.

STUART HOUSDEN
Steering Committee member & Trustee

Puffin (***Fratercula arctica***) .

PROJECT LOCATIONS

From Shetland to the Mull of Kintyre, HIEF grants have reached communities the length and breadth of the Highlands and Islands.



OUR WORK IN FOCUS

Surveyors during the Knoydart Wild Trees Survey (p22).
© Knoydart Forest Trust

AREAS OF INTEREST

Plastic@Bay (p16); © JHP Visuals.

Tackling Environmental Threats

page 13

Confronting the root causes of biodiversity loss, ecosystem degradation, and pollution.

78,800 Items of fishing gear removed

14 Meetings with public authorities

7 Management plans developed

Protecting Native Species

page 17

Projects that proactively protect, monitor, or safeguard valuable ecosystems and at-risk species.

189 Species monitored

Habitat surveys completed: **861**

27km² Habitat mapped

Twinflower in the Cairngorms; © Plantlife.

Seagrass meadow, Loch Craignish; © Seawilding.

Restoring Ecosystems

page 21

Supporting nature's recovery by restoring damaged, degraded, or missing habitats & species.

243 Hectares undergoing restoration

10 New technologies piloted

48 Farmers restoring biodiversity

Empowering Communities for Nature

page 25

Building the capacity, confidence, and leadership of communities to steward their local environment.

15,350 Children reached through educational campaigns

2,830 Volunteers involved

113 Awareness raising events organised

© Argyll Coast & Islands Hope Spot.

Unsustainable Fish Farming

There are concerns at local and national levels over the environmental impacts of the fish farming industry, with over 200 salmon farms located throughout the Highlands and Islands. Waste discharge, catastrophic escapes, and high sea lice numbers all threaten the surrounding marine environment, particularly wild salmon and sea trout populations which have been declining over the last 50 years to now critical levels.

For over a decade, local community groups have been advocating for a moratorium on new fish farm developments. Despite this, the Scottish Government has continued to support the expansion of the industry due to its perceived economic benefits. HIEF has challenged this expansion through several grants, with an overall aim of reducing the environmental impacts on the marine environment.

Mapping & Modelling

Sea lice are one of the many pressures leading to the decline of wild salmon and sea trout. Infestations of these parasites spread from fish farms and threaten wild fish as they swim migratory routes. Computer modelling, predicting and displaying how sea lice densities vary in each location, helps to communicate this risk to decision makers using clear ‘heat maps’.

A community-led effort, led by the **Friends of the Sound of Jura** along with other members of the Coastal Communities Network, set out to develop these models to show sea lice densities and hot spots throughout the entire West Coast of Scotland.

This two-year project, which received three HIEF grants totalling £45,000, combined complex hydrodynamic models of the marine environment and over-layed sea lice data. This technology was used by several community groups in their campaigns against inappropriately sited fish farms application. SEPA added the Firth of Lorn to its Wild Salmonid Protection Zones as a direct result of the sea lice modelling, extending protection to more wild fish.

“HIEF has been great to work with - they understood what we are aiming to do and why it is important, then trusted us to get on with the work. With their help we have been able to make a real difference to the protection of wild salmon and sea trout from the sea lice produced by salmon farms.”

JOHN AITCHISON
Friends of the Sound of Jura

Loch Hourn

When MOWI, a Norwegian salmon-farming giant, planned to expand the biomass of their Loch Hourn salmon farm from 2,500 to 3,100 tonnes, local community group **Friends of Loch Hourn** were extremely concerned about the threat to wild fish populations.

A HIEF grant of £5,000 enabled the group to commission a detailed assessment of the environmental impact of this expansion on marine life in the loch. The report utilised the Mapping and Modelling data created by the Friends of the Sound of Jura, concluding that “Loch Hourn salmon are threatened with extinction”.

This evidence-based argument successfully influenced the decision of the Highland Council to reject MOWI’s application over wild fish concerns, setting a remarkable precedent for future planning applications.

Sadly, MOWI appealed the decision, and the expansion was later approved by the Scottish Government. The Friends of Loch Hourn may not have saved their loch, but they played a key role in the growing movement to challenge the environmental impact of salmon farming.

Cost Benefit Analysis

Economic reasons are often cited by the Scottish Government as justification for their continued support for industry expansion, with headline figures routinely quoting an estimated contribution to both local and national economies:

“Salmon farming provides around 2,500 direct jobs in economically fragile, coastal communities across rural Scotland, with another 8,500 people employed in businesses that depend on the sector.”
Salmon Scotland, November 2025

There were concerns that these figures were exaggerated, so **WildFish** and the **Sustainable Inshore Fisheries Trust**, with funding from HIEF, commissioned a report to assess the true economic contribution. The 6-month long research project was led by Dr Andrew Moxey, the former Chief Agricultural Economist at the Scottish Government and Prof Angela Tregear, from the University of Edinburgh.

Using Skye and Lochalsh as a case-study, the research identified several findings.

“Headline estimates of the economic impacts of Scottish salmon exaggerate economic benefits by focussing on gross rather than net effects and disregarding counterfactuals.”

“In Skye and Lochalsh, salmon farms are estimated to account for c.137 jobs. Of these, stakeholder testimony suggests that c.9% to 28% may not be net additions to local employment due to displacement effects.”

For example, interviews with a range of stakeholders indicated that salmon farms displace other marine industries, such as mussel farming, low-impact fishing, and marine tourism.

The report will provide a foundation for the ongoing policy and advocacy work of WildFish and SIFT, who are both campaigning for the sustainable use of Scotland’s inshore waters.

Marine Litter

The threats to wildlife from marine plastic pollution are extensive, impacting species at every level of the food chain. Ingestion of litter can result in long-term health effects, and malnutrition and entanglement can lead to injury, starvation or drowning.

In addition to direct harm to individual animals, marine litter can also disrupt ecosystem functions, threatening biodiversity and the health of marine habitats. Societal and economic impacts are also significant.

Addressing this urgent crisis requires more than national beach cleaning efforts. We need to harness cutting-edge technology, raise awareness of the problem at source, while also building the evidence base for robust policy changes.

Volunteer-powered beach cleaning on remote Scottish coastlines; © "InTheSameBoat" and SIF.

Drone Analysis of Litter

The **Scottish Islands Federation (SIF)**, specifically their Marine Litter Working Group, has been instrumental in increasing marine litter data collection across the Scottish Islands.

In 2023, through collaboration with the Marine Conservation Society (MCS) and funding from HIEF and others, the number of annual surveys increased from 67 to 156.

However, this effort requires significant volunteer time and effort. The high risk of volunteer fatigue drove SIF to explore alternative means of continued data collection, such as the use of drones and Ai.

The purchase of the DJI Mavic 3 Enterprise drone and auxiliary equipment, along with appropriate licences and insurance, equipped the SIF Marine Litter Working Group with the specialised technology to collect data.

Over the winter of 2024/25, the project collected data on four Scottish islands, successfully capturing eight sets of aerial imagery and accompanying manual marine litter counts.

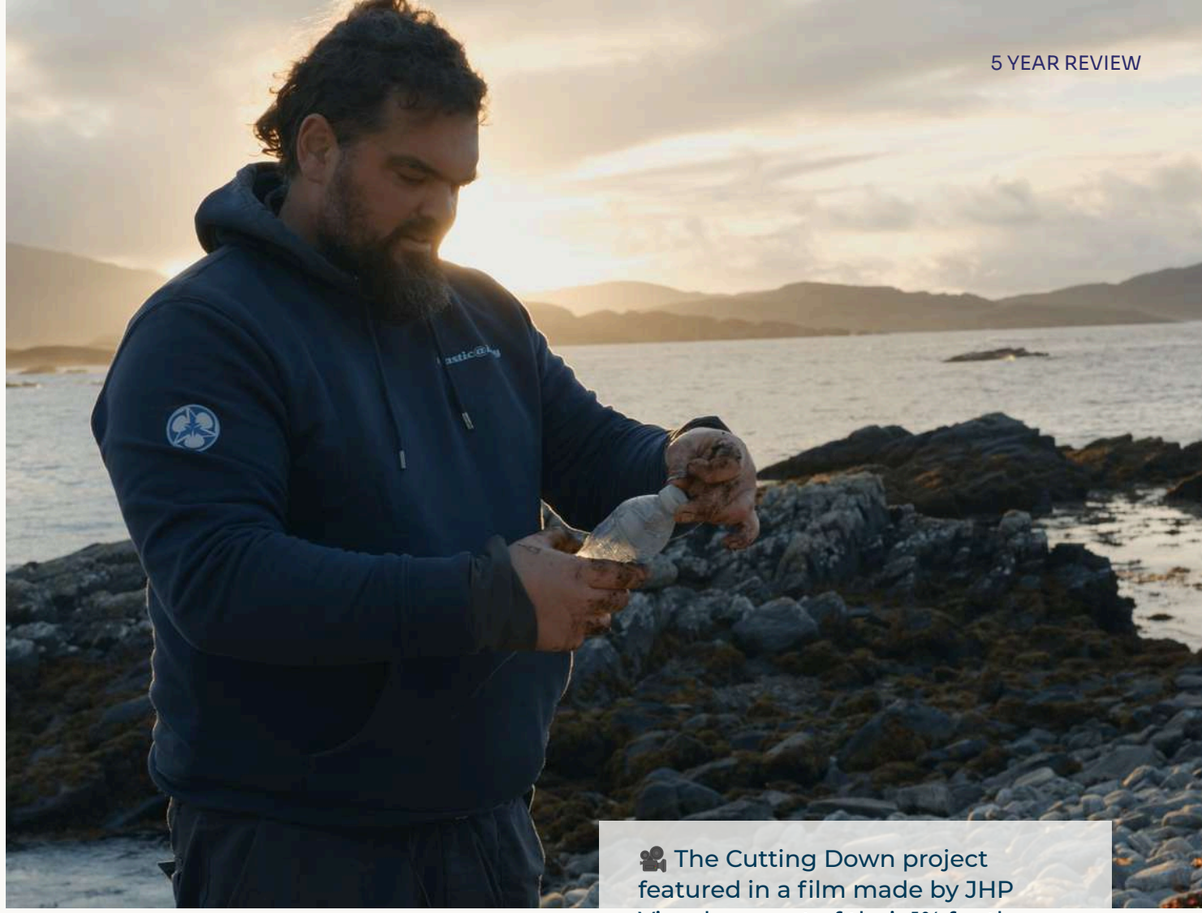
This data fed into a project at The Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture (Cefas), in Suffolk, developing an algorithm to automate identification of marine litter from drone imagery. Imagery collected by SIF will help test the Cefas algorithm, ensuring it will accurately be able to collect data on island-specific marine litter (e.g. aquaculture and fishing gear).

When this becomes operational, data collection will grow in scale and scope to build a more comprehensive picture of marine litter composition.

Simultaneously, automation through drones and Ai will allow volunteers that currently undertake beach surveys to focus on marine litter removal, resulting in more litter removed from the environment.

The partnership between SIF and CEFAS is an exemplar of how community-led data collection can complement larger-scale scientific research.

Looking ahead, HIEF are delighted to be supporting SIF with an unrestricted grant of £60,000 (£20,000 a year for three years) enabling the Federation to continue its vital work tackling marine litter across the Scottish Islands.



🎥 The Cutting Down project featured in a film made by JHP Visuals as part of their 1% for the Planet contribution to HIEF.

The Cutting Down Project

When we imagine marine litter, we often picture plastic bottles, wet wipes, and crisp packets. On Scotland's islands, however, 59% of marine litter originates from fishing, aquaculture and shipping.

Net cuttings are particularly common. These are short 5-50cm sections of fishing rope, generated when fishermen mend nets or creels by cutting out damaged sections and replacing them. Their relatively short length means that they unravel and break up easily, generating micro and nano-plastic pollution hazards.

This project worked with harbours on the Outer Hebrides, and their respective fishermen, to pilot ways to collect these net cuttings quayside and then recycle them.

The **Plastic@Bay team** worked closely with local fishermen to determine the optimal harbour locations across Lewis & Harris. At these five harbours, collection stations – in the form of open sided metal luggage cages – were placed conveniently with accompanying guidance.

Over the course of just two-months, a tonne of rope and net cuttings were collected. This demonstrates that marine pollution can be effectively prevented at source through local initiatives that work collaboratively with industry.

"What we've found is, just from the simple act of placing a bin there, fishermen are not just only putting their net cuttings in there, but they're also actually sorting out their other plastics."

JOAN D'ARCY
Plastic@Bay

Monitoring Ocean Giants

From breaching whales to elusive sharks and skates, our seas are home to a number of unique ocean giants.

Feeding on krill, small fish, and crustaceans, these species indicate the health of the wider marine environment.

Centuries of pressure from fishing and whaling, coupled with the growing impacts of climate change, have left our seas struggling, in terms of overall health and productivity.

The Scottish Government is part way through implementing an ambitious network of Marine Protected Areas (MPA). Yet there are significant gaps in monitoring, particularly for mobile species that live in relatively inaccessible areas of our seas, to inform these decisions.

The growing network of community-led initiatives, not only fill vital gaps in national monitoring efforts, but also engage people of all ages with the marine environment, fostering a sense of stewardship within coastal communities.

Orkney Skate Trust

Flapper skates (*Dipturus intermedius*) are considered endemic to the Northeast Atlantic. The largest skate in the world, they are true ocean giants, measuring up to 2.85m in length and 100kg in weight, with the ability to live for over 50 years.

Sadly, following decades of pressure from human activities such as fishing and subsea infrastructure, they are now classed as 'Critically endangered'.

Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) can be effective in helping the species recover. For example, numbers have increased by up to 92% in the Loch Sunart to the Sound of Jura MPA. However, skate distributions are still poorly understood in many parts of Scotland, hindering the identification and designation of further protected areas.

Filling this gap is **The Orkney Skate Trust** (OST)– a community-led research organisation consisting of volunteer marine professionals and community members.

Their focus is not just flapper skate, but a range of species in the waters surrounding Orkney, including the porbeagle shark and the blue skate, a smaller relative of the giant flapper skate.

In recent years, they have developed sophisticated survey technology specifically for monitoring skate. Baited Remote Underwater Video (BRUV) systems – essentially frames fitted with a camera and bait that sink to sit on the seabed - were adapted to capture the dorsal side of the fish for population dynamic studies.

A HIEF grant in early 2025 supported the OST to carry out 38 successful BRUV surveys. The data collected provided an additional layer of evidence to prove that two areas – Galt, and Neban Point - are vital habitats for the critically endangered flapper skate.

This led to an international team of leading marine scientists designating both Galt and Neban Point as 'Important Shark and Ray Areas (ISRAs)'. This is a huge win for OST, with the ISRAs bridging a crucial gap between data collection and marine management, making decision-makers aware that development should be avoided in these areas.

Flapper skate; © OST.

Minke Whale data collection; © HWDT.

30 Years of Minke Whale research

Based in Tobermory, Mull, the **Hebridean Whale and Dolphin Trust** (HWDT) has been pioneering community-led monitoring efforts for thirty years. Through a series of volunteer-crewed expeditions onboard their sailing vessel Silurian, they monitor the health and distribution of whales, dolphins, and porpoises throughout the West Coast of Scotland.

A network of MPAs has been designated by the Scottish Government, including the Sea of the Hebrides MPA designated specifically for minke whales. These inquisitive mammals are the UK's smallest whale, and gulp feed on huge mouthfuls of fish and krill.

Five years on from the MPA designation there are still no management measures in place to protect minke whale populations, meaning that, like many of Scotland's inshore MPAs, it is effectively protected in name only.

A major Government consultation on their proposed fisheries management measures for MPAs – essentially restrictions on certain types of fishing such as dredging and trawling – was promised to take place in 2024. This was considered a landmark opportunity to inform marine protection.

HWDT therefore set out to analyse thirty years of minke whale photographic data to form an official consultation response. This involved distinguishing whales by the shape of their fins, revealing information on the historical movement of individuals, with scars providing insight into rates of entanglement.

This research was presented at national and international conferences and is the subject of two research publications.

Sadly, the Government again delayed their consultation of management measures for MPAs until late 2026 at the earliest.

Despite this, the HWDT team continue to use the improved evidence base to advocate for effective marine management, attending eleven meetings with politicians, ministers, and Government agencies.

"This project enabled HWDT to increase the reach and impact of its advocacy for minke whale protection in Scottish seas and strengthen the evidence base available, alongside our research collaborators, ahead of a long-awaited public consultation.

As the external policy timeframes changed multiple times during this project it was a relief and an advantage to be supported by a flexible funder that understood the need to adapt the project to achieve the desired impact."

ALISON LOMAX
Director, Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust

Invasive Species

Invasive Non-Native species (INNS) are running rampant through the Highlands and Islands. In Scotland's temperate rainforest zone, Rhododendron ponticum threatens 140,000 hectares – an area large enough to blanket all of Scotland's cities twice over.

American skunk cabbage, Himalayan balsam and Japanese knotweed are some of the other INNS becoming increasingly prevalent with devastating impacts on native species, suppressing plants and trees by blocking out light.

As the problem continues to grow, there is an urgent need for co-ordinated funding and resource allocation at a national scale. Many communities, particularly those living in areas where INNS now dominate, are taking matters into their own hands.

Rather than framing INNS as solely problematic, they recognise an opportunity to protect and restore their natural environment, while simultaneously increasing woodland management skills.

Tayvallich Rhododendron

To be successful, rhododendron removal needs to be strategic, and the Tayvallich peninsula in Argyll is one area where there is a real opportunity to eradicate the species entirely.

A £5 million rhododendron-removal project led by Argyll-based charity ACT is underway, however small pockets of rhododendron around the village of Tayvallich fall outwith the ACT project area. The largest of these is a 1.3 hectare block in an area of land owned by **Tayvallich Initiative,** a community organisation that owns and manages community assets while also delivering an environmental ranger project.

Tayvallich Initiative have taken a long term view, concluding that the most cost-effective option is to upskill volunteers to undertake the rhododendron removal work.

Over summer 2025, a HIEF grant supported a team of three to undergo training to ensure safe herbicide application. By December, they had completed the initial treatment, with follow up visits planned for autumn 2026.

TOP: Cnoc Leis community land, neighbouring the village of Tayvallich.
MIDDLE RIGHT: Tayvallich Initiative volunteer tackling rhododendron. © Tayvallich Initiative.

As well as protecting the temperate rainforest habitats, the project has empowered community members to steward the land. Looking ahead, Tayvallich Initiative will continue to treat the rhododendron along with other INNS such as Sitka spruce and American skunk cabbage.

American Mink

The **Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation** (HAWO) is based at the Argyll Beaver Centre, in Knapdale, Argyll. The surrounding temperate rainforest, lochs, and wetlands were the site of the UK's first trial beaver reintroduction which had positive environmental, economic, and social impacts.

The beavers created complex and messy wetlands – the ideal habitat for water voles. A HIEF grant, in May 2021, aimed to kickstart a multi-year project to restore water vole populations. Initially, HAWO undertook a comprehensive ecological survey in Knapdale, which identified large swathes of suitable water vole habitat.

However, the project had to shift focus early on, when it became clear that eradication of American mink was a crucial prerequisite for restoring water voles. Having escaped from fur farms in the 1950s and 60s, mink are now well established throughout the UK. They are fierce predators, feeding on ground nesting birds and other species such as the water vole, who are now classified as endangered.

Through collaboration with the Waterlife Recovery Trust, genetic analysis established the age, distribution, relationships and dispersal distances of the mink population. Following best practice established by the Waterlife Recovery Trust, mink trapping will continue for a minimum of 3 years in order to eliminate mink from Loch Sween and Knapdale Forest, creating suitable conditions for water voles to return.

Water voles have suffered a severe, long-term decline of roughly 90-95% since the mid-20th century, primarily due to predation from invasive non-native American mink

"The HIEF grant enabled our project to become a reality, at a time when smaller organisations find it increasingly difficult to access funding. HIEF are approachable, flexible and happy to adopt a 'boots on the ground approach' to assessing a project's needs and progress."

Pete Creech
Manager, Heart of Argyll Wildlife Organisation

RIGHT: Setting up mink traps; © HAWO.

Native woodland

The Highlands and Islands are home to a range of woodlands. From the Temperate Rainforests of Argyll to the Caledonian pinewoods of Glen Affric, our woodlands are an integral part of our landscape, culture and identity.

However, the extent of native woodland today is a fragment of what once existed. A range of factors such as deforestation, farming, and climate change has reduced native woodland cover to just 5% of Scotland's total land area. Community groups and NGOs are pivotal to national efforts to restore native woodland.

Central to HIEF's grant giving ethos is that restoration is only part of the picture. Investing in tree nurseries ensures a sustainable supply of saplings. Landscape scale surveys enable strategic and effective intervention, while education and capacity building are vital to inspiring collective action.

TOP: Volunteers clearing litter from Oban Waterfall Wood.
BOTTOM: Rare lichens and bryophytes are a key feature of Scotland's temperate rainforest; © Keep Oban Beautiful.

Site visit to Atlantic Rainforest; © Daisy Honeybunn.

Oban Waterfall Wood

Keep Oban Beautiful are a local organisation who support community involvement in improving Oban's local environment. In 2023, they identified an unused strip of council-owned woodland adjacent to the High School.

It was in a neglected state, having fallen victim to fly-tipping and the spread of INNS. However, rare oceanic bryophytes and lichens signalled that this woodland was a fragment of rainforest, which, coupled with its accessible location in the centre of town, inspired an effort to 'rehabilitate' this woodland for the benefit of humans and wildlife.

A HIEF grant of £5,000 enabled the team to carry out targeted INNS removal, improve accessibility, and run creative events and initiatives in the woodland.

"The HIEF grant has been a game changer for this project! Volunteers can achieve so much with shared resources & muscle, but this allows us to develop the people side of the project.

Slowing people down and helping them to appreciate the magic of a rainforest will bring about a sense of wonder & desire to protect this very special but overlooked resource that is right on our doorstep."

LAURA CORBE
Keep Oban Beautiful

An isolated juniper perched at high-altitude within 'Britain's Last Wilderness'; © Knoydart Forest Trust.

Knoydart Wild Trees Survey

There are two closely related, but different approaches to restoring native woodlands. Many projects focus on planting native trees, and in many areas, where trees have disappeared completely, this is the only option.

An alternative approach is to enable wild tree populations to regenerate and expand naturally. Wild trees are defined as Scotland's natural tree populations. What makes them unique from planted trees is that they are part of an unbroken chain of natural regeneration that goes right back to the end of the last ice age.

Wild trees have high biodiversity value because they support unique 'refugial species' such as lichens, mosses, wildflowers, ferns, and herbs. They are also genetically diverse and have evolved in harmony with the local conditions, meaning they are more resilient to threats such as disease and climate change.

It can take time, but when the conditions are right, wild trees can reforest whole landscapes. On Knoydart, a partly community-owned peninsula accessible only by boat or foot, the **Knoydart Forest Trust** in partnership with the Knoydart Foundation are looking to do just that. The first step towards this landscape-wide regeneration is understanding the full extent of these wild tree 'refuges'.

In 2025, with support from HIEF and other funders, they undertook a Wild Trees Survey across 8,500 hectares of Knoydart.

Over nine weeks in the summer, a dedicated team surveyed 1,396 plots and 248 transects throughout the peninsula. These varied from steep coastlines to remote mountainsides, tree-scattered hillslopes to jagged gorges bursting with life.

Excitingly, the survey confirmed that given the right conditions there is potential for significant natural woodland regeneration. The project report concluded with a series of detailed recommendations to land managers, emphasising the need for effective landscape-scale deer management and INNS removal.

As well as laying the essential groundwork for improved land management and landscape-scale restoration, the project also built capacity and awareness within the Knoydart community.

Nine people were trained in ecological monitoring, improving the viability and effectiveness of Knoydart Forest Trust's long-term woodland recovery efforts.

"The HIEF team were extremely supportive and helpful in all aspects of the application process and throughout the project. We are very grateful for their support in making our project happen."

LORNA SCHOFIELD
Knoydart Forest Trust

Riparian woodland on the River Morriston, Inverness-shire.

Reviving Rivers

Scotland's rivers and their freshwater species face increasing pressure from a range of environmental stressors. Degraded riverbank habitats reduce shade and bank stability, making rivers more vulnerable to rising temperatures, erosion, and loss of biodiversity. These changes threaten iconic species such as wild Atlantic salmon and sea trout, while also undermining water quality and ecosystem resilience.

The network of long-established Fisheries Trusts throughout the whole of Scotland provides a unique framework to advance the conservation of rivers at catchment scale. Combining in-depth local knowledge, partnership working, and innovation, they are leading the way in restoring river habitats throughout the Highlands and Islands.

Edinglassie Burn Restoration

The **Deveron, Bogie and Isla Rivers Trust** (DBIRT) works to restore and enhance the health of the Deveron catchment in northeast Scotland. As part of the wider Project Deveron programme, a 10-year catchment-scale partnership with the Atlantic Salmon Trust, DBIRT is leading restoration work on the Edinglassie Burn, a tributary of the River Deveron

The Edinglassie project is focused on practical habitat improvement and reducing pressures from agricultural riparian land use as an important demonstration site for showing how farming and river restoration can work together. The project is being delivered with landowner support and is designed to improve the burn while maintaining practical agricultural management.

Work delivered so far includes the creation of a hectare of additional buffer strips, installation of alternative watering points to ensure livestock exclusion from sensitive river margins and the planting of 8,000 native broadleaf trees along the burn.

Together, these actions are helping to reduce bank erosion, limit sediment and nutrient inputs, increase future riparian shade, reconnect the burn to the floodplain, improve habitat structure, and create better conditions for salmonids and wider freshwater and terrestrial biodiversity.

In summer 2026, Phase 2 of the project looks to restore access to migratory species through the installation of a rock ramp style fish pass at the confluence with the Deveron.

To ensure the effectiveness of these actions, robust environmental monitoring is essential. With support from a HIEF grant, DBIRT have installed temperature loggers along the burn and downstream to collect high-resolution data on thermal conditions.

This will help assess how riparian restoration affects water temperature and habitat suitability over time, and will support adaptive management across the wider Deveron catchment.

LEFT & CENTRE: Tree nursery saplings; ©Gethin Chamberlain.
RIGHT: Planting riparian woodlands; © Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust.

Kyle of Sutherland Tree Nursery

Riparian woodlands adjacent to streams and rivers play a vital role in maintaining river health. Through preventing bank erosion, creating deadwood, and supplying nutrients, riparian woodlands provide habitat for a wide variety of organisms.

The endangered Atlantic Salmon, for example, rely on riparian woodlands to provide shade in hot summer months, and boost invertebrate populations, which constitute an essential food source.

These crucial 'riverwoods' have been fragmented to isolated areas, causing rivers to erode and biodiversity to decline, threatening keystone species such as the salmon. Restoring these woodlands offers an opportunity for ecosystem revival, and in the case of the salmon: species survival.

Kyle of Sutherland Fisheries Trust are one of several organisations leading the charge to restore this vital habitat. In 2024, they established a tree nursery to ensure a steady supply of locally sourced saplings, growing 20,000 saplings for planting in just one year.

This included a wide variety of native species, such as downy birch, eared willow, alder, oak, aspen and wych elm. By sourcing seeds locally, the nursery maintains the genetic diversity of stocks, and reduces biodiversity risks associated with sourcing trees from elsewhere.

Through a programme of outreach activities, the nursery raised awareness locally of the threats facing salmon, and the role of the riverwoods project and tree nursery in addressing these. Local events, such as an Agricultural Show, enabled the team to engage with the public through pricking out birch seedlings for the nursery, with regular volunteer sessions being held to enable people to get involved with the project.

In the long term, restored riparian woodlands will provide high water quality and a range of habitats for freshwater organisms. Through creating shade for migrating Atlantic Salmon, the woodlands will not only reduce the plight of this iconic keystone species, but also positively impact the local fishery and tourism economy.

Atlantic salmon leaping on a Perthshire river; © George Clark.

Community Stewardship

There is a growing recognition that the most effective, long term conservation projects are 'bottom-up' – led by people who live and work in their local environment. However, in many parts of the Highlands, opportunities to participate in nature conservation are limited. Divisive topics such as rewilding, fish farming, and deer management dominate local environmental conversations, with public funding favouring capital project costs over community participation in nature.

Empowering communities for nature involves investing in local knowledge, skills and creativity. These approaches move beyond engagement, forging a space where local people can take ownership and lead on actions that protect and restore nature.

Glenelg Biodiversity Mapping

The Glenelg peninsula is a remote, rugged, beautiful corner of the Western Highlands. With a population of around 300 people, social isolation is a challenge, and **The Arnisdale and Loch Hourn Community Association** play a crucial role in organising music, arts, and environmental events for people of all ages.

The idea for a photography and citizen science project was conceived through conversations within the community. Over summer 2024, a series of workshops, led by experts, brought to attention the abundance of wildlife on the Glenelg Peninsula, such as sea eagles, otters, wading birds, and seaweed. Experts included ornithologist Bob McMillan, marine biologist Joss Main, Ben Yoxon from the International Otter Survival Fund, and environmental anthropologist Guadalupe Canale.

These workshops, taking place either in the field, or in village halls on the peninsula, were followed by environmental action along the coastline. Litter picks, for example, collected 113kg of plastic in total.

Simultaneously, the photography element of the project took place in collaboration with Glenelg Camera Collective, who introduced participants to iNaturalist – a citizen science app. By uploading photos of species, people formed a collective understanding and appreciation of their local biodiversity.

The project culminated with a photography competition inviting participants to submit photos of the natural environment of the Glenelg peninsula.

There were high levels of engagement, with 94 entries submitted from a wide range of individuals. An exhibition took place in the Ceilidh House in Arnisdale, with a great turnout for the opening night on 23rd May 2025 where the winners were announced.

TOP: Oyster catcher on the Glenelg peninsula.
BOTTOM: Coastal workshop in summer 2024.
© Glenelg & Arnisdale Community Association.

"The end result was an illustration of what can be achieved in a remote location when people pull together to respect and protect their environment.

It has been very gratifying to be a part of a project that has inspired so many people to look closer at the natural world around us and we are delighted that we are already having discussions about what's next!"

JENNY MUNRO
Arnisdale & Loch Hourn Community Association

Scything on the Plock; © KLCT.

Plock Pilot

The **Kyle & Lochalsh Community Trust** (KLCT) took 'The Plock', a 60-acre site on the edge of town, into community ownership in 2019, and since then have been managing the site and improving habitats through the Plock Ranger.

There was a desire locally for more environmental education and citizen science, prompting the idea for 'Plock Pilot' – a 9-month pilot scheme to turn the Plock into an outdoor 'school of the environment'.

A range of educational and citizen science opportunities were delivered for local people. This included several visits from local primary schools, who spent sessions exploring and learning about the Plock's biodiversity. The UHI college also undertook trips to the Plock as part of its outdoor leadership course, focusing on species identification.

A series of weekly and monthly activities took place, including volunteering work parties, health and nature walks.

The heritage skill of scything – cutting grass, weeds, or crops by hand using a blade – proved a particularly popular activity, with the ranger extending scything courses to communities further afield in Caithness and Oban.

Data was gathered to understand the importance of Plock in the Highland landscape and UK context through bryophyte surveys, flowering plants records, and a mammal survey.

It was discovered that the Plock has 'near threatened' Northern Emerald Dragonfly Nymphs, as well as the rare fern 'Dryopteris pseudocomplexa' - crucial findings to inform long term management.

Significantly, the pilot helped the project to secure further funding through the National Lottery Heritage Fund, ensuring that environmental education on the Plock will continue into the future.

EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Engaging young people with the marine environment on The Isle of Arran; © COAST.

The Next Generation

Children in the UK are increasingly disconnected from the natural world. A survey in 2019 found major gaps in species knowledge, with 83% of children unable to identify a bumblebee. However, surveys consistently show children want to learn about nature.

Harnessing the unparalleled enthusiasm of youth is a vital opportunity for conservation – this means investing in projects that inform and empower young people to engage with their local ecosystems, habitats and species.

Young People at Coast

The **Community of Arran Seabed Trust** (COAST) are one of the leading community-led marine conservation organisations in Scotland. They pioneered Scotland's first 'No-Take Zone' in 2008 and combine research and advocacy work with educational outreach on Arran.

Their discovery centre, in Lamlash Bay, is a hub for marine activities such as snorkelling and boat trips, hosting thousands of visitors a year.

Thanks to COAST's work in marine protection and education, Arran's marine and coastal biodiversity has the potential to recover. To ensure that this work is continued by future generations, it is essential to engage with young populations, many of whom have limited opportunities to engage in marine conservation.

Funding from HIEF allowed COAST to work with consultants to draft a detailed Youth Action Plan setting out a future strategy for engaging with young people. It aimed to engage with young people (18-25) both on and off the island of Arran, extending into North Ayrshire towns with higher levels of deprivation.

To inform the plan, COAST engaged directly with 100 young people at Arran High School's careers fair, as well as a variety of youth groups on both Arran and mainland Ayrshire. This consultation itself was valuable, raising awareness of COAST's work within the young cohort, and generating interest in conservation careers.

The result is an evidence-based, needs-led plan which outlines the next 5 years of COAST's activity – offering a series of recommendations for specific activities, timelines, responsible parties, and potential funding sources.

Through strategic planning, the next phase of COAST activities will engage and empower young people as effectively as possible, giving our oceans and future generations the best chance of a healthy environment in the years to come.

"We are immensely grateful to HIEF for their support, which has enabled us to deepen our engagement with young people across the Firth of Clyde. At COAST, we believe that empowering the next generation with knowledge and hands-on experience is essential for fostering a sense of stewardship towards our marine environment."

AINE PURCELL MILTON
Executive Director, COAST

Highland Birdboxes

Tom Rawson from **GreenTweed Eco** is a force for nature. From his home in the Scottish Borders, Tom kickstarted a project to supply all primary schools in the Borders region with 10 birdboxes. The initiative was a huge success, winning several awards and setting a precedent to expand into other regions.

Tom then turned his attention North, to the 175 primary schools of Highland region. Funding from HIEF was secured in 2020, and Tom started to build the boxes, using sustainable and recycled materials.

The Highland council region is vast, stretching from John o' Groats to the Isle of Skye. In the project's first year, 450 boxes were delivered to 45 schools in the Speyside area, before a second HIEF grant allowed Tom to expand North of Inverness into Caithness and Sutherland.

These birdboxes provide much needed nesting sites for native birds whose populations have plummeted in recent years. In schools that reported back, over 60% of the boxes were occupied in their first year.

At the same time, teaching resources supplied with the boxes enabled the schoolchildren to engage with the natural world around them, inspiring them to be the wildlife ambassadors of the future.

The HIEF grant leveraged additional funding to complete the Highland region, before other council areas followed suit. The project received recognition in national media and was also highlighted in the Scottish Parliament. Birdboxes have now been supplied to Borders, Highland, Aberdeenshire, Moray, Fife, Perth, and East Lothian, with funding being sought to extend into Argyll and Bute.

Through the deceptively simple act of placing 10 birdboxes in every school, Tom has impacted the lives of thousands of children in the Highlands and further afield, shaping the next generation of nature advocates.

"Having an amazing showcase project like The Highlands meant that I could start picking up bird box projects in the surrounding area. The Highland project led directly to doing Moray and East Lothian at either end of Scotland.

The funding from HIEF directly helped fund me building the workshop that I now have outside, allowing me to really professionalise what I'm doing. It was one of those real moments in your life that changes the direction of what you're doing in a really positive way."

TOM RAWSON
GreenTweed Eco

© Tom Rawson

The Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest team; © Jenny Tweedie.

IN THEIR WORDS

Saving Scotland's Rainforest

JULIE STONEMAN
Saving Scotland's Rainforest Programme Manager at Plantlife Scotland

At the end of 2020, the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest (ASR) was preparing to launch its first strategy, but at that time, awareness of Scotland's rainforest was very low and even Alliance partners were describing it in different ways. As an early-stage voluntary partnership, we lacked capacity to co-ordinate messaging and engage key audiences, such as funders, politicians, landowners and communities.

HIEF arrived at a pivotal moment, funding one of its first grants for a communications specialist to help us build a shared narrative and a clear, consistent identity for Scotland's rainforest and for ASR.

Over the following year, this capacity boost helped Scotland's rainforest move into the public and policy mainstream. The Scottish Government committed to restoring and expanding rainforest, and the habitat began to feature regularly in policy. Higher profile also helped catalyse action on the ground, and by year end four landscape-scale rainforest restoration projects had formed and were starting to attract funding.

As these projects developed, they needed practical guidance to protect the bryophytes and lichens that make these woodlands internationally important. At that point, HIEF stepped in to help fund a two-year post for a specialist ecologist to set good-practice management principles and provide training, workshops and tailored advice.

Today, the roles first enabled by HIEF are embedded: the communications post is now an established staff position hosted by RSPB, and the ecologist role is permanent at Plantlife. ASR has grown in confidence and capability, uniting more organisations around shared objectives. Scotland's rainforest is now widely recognised as a national priority habitat, with twelve restoration projects covering almost 40% of core rainforest areas.

HIEF's early support helped build the foundations, credibility and capacity to get us on track.

Crucially, action is increasingly being initiated beyond ASR's direct reach—what we call "the rainforest movement". While major challenges remain to achieve ASR's aim to restore all of Scotland's rainforest and double its size by 2045, HIEF's early support helped build the foundations, credibility and capacity to get us on track.

Swift (*Apus Apus*).

Lunan Burn Wildlife Cluster

ROBERT RATTRAY
Lunan Burn Wildlife Cluster

The Lunan Burn Wildlife Cluster is a collaboration of landowners & farmers in the Dunkeld & Blairgowrie area of Highland Perthshire who have come together to help our local wildlife & biodiversity through landscape scale management. Our Cluster was formed in 2024; our three key aims being water quality, pollinator habitats and deer management.

In our local area, we have suffered a noticeable decline in both swifts and barn owls, and part of this project has been specifically to encourage both species back into our cluster area.

With the assistance and encouragement of HIEF, and the funding provided, we were able to kick off with this project in March/April of 2025.

We decided to utilise old farm buildings to site ten barn owl boxes, spread throughout the cluster, concentrating on areas where there is close access to rough ground and lots of voles, and I'm pleased to report a year on that we already had boxes occupied, and at least one successful hatching and rearing of two owlets.

To encourage swifts, we put up twenty swift boxes in groups of twos and threes on seven sites in the cluster, putting them on suitable buildings belonging to cluster members, in areas where swifts had been sighted in the past.

To encourage birds to find these boxes, we added caller units, and this should help significantly in swifts finding and occupying these boxes.

Additionally, we also deployed bio-acoustic monitors into four locations for the months of May & November to record bird species – residents plus summer and autumn migrants. The first year's results were encouraging, and have provided us with some base line data to build on.

The two highlights for me were watching the Barn owl family, and seeing a number of swifts swooping around the swift boxes in early July, no doubt attracted by the caller. Fingers crossed for 2026!

My main takeaway from this project has been the enormous assistance and enthusiasm from those I approached for advice. In particular, Tim Norris of Hampshire Swifts (who were instrumental in the advice regarding callers, and putting me in touch with Graham Fell of Kendal Men in Sheds, who put together the caller units for us), Rob Tilsley of the Barn Owl Trust, and Stefan Zeeman of Carbon Rewild, who provided the bio-acoustic monitors, and lots of advice.

So, many thanks to them all, and the volunteers who have helped within the cluster, and not least to Louis and Sally of HIEF, for helping make this project happen.

Wester Ross salmon nutrition project, co-funded with Fishmongers; © Wester Ross Fisheries Trust.

Co-Funding with HIEF

ANDREW WALLACE
Fisheries Director of the Fishmongers Company

Those who have worked with HIEF over the last few years will have appreciated the impact of this charity on the environments, landscapes and communities of the Highlands. And so many congratulations are due HIEF on their 5th anniversary.

In just a few short years HIEF has put itself on the map in a part of the UK which often gets neglected by philanthropy.

We look forward to a continuing, constructive working partnership with HIEF at a time of mounting pressures on our natural environment.

We have collaborated with HIEF on several projects, over recent years, sometimes with us as the project lead and on other occasions on projects that HIEF have spearheaded.

Such co-operation between environmental charities is not only efficient from a governance and due diligence perspective but also allows, through the leveraging of additional funds, the impact of all our investments to be greater still. An essential attribute of modern-day philanthropy where the environmental challenges of the Highlands far exceed the funding available.

The Community Association of Lochs and Sounds (CAOLAS) team at Lochaline Harbour; © Daisy Honeybunn.

BEYOND GRANT-GIVING

Grant givers can bring more to the table than the provision of funding. In the Scottish context, there are already a variety of organisations playing different, albeit vital, strategic roles. Through relationship and network building, HIEF has identified areas where it can broaden impact through unlocking additional funding and strengthening the skillset and collective capacity of the sector.

Increasing & Diversifying Funding

All parties involved with nature conservation and restoration are acutely aware of the biodiversity finance gap, and community-groups in the Highlands & Islands are no exception. Demand for HIEF funding is approximately triple the amount available to disburse. A core HIEF goal is thus to increase and diversify the amount of funding available for community groups.

HIEF builds relationships with philanthropists, trusts & foundations, and corporates who share our passion for community-led nature restoration. In a fundraising world dominated by digital communication, bringing people together is more important than ever. Events in 2023 (Aldourie Castle) and 2025 (HIEF 5th Birthday Celebration, p.3) welcomed supporters, donors, partners, and grantees to celebrate success and connect.

The networks developed have flourished, to a point where HIEF has leveraged an additional £537,000 from other funders into community-led projects in the Highlands & Islands. The understanding of funder interests coupled with a bird's-eye view of the sector enables HIEF to act as a matchmaker, introducing collaborative funders to trusted and effective organisations on the ground.

ABOVE: HIEF co-founder Hugh Raven addressing the audience at HIEF 5th Birthday event.
RIGHT: Steering Committee visit to Oban Waterfall Wood.

LEFT: Sally McNaught, a group of journalists, and the Alladale Wilderness Reserve team, on day 1 of a week-long Press Tour around the Highlands and Islands; © Gethin Chamberlain.

Grantee Support & Coaching

HIEF's collaborative approach stretches beyond relationship building and matchmaking. Through Crowdfunding campaigns, such as with Bute Community Forest in 2024, HIEF helps to unlock additional funding for grantees. Simultaneously, these campaigns strengthen funding resilience by building a network of local donors, and evidencing community support for future funding bids.

As both a funder and a fundraiser, HIEF is well placed to offer insight into funding applications. Online meetings in advance of, and during the HIEF application process help to strengthen organisations' abilities to communicate their work effectively. This exercise has value beyond fundraising, with the principal messages being adjusted for other audiences - from local media to national policy decision-makers.

Bridging the Gap

HIEF's network is diverse, consisting of community groups, NGOs, environmental experts, and philanthropic donors. The funding world is often viewed as binary and transactional - funder and fundraiser, grantmaker and grantee. Important distinctions exist between these groups, but a narrower focus on difference can obscure common ground.

It is when different parts of the sector are brought together that those distinctions fade and creative collaboration becomes possible.

At least one Steering Committee meeting a year is held in person, tied to a visit with a grantee. In June 2025, Steering Committee members joined Laura Corbe of Keep Oban Beautiful for a tour of Oban Waterfall Wood - a fragment of temperate rainforest tucked within the town.

The setting drew out conversations that ranged from rhododendron clearance to woodland education, with shared experience and mutual curiosity cutting across the usual lines between funder and funded.

Days like this build knowledge and strengthen connections, but their deeper value lies in renewing a collective commitment to our common cause: protecting and restoring the natural world.

OUR HISTORY

2020

HIEF FOUNDED by prominent philanthropists Hugh Raven and Ben Goldsmith, as an independent Scottish Charity affiliated with the Conservation Collective.

MILESTONE Sally McNaught appointed Executive Director.

MILESTONE First grants awarded in October 2020.

2021

MILESTONE First in-person Steering Committee Meeting at Ardtornish.

SUCCESS HIEF wins the award for Best Marine Grant at The Collectives awards, recognising the success of the Mapping & Modelling Resources developed by members of the Coastal Communities Network.

EVENTS COP 26 takes place in Glasgow.

FUNDING HIEF awards £118,000 in grants, including support for West Loch Ness Farm Cluster, one of Scotland's first farm clusters.

2022

MILESTONE First grantee visits possible after COVID restrictions lifted.

EVENTS Steering Committee meeting takes place at Ruantallin, Isle of Jura.

SUCCESS for HIEF grantee Seawilding at the Nature of Scotland Awards.

FUNDING HIEF awards its 25th grant. Mull & Iona Community Trust receive funding to restore nature at Ardura Woodland.

2023

FUNDING from Depeche Mode & Hublot is channelled to Marine Conservation Society for the Beachwatch project, boosting marine litter data collection efforts across the H&I.

EVENTS Donors and friends of HIEF gather at Aldourie Castle for a day of learning and connection.

SUCCESS HIEF wins the award for the Best Impact Grant at the Conservation Collective Global Gathering, recognising the success of the support to the Coastal Communities Network achieving a de facto ban on the use of Acoustic Deterrent Devices by salmon farms.

IMPACT Scottish Islands Federation report reveals that 59% of marine litter found on island beaches in 2023 came from marine-industry sources such as salmon farming and fishing.

2024

MILESTONE HIEF staff doubles with Louis MacMillan joining as Project Co-ordinator.

SUCCESS HIEF wins the award for Protecting Native Species at the Conservation Collective Global Gathering recognising the success of their grants supporting the restoration of native oysters.

MILESTONE Bute Community Forest Crowdfunder in partnership with HIEF raises £30,000 for their woodland ranger programme.

EVENTS A week long press-trip immerses seven journalists in community-led conservation and restoration, raising awareness of an array of inspiring HIEF-funded projects.

IMPACT The GRAB Trust deliver marine litter workshops for over 3,000 schoolchildren in Argyll & Bute.

IMPACT Seawilding achieve a 97% survival rate in transplanted seedlings, a major breakthrough in Seagrass restoration.

IMPACT The Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest grows to adopt 11 community-focused, landscape-scale projects that cover more than 15% of Scotland's rainforest zone.

FUNDING First unrestricted multi-year grant awarded to the Scottish Islands Federation.

FUNDING Orkney Skate Trust and Plantlife Munsary Peatland projects supported by the BA Community Fund on Crowdfunder.

MILESTONE HIEF awards a record number of 26 grants, making an annual total of £360,000 awarded to projects.

2025

EVENTS First 5 Years of HIEF celebrated in the Caledonian Club, London. A room of 80 guests are treated to drinks courtesy of Nc'nean and an inspiring talk from award-winning wildlife filmmaker Alastair Fothergill OBE.

LOOKING AHEAD

There are a range of exciting and innovative HIEF projects underway in 2026.

Peatland is an internationally important habitat, crucial in terms of carbon storage, water quality, and biodiversity. In Poolewe, Highland, **Rewilding Bac Dubh** are restoring degraded peatland habitats through creating leaky dams. Further north in the famous Flow Country of Caithness, **Plantlife Scotland** are restoring hydrological function by blocking artificial drains and gullies, and stabilising eroding peat surfaces through hag reprofiling and revegetation.

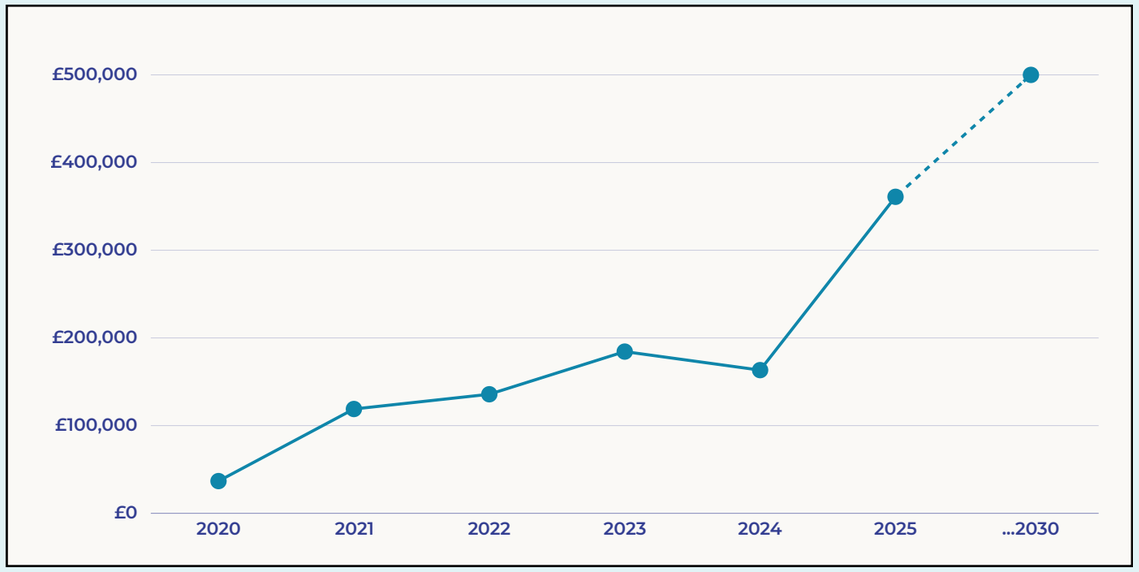
Scotland's sand dune habitats are internationally important from an ecological perspective, supporting specialist plant communities and rare invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians and ground nesting birds. In Orkney, the **Sanday Development Trust** are reversing dune degradation by reducing visitor pressure and re-planting grasses into over grazed areas. On the Moray Coast, **Lossiemouth Community Council** are pioneering the use of Christmas trees to stabilise the fast-eroding sand dunes.

Head to our website (hief.scot) and subscribe to our newsletter to be the first to hear updates on the many inspirational community-led projects taking place.

PROJECTS UNDERWAY IN 2026.
Clockwise from top left: Lossiemouth Dune Restoration; Seedshed Sutherland; Bac-Dubh Peatland Restoration; Eigg Tree Nursery

Funding Growth

*2025 marked a step-up in our grant giving, with **£360,955 awarded to 26 different projects.** Alongside an increase in the grant disbursement, there has been increased demand for HIEF funding, with the amount of funding requested increasing fourfold between 2022 and 2025. By 2030, we aim to disburse over £500,000 a year to community-led projects.*



New Partnerships for 2026

SoSo Swim uses recycled fishing nets to create its swimwear and donates 1% of sales to Conservation Collective's network.

Every 6 months, SoSo spotlights a different CC Foundation, and from May to October 2026, HIEF will be the recipient of funds from this partnership! Thank you SoSo swim!

Made in one of Scotland's oldest mills, the new Brora x HIEF cashmere scarf is woven with colours inspired by the Scottish landscape. Brora is donating 10% of the sales of each scarf to the Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation to help fund community-led projects that protect, restore and regenerate Scotland's natural beauty, biodiversity and ecosystems.

Get Involved

Make a donation - One off or regular donations enable us to award grants. For an annual donation of £15,000 or more (3 year pledge) you can join the HIEF Steering Committee and help select projects and guide strategy.

Support a project - We receive 50-60 requests for funding for environmental projects a year. Donations to HIEF can support either projects within one of our areas of interest or a particular project.

Allocate a percentage of sales - Through our partners 1% for the Planet, businesses can donate a portion of turnover or proceeds from product sales or services or direct customer donations.

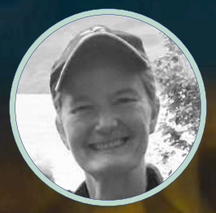
Donations in kind - We welcome donations of services and goods to keep our running costs low, and prizes for use in our events and online crowdfunding campaigns.

OUR TEAM

Sally McNaught
Executive Director

Louis MacMillan
Project Co-ordinator

Bill Carman
Steering Committee
Chair



Laura Maxwell-Stuart
Steering Committee

Laura Pigott
Steering Committee

David Stewart
Steering Committee

Stuart Housden
Steering Committee

Kendra Walsh
Network Director
Conservation Collective

Caroline Younger
Steering Committee

> Having had the pleasure of being on the HIEF Steering Committee since its beginning 5 years ago, I have been part of a tale of growth in reach and in depth. The focus on the power of participation, of community engagement, of building networks has been crucial.
>
> Nature restoration projects that are rooted in an engaged community have resilience. Getting more people involved at every level is key to protecting and restoring nature.

OUR SUPPORTERS

2020 - 2025

THE DULVERTON TRUST
DEPECHE MODE
HUBLOT
ISLE OF MULL SOAP CO
THE GOLDEN BOTTLE TRUST
BRORA EST. 1993
Seacology
The FISHMONGERS' Company's FISHERIES CHARITABLE TRUST
Fife Arms HOTEL
SIGRID RAUSING TRUST
LUND
The Christopher and Henry Oldfield Trust
the european nature trust
WILLIAM GRANT FOUNDATION
ADELPHI Selection SINGLE MALT SCOTCH WHISKY
SWIRE CHARITABLE TRUST
10% for the ocean
Highland Soap Co. SCOTTISH HANDMADE SOAPS & SKIN CARE
ISLE OF HARRIS DISTILLERY
Johnstons of Elgin MADE IN SCOTLAND
WALKER'S SPEYSIDE - EST. 1898
ISLE OF RAASAY HEBRIDEAN DISTILLERS
INCHDAIRNIE WHISKY LTD
REGATTA GROUP
JHP VISUALS
savills
Saffery Champness CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS
THE CRAIGELLACHIE 181 COLLECTION

and many other individual donors. We are very grateful for your support.

CONSERVATION · COLLECTIVE ·

Conservation Collective

Highlands & Islands Environment Foundation is a member of the Conservation Collective, a global network of local foundations funding effective grass-roots conservation initiatives to protect the environment, restore nature and safeguard against climate change.

Scottish Kelp forest; © Thomas Horig / Ocean Image Bank.

THANK YOU

to all our donors, partners, and supporters. We couldn't have done any of this without your generous support.

FOLLOW US

hief.scot

@highlandsandislandsenvironmentfoundation

@highlands_islands_environment

sally@hief.scot

The Highlands and Islands Environment Foundation is a charity registered in Scotland, SC043026, and an affiliate of the Conservation Collective, a charity registered in England and Wales, charity number 1185925.

Printed by Glasgow GFX Print Studio