Action for Nature

A summary of our nature conservation and restoration activities

June 2026

ScottishPower

Foreword

ScottishPower is one of the UK's leading energy companies and the first integrated energy company in the UK to generate **100% green electricity**.

Our focus is on renewable energy, smart grids and driving the change to a cleaner, electric future and we're investing £24 billion between 2024-2028 - that's £18 million every working day - to make that happen.

As part of the Iberdrola Group, we operate over 40 operational windfarm sites, generating more than 3GW of renewable energy - that's enough clean power for around two million homes - and deliver electricity to around 12 million people across an electricity network spanning more than 170,000 kilometres. Our focus is on delivering a **cleaner, greener and better future – quicker**.

As we work to accelerate a fair and rapid transition to Net Zero, the climate crisis isn't the only challenge we face. The world is confronting a deepening biodiversity crisis. The loss of nature threatens the ecosystems and services every one of us depends on.

Business has a critical role to play in reversing this decline, and ScottishPower and Iberdrola have long recognised that responsibility.

For many years, ScottishPower has worked to be a leader in managing the risks and opportunities that come with developing and operating assets across a wide range of habitats, with a focus on nature positive outcomes. This report provides a snapshot of the work happening across ScottishPower to deliver nature conservation and restoration, trial new practices and share our learning.

Cheryl Andrew
Nature Lead

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ScottishPower's commitments for nature

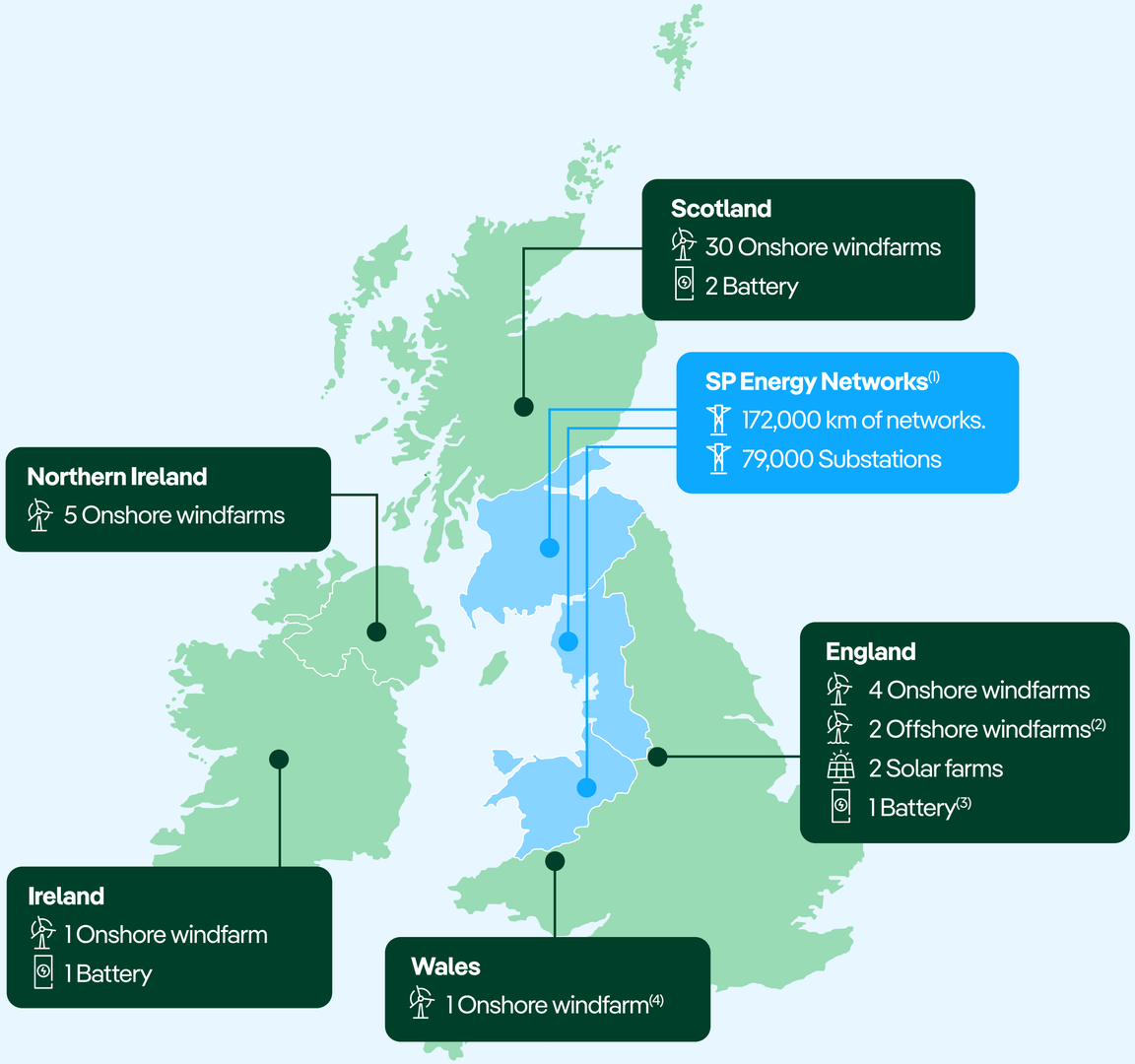
As a developer, owner and operator of major infrastructure, our activities can have both positive and negative impacts on the natural environment. Our scale, geographic reach and long-term investment plans give us the opportunity to deliver nature benefits at a nationally meaningful level.

We construct and operate assets across the UK and Ireland, from central and southern Scotland to northwest England and north Wales. Our portfolio includes networks, onshore and offshore windfarms, solar farms, and over 30 office and depot sites.

For many years, ScottishPower has worked to be a leader in managing the risks and opportunities that come with developing and operating assets across a wide range of habitats. In 2023 our first sustainable development strategy, Action 2030, was published, including our commitment to delivering a net positive impact on biodiversity by 2030. The 2025 publication of our Nature Action Plan renewed our longstanding commitment to play our part in conserving and ultimately restoring nature. We are proud of our track record - winning awards for our efforts to protect the natural environment - from participation in leading research to gaining recognition for our peatland conservation work.

Nature restoration is a long-term process, taking place over many years, as ecosystems and habitats rebuild through slow, interconnected processes like soil development, species establishment, and the re-establishment of ecological networks. Even the most carefully planned actions require sustained management to achieve lasting, robust improvements in habitat quality and ecosystem health.

The case studies featured in this summary show-case these efforts and highlight how we are delivering action for nature.



(1) EnergySP Energy Networks, part of ScottishPower, owns four regulated electricity network businesses in the UK:
- SP Distribution plc (SPD)
- SP Transmission plc (SPT)
- SP Manweb plc (SPM)
- SP Electricity North West (SPENW) (88% share)

(2) Gross capacity - West of Duddon Sands 50% of total 389MW. East Anglia ONE 60% of total 714MW
(3) Carland Cross Battery is a joint operation with Centrica
(4) Llandinam Windfarm is a joint venture with Eurus Energy

Action for Nature

ScottishPower Renewables Onshore
ScottishPower Renewables Offshore
SP Energy Networks

Restoring ecosystems

Rebuilding ecosystems through restoration, protection and action that delivers for biodiversity.

Innovation driving peatland restoration: Renewable energy projects contributing to actively restoring ecosystems at a landscape-scale.

Community-led peatland restoration in Tarras Valley: Networks supporting community-led environmental regeneration.

Whitelee - restoring nature at scale: Combining clean energy generation with ambitious peatland restoration, biodiversity enhancement, and community engagement.

From farmland to flagship through thoughtful management: Creating a flagship biodiversity asset through strategic habitat creation, native planting, and long-term ecological management.

Dorset heath creation at Carland Cross: Restoring rare habitat to boost biodiversity, and strengthen ecological connectivity through carefully planned, long-term management.

Collaborative peatland restoration in Dumfries and Galloway
Partnership-led conservation to deliver peatland restoration.

Connecting habitat

Reconnecting fragmented habitats through focused action that restores nature's links.

Bickley Hall Farm hedgerow planting: Targeted enhancements reconnecting fragmented habitats, improving wildlife movement and delivering measurable biodiversity gains.

Wetlands for waders: Restoring and enhancing wetland mosaics to boost biodiversity, improve water management, and build climate resilience at a landscape scale.

Supporting wildlife

Supporting species conservation with focused action to safeguard species through active protection, conservation and monitoring.

Mapping nature through DNA: Monitoring insect biodiversity using innovative DNA techniques to understand ecosystem health and the impacts of peatland restoration.

Golden eagles at Beinn an Tuirc: Research highlighting how planning, monitoring, and mitigation can enable successful coexistence of protected species and Renewable energy projects.

Understanding hen harriers through tracking: Targeted research and conservation support improving understanding and protection of vulnerable species like the hen harrier.

Collaborating for nature

Driving nature recovery through collaboration with local communities and partners.

Rethinking mitigation and nature inclusive design: Acoustic monitoring to improve understanding of marine mammal behaviour and inform responsible offshore wind development.

Empowering local action for nature: Strategic partnerships and community funding enhancing biodiversity while delivering meaningful local benefits.

Understanding marine life around offshore wind: Acoustic monitoring to improve understanding of marine mammal behaviour and inform responsible offshore wind development.

Helping seabirds and offshore wind thrive together: Collaborative research to better understand collision risk, supporting offshore wind development and biodiversity protection.

Click on each project to navigate to more information

Restoring ecosystems

Restoring ecosystems is essential to nature recovery, helping to reverse the damage caused by habitat loss, pollution and climate change, giving wildlife the space and conditions it needs to recover and thrive.

Healthy ecosystems also provide vital benefits for people, from cleaner water and air to natural flood protection and carbon storage.

By bringing degraded habitats back to life, restoration strengthens nature's resilience, reconnects fragmented landscapes and supports long-term biodiversity recovery, helping both nature and communities adapt to a changing climate.

Innovation driving peatland restoration

Scotland hosts around 13% of the world's peatland, covering over 2 million hectares and roughly 20% of Scotland's total land area. These peat bogs store an estimated 1.6 billion tonnes of carbon, but when they are drained or damaged, they can switch from carbon sinks to major carbon sources, releasing greenhouse gases and accelerating climate change. Restoring these globally important ecosystems - using nature-based solutions - helps lock carbon back into the ground, improves water quality, reduces flood risk, and brings back vital habitats for wildlife, making peatland recovery a key part of Scotland's climate and biodiversity goals.

ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) has **restored more than 1,053ha of degraded peatland** at Mark Hill and Black Law Windfarms, showing how renewable energy projects can contribute to actively restoring ecosystems at a landscape-scale. Scotland's uplands contain large areas of peatland previously drained or ploughed for conifer forestry, leaving soils dried, damaged, and vulnerable to carbon loss. SPR set out to reverse that legacy, developing new, practical restoration methods where traditional approaches simply did not work.

At Mark Hill, a **13year, £1 million programme** transformed a species-poor conifer plantation into a thriving natural habitat. The team **restored 610ha of peatland** – rewetting the landscape and enabling bog vegetation such as sphagnum moss and cotton grass to recover. They also **planted more than 220,000 native trees**, created ponds, holts and hibernacula supporting amphibians, reptiles, otter and water vole. The result is a resilient mosaic of peatland, woodland and wetlands that boosts biodiversity and strengthens long-term carbon storage.

Black Law became SPR's hub for innovation in peatland restoration, where new techniques were trialled to tackle deep ploughing, drainage lines, and persistent conifer regeneration. Ground smoothing restored natural hydrology by flipping old stumps into furrows, encouraging bog vegetation to return while dramatically reducing costs. Wave damming offered a fast, low disturbance way to raise water levels on drained peat. Throughout the work, careful planning protected water quality through phased treatments, buffer strips, and targeted catchment restoration.

Wave damming

Together, these award-winning efforts have delivered major environmental gains, from significant carbon emission reduction, improved long-term carbon storage, and re-establishment of natural hydrology to improved habitat diversity, recovery of key species and lower wildfire risk.
The techniques developed are cost-effective, scalable, and now being applied across SPR sites.

These initiatives clearly demonstrate that renewable energy infrastructure can actively drive landscape-scale ecological recovery.

Peatland restoration and native tree planting at Mark Hill Windfarm

Wave damming at Mark Hill Windfarm

Key Highlights

1,053ha restored

£1m

220k trees

Community-led peatland restoration in Tarras Valley

In 2025 SP Energy Networks Transmission (SPT) joined forces with The Langholm Initiative to support the Middlemoss Head Peatland Restoration Project, a flagship example of community-led environmental regeneration. The Langholm Initiative works to make the Eskdale and Liddesdale area a better place to live, work and visit.

Following a successful land buyout, the people of Langholm now steward 10,500 acres of the Tarras Valley Nature Reserve. SPT's support enabled peatland restoration across **193.66 hectares**, including blocking over 56km of artificial drains and reshaping eroded peatland to help return the landscape to its natural bog-like state. This mosaic of habitats **now supports wading birds, rare plants, and insects**, while improving carbon sequestration and climate resilience. The project is also delivering an **estimated 183 biodiversity units** to offset from the impacts of the infrastructure project Chirmorie Windfarm overhead line.

Digger contractors on site

Digger contractors on site at Middlemoss Head rewetting the area by blocking old artificial drains

Key Highlights

193ha restored

183 biodiversity units

Key Highlights

1,113ha restored

Green Flag Award

Ground smoothing at Whitelee Windfarm

Whitelee - restoring nature at scale

Whitelee Windfarm is one of the UK's most ambitious nature positive renewable energy projects. It displays how landscape-scale peatland restoration can be successfully integrated into wind energy development, restoring over **1,113 hectares of degraded peatland** while creating a hub for ecological research and public education. The project has delivered major gains for biodiversity, carbon storage, and scientific understanding, all funded by ScottishPower Renewables (SPR). Through innovation, community engagement, and long-term commitment, Whitelee sets a new benchmark for nature and biodiversity performance across the renewables industry.

The project restored 1,113 hectares of peatland by removing non native forestry and using bespoke machinery to flip stumps and re wet the peatland. As hydrology recovered, biodiversity returned – monitored through long-term data collection. The peatland now has the **potential to store up to 3.6 million tonnes of carbon**.

Restoring peatland benefits a valuable ecosystem that supports specialist plants and wildlife while acting as a major carbon store. At Whitelee, key **peat-forming species such as sphagnum moss and cotton grass have increased**, proving that ecological recovery is underway. The project followed early 'Biodiversity Net Gain' principles long before they were mainstream, demonstrating SPR's leadership.

The project has been awarded the Green Flag for four consecutive years for its work with the Whitelee Countryside Ranger Service to provide a positive environmental legacy by educating members of the public on the importance of biodiversity and undertaking large-scale peatland restoration works.

Wave damming at Whitelee Windfarm

Key Highlights

9.23ha restored

93.8 biodiversity units

10k trees

Sandsfield Road meadow interspersed with wood pasture planting, Spring 2026

From Farmland to Flagship through thoughtful management

Sandsfield Road in Carlisle is one of the largest sites in the SP Electricity North West (SP ENW) estate, and its flagship biodiversity site. The former agricultural land has been actively managed over several years to enhance biodiversity and deliver nature positive outcomes.

A bespoke tree-planting plan, accounting for the presence of overhead and underground electricity lines, saw over **10,000 native tree stems planted** on site - with species comprising oak, birch, rowan, aspen, holly, hawthorn, crab apple, alder, goat willow, field maple, hornbeam, hazel, blackthorn, elder, dogwood and spindle. This led to the creation of new hedgerows, woodland pasture (a valuable declining habitat in the UK), and high-density scrub areas.

A species-rich grassland restoration programme has been implemented for the remaining grassland areas on site. The first cut of this restoration programme was made in May 2025, with scarifying and yellow rattle oversowing completed in autumn 2025 to help control competitive agricultural grass species and encourage a greater diversity of wild flowering plants.

These enhancement works will result in the **restoration of 9.23 hectares of land and the creation of 93.8 biodiversity units**. The site is now made up of a range of grassland, broadleaf woodland, bramble, and mixed scrubs and other native and species-rich hedgerows. The small-scale habitats created by the varying heights of the mixed vegetation structure help support wildlife, including high levels of invertebrate activity and amphibians.

Yellow rattle established in Spring 2026 as part of species rich grassland restoration at Sandsfield Road

Dorset heath creation at Carland Cross

Dorset heath is a rare habitat, with much of it lost or fragmented due to intensive farming, woodland and development. Dorset heath supports a range of plant and animal species, including rare reptiles, ground-nesting birds, and invertebrates that are often absent from surrounding agricultural land or even upland heaths. The creation and restoration of Dorset heath helps rebuild ecological networks, enhance resilience to climate change, and protect valuable carbon storing soils.

As part of an extensive upgrade to Carland Cross Windfarm, the project required the restoration of **2.4ha of Dorset Heath habitat** on farmland. This included the development of Dorset Heath restoration methods suitable for the site conditions and long-term work to improve local wildlife habitats around the windfarm. This was not replacing lost habitat but adding something new to improve biodiversity.

A large area of semi-improved grassland was chosen as the preferred site, located directly next to Newlyn Downs Special Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). Newlyn Downs, increasing ecological connectivity, and in turn the opportunities for wildlife to spread naturally into the new area, and the likelihood of long-term success.

The ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) ecology team trialled various establishment methods to determine what would work best in the existing conditions. The full site was prepared by lightly ploughing and harrowing, rolling the soil flat, and spreading seed and brash collected from Newlyn Downs, aiming to mimic natural colonisation from high quality nearby heathland.

A long-term monitoring plan was established to assess the development of the new habitat. This included counting of individual plants in the first years – later switching to sampling techniques as plants grew – and recording heather height to track growth.

Monitoring since 2017 has covered 30 permanent points, recording the presence of key species and bare ground. This provides important evidence of grazing impacts on pollinator resources where non-flowering vegetation becomes dominant.

Results from the annual monitoring indicate success in the establishment of new heathland plants with almost all monitoring points recording target heathland species. While the continued presence and recent increase of key indicator species are positive outcomes from the initial restoration process, ongoing adaptive management is required to ensure the ongoing success of the restoration.

This habitat creation work highlighted key learnings for success - selection of the right site for the habitat, the importance of running trials, the need for long-term monitoring, and adapting management as the habitat develops.

Dorset heath creation at Carland Cross

Key Highlights

2.4ha restored

Collaborative peatland restoration in Dumfries and Galloway

SP Energy Networks (SPEN) has embarked on a collaborative project to enhance the south of Scotland's peatlands, waterways, and wildlife, partnering with Galloway Fisheries Trust and Forestry and Land Scotland. The initiative focuses on restoring peatland around Loch Moan, a move set to improve the health of the River Cree in Dumfries and Galloway.

Spanning an area equivalent to 32 football pitches, the restoration involves the rewetting of previously forested peatlands to promote more natural water flow into the river. This effort aims to improve water quality, foster healthier conditions for local wildlife, and support sustainable fish populations, particularly in the River Cree, a well-known angling spot and one of only three habitats for the rare sparling fish species. The **restored area covers 22.5 hectares** and is expected to strengthen the surrounding ecosystem in the long term.

Healthy peatlands play a crucial role in carbon storage; however, their degradation can lead to carbon emissions. The project seeks to prevent this by restoring 'anoxic' conditions, which help trap carbon, while enhancing water quality for wildlife.

Species like black grouse, reptiles, amphibians, and various others are anticipated to benefit from the enriched natural environment.

The initiative is part of SP Energy Networks' Action Plan for Nature, integrating ecological considerations into network investments, benefiting both communities and natural surroundings.

Peatland restoration area around Loch Moan

SPEN staff observing restoration work

Key Highlights

22.5ha restored

Collaboration for conservation

Connecting habitats

Connecting habitats is essential for effective nature restoration. Many species rely on the ability to move between areas to find food, shelter, and breeding sites.

By linking fragmented habitats, we can support healthier, more resilient ecosystems and help wildlife adapt to environmental pressures such as climate change and habitat loss.

Bickley Hall Farm Hedgerow Planting

Nature connectivity is currently fragmented, with many habitats isolated by intensive land use, development and infrastructure. Healthy hedgerows play a vital role in reconnecting these habitats, acting as wildlife corridors that allow species to move, feed, and reproduce more effectively.

Bickley Hall Farm, the headquarters of Cheshire Wildlife Trust, contains an extensive hedgerow network running through floodplain grazing marsh and modified grassland. As part of a voluntary biodiversity enhancement initiative, SP Energy Networks (SPEN) commissioned Cheshire Wildlife Trust to assess and improve seven of these hedgerows. Enhancements were evaluated using the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric to demonstrate measurable ecological gains beyond standard management. A hedgerow survey was carried out in 2025, with those in sensitive wader areas excluded to avoid disturbing breeding and feeding birds.

The chosen improvement was to plant native hedgerow trees at spacing of less than 20 metres. Planting native species hedgerow trees provides enhanced ecological, environmental and resilience benefits when compared to non-native species. Species planted - including pedunculate oak, field maple, crab apple, rowan, and bird cherry - increase access to native fauna for other native species, supporting greater biodiversity.

Tree whips were planted during winter to help them establish well. Each tree was given a guard, mulch, a marker flag, and a GPS point so it can be protected during future cutting. Ongoing management will keep all hedgerows within Good condition requirements set by the Metric. These include a minimum height and width of 1.5 metres, less than 10 percent gaps and a tree survival rate above 95 percent.

Trees were planted close to the existing hedgerow, using any existing gaps where possible.

Improving all seven hedgerows, with a **total length of 1.09 km**, produced a gain of 5.82 hedgerow units. This targeted work shows that small, well-planned interventions can **improve the potential for wildlife movement across the floodplain, increase habitat quality, and deliver measurable biodiversity benefits** even when BNG requirements do not apply.

Target Hedgerow Plan – Bickley Hall Farm

Wetlands for waders

Healthy wetland mosaics - where ponds, marsh, grassland and ditches all connect - are some of the UK's richest habitats, supporting a wide range of wildlife from wading birds to amphibians and insects. They also act like natural sponges, holding water in the landscape, reducing flood risk and improving water quality.

Restoring these habitats is vital because many have been lost or degraded over time; bringing them back helps reverse biodiversity decline, strengthens climate resilience and reconnects fragmented landscapes so wildlife can move and thrive again.

Beyond its hedgerows, Bickley Hall Farm contains a diverse wetland mosaic of floodplain grazing marsh, modified grassland, ditches and recently created ponds. SP Energy Networks (SPEN) commissioned Cheshire Wildlife Trust to model habitat creation and enhancement opportunities to bolster biodiversity, water retention and wader habitat.

Measures to **support waders, amphibians (such as the great crested newt), and wetland invertebrates while enhancing water retention on peat soils, were implemented at the site.**

The farm lies within a designated Restoration Area, and has high strategic significance and importance for nature, so the focus was on making practical improvements that matter.

Improvement actions included:

- Turning species-poor grassland into flower-rich meadow by cutting, lightly cultivating the soil and reseeding with a local wildflower mix (including yellow rattle)
- Creating four new ponds to add more variety and life to the wetland
- Digging three shallow scrapes to provide small, wet habitats for wildlife
- Refreshing existing scrapes to reduce rush-dominated areas and improve condition

Landscape scale interventions at Bickley Hall Farm demonstrate how micro wetland creation, meadow enhancement and ditch diversification can:

- Substantially improve ecological function across floodplain systems
- Bolster habitat for waders, amphibians, and wetland plants
- Strengthen resilience of peat rich soils
- Produce real biodiversity gains

This project highlights how voluntary partnerships between land managers and infrastructure operators can deliver nature positive outcomes at landscape scale.

Great Crested Newt

Key Highlights

Supporting waders, amphibians and wetland invertebrates while enhancing water retention on peat soils.

Supporting wildlife

Supporting wildlife is at the heart of effective nature recovery, working to ensure the right conditions are in place for wildlife to return, recover and thrive.

It's not just about rebuilding habitats, but actively helping species and ecosystems function as healthy, connected systems again. By supporting nature through careful protection, monitoring and management, restoration efforts become more successful, resilient and long-lasting, delivering real gains for nature.

SPR ecologists on site at Whitelee Windfarm

Mapping nature through DNA

While many people will be more familiar with bird and bat surveys around renewables developments, the analysis of invertebrates, and work to support them, is just as important as they are part of the food chain, providing food for those birds and bats.

Since 2023 ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) has participated in the Sanger Institute's cutting-edge, multi-year BIOSCAN project. This project involves the monthly capture of insects for DNA analysis with the aim of identifying the species present, and over time monitoring how species diversity and abundance is changing at Whitelee Windfarm.

As the only renewable energy developer participant, amongst universities, museums and nature statutory bodies, SPR's ecology team collect insects from the windfarm by setting up Malaise traps monthly, with the insects caught being sent to Sanger for analysis. Scientists then use the Barcode of Life DNA database to identify the species present and monitor how species diversity and abundance changes.

DNA is extracted from each insect non-destructively. Therefore, once the DNA has been extracted, the actual specimens will then go to a collection in a museum, for example, the National Museum Collection Centre in Edinburgh, where they can be used for other research in the future.

Data from the project will allow the ecology team to detect the positive impacts SPR's peatland restoration work has on the insect communities at Whitelee.

SPR ecologists on site at Whitelee Windfarm

SPR ecologists on site at Whitelee Windfarm

Golden eagle

Key Highlights

Nine chicks fledged since 1997

Golden eagles at Beinn an Tuirc

2025 saw ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) reach its 28th year of a research project investigating the interactions between golden eagles and Beinn an Tuirc windfarm. The project has helped SPR understand how golden eagles use the habitats around the windfarm and demonstrates the outcomes of successful mitigation.

In 1997, SPR began a habitat management plan to protect and evaluate golden eagle territory identified during the development of Beinn an Tuirc. The monitoring project aimed to investigate how the eagles would behave around the wind turbines and included the fitting of satellite trackers on Golden eagle chicks.

Monitoring of flight activity identified the eagles' core territory during the development phase of the windfarm project.

This information was used to mitigate against possible adverse impacts to the eagles by building the windfarm further south than initially planned.

Additional mitigation measures introduced included the creation of additional foraging habitat, annual surveys to determine breeding status and satellite tagging to reveal offspring breeding locations.

This work has resulted in the resident golden eagle territory becoming one of the most well-studied in Europe. Breeding success has been variable, although at least nine chicks have fledged since 1997. The study has also contributed to a broader understanding of golden eagle behaviour, indicating limited use of habitat within, and in close proximity to, windfarms. This finding is supported by subsequent studies, including satellite tracking of eagles in other parts of Scotland.

Golden eagle fledgling

Understanding hen harriers through tracking

The hen harrier is a scarce breeding species in Scotland that has been the subject of a considerable amount of interest over the past 25 years over concerns about its status, conservation, impact on grouse moors and level of persecution. Studies suggest that the occupation of known breeding sites in Scotland has been falling steadily since 2003, as has breeding success and mean brood size. As a ground nester, hen harriers are particularly susceptible right up to and just after fledging.

In 2025 ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) donated **£10,000 to Argyll Raptor Study Group** to support a project to develop understanding of hen harriers in Argyll. The main aims of the project are to understand movement patterns of hen harriers, identify where the Argyll birds go over winter, minimising future disruption or harm by identifying locations of the main roost sites.

The long-term aim of the project is to examine several key biological measures across different areas and habitats in Argyll.

This involves satellite tagging of juveniles, to gather information on: chick survival and movement from natal birthplace; the age young hen harriers are recruited into the breeding population; post-breeding movements and settlement; locations of breeding sites and winter roosts; and habitat uses within Argyll and beyond.

Hen harrier

Hen harrier

Collaborating for nature

Collaboration with local communities and partners is essential for nature recovery, bringing together knowledge, resources and shared ownership.

From in-depth knowledge of an area from local communities to expertise from specialist partners, collaboration aids in making restoration more effective and practical.

By working together, projects gain stronger support, deliver lasting cross-sectoral change and create solutions that benefit both nature and people.

Rethinking mitigation and nature inclusive design

In 2024, ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) played a key role in the Scottish Offshore Wind Energy Council's (SOWEC) Collaboration for Environmental Mitigation & Nature Inclusive Design (CEMNID) project. With the purpose of developing practical, biodiversity boosting tools for Scottish offshore wind, CEMNID brought together offshore wind developers and Scottish regulators to rethink how the sector can minimise impacts and enhance marine ecosystems. The project was recognised for its contributions, earning the Sustainable Development Award at the Scottish Green Energy Awards 2024.

The project responded to the twin climate and biodiversity crises and aimed to help address a major challenge for the sector: speeding up consenting while maintaining strong environmental safeguards.

The key outputs from the project, available on the project webpage, included a library of good practice mitigation options and a review of nature inclusive design measures.

These resources give developers a clear, workable framework for delivering offshore wind projects that support the health of Scotland's seas.

The library highlights several promising nature inclusive measures for early-stage project design, such as fish hotels, adaptable rock protection, reef-type structures, cable protection mattresses, and water replenishment holes that improve water flow through monopiles. These features create new opportunities for marine species to shelter and thrive.

It also showcases best practice seabird mitigation, including turbine layout adjustments based on flight behaviour and increasing the air gap between blades and the sea. Additional recommendations focus on lighting choices and cable burial strategies that reduce ecological disturbance.

Together, these insights provide a practical roadmap for the sustainable growth of offshore wind in Scotland. With this guidance now published, SOWEC members can confidently embed nature inclusive design into future planning and policy, helping offshore wind play a leading role in restoring Scotland's marine environment.

Key Highlights

Publication of guidance to support embedding nature inclusive design in offshore wind

ScottishPower Renewables Offshore Windfarm

Key Highlights

£150,000 to deliver biodiversity enhancements

16 community groups have received microgrants

Through the Pollinator B-Lines project, SPT have worked with Buglife to repurpose unused land at several electrical substations including Busby, Leven, Livingston East and Drumcross, turning them from barren grass patches into wildlife havens

Empowering local action for nature

Under its 2021-2026 transmission business plan, SP Energy Networks (SPEN) was awarded **£150,000 to deliver biodiversity enhancements**. Half of this funding supported a strategic partnership with conservation organisation Buglife, helping support its wider work for the Pollinator B-Lines project: a UK-wide network of insect pathways linking towns and countryside through wildflower corridors. The SPEN and Buglife partnership works to enhance pollinator habitats through the improvement of grasslands across four urban substation sites in Busby, Leven, Livingston East and Drumcross, with the involvement of local volunteers who are helping to deliver the enhancements.

The remaining **£75,000** was distributed through microgrants of up to **£5,000 for 16 local community groups** located near SPEN transmission sites to support their own nature projects.

These grassroots projects – ranging from school gardens and community woodlands to bee-keeping site enhancements – demonstrate how targeted funding can deliver meaningful biodiversity outcomes while empowering communities.

This distribution of the funding allows SPEN to support real community benefit across a wide range of sites, while delivering biodiversity improvements. These projects are making a noticeable difference to local visual amenity and greenspaces, especially through community and school garden projects. Some micro-grants have also gone to groups working to improve natural spaces that support local mental health organisations. Relationships with the local groups have flourished through the planning of SPEN volunteer days.

So far, SP Transmission (SPT) has supported a range of local projects including community woodlands, school gardens, and community centre gardens. **16 community groups have received microgrants and by the end of 2026 four SPT sites will have been enhanced with flowering seeds and bee banks as part of the Pollinator B-Lines project.**

Understanding marine life around offshore wind

An exciting project is underway to better understand the lives of marine mammals around ScottishPower Renewables (SPR)'s East Anglia THREE offshore windfarm, located within the Southern North Sea Special Area of Conservation.

Using cutting-edge underwater listening technology, the project is capturing the sounds marine mammals rely on every day, from communication calls to feeding clicks and navigation signals. By tuning into this hidden underwater world, researchers can build a clearer picture of how species like harbour porpoises, which are common in these waters, use the area and respond to offshore activity.

A network of underwater microphones, known as hydrophones, has been installed at 12 locations across the windfarm site and up to 25km beyond. Suspended beneath the surface and anchored to buoys, these devices create a series of acoustic listening stations, continuously recording the sounds of the sea.

This isn't a short-term study. The equipment will be in place for four to five years, spanning the period before construction begins, throughout the build phase, and into the first year of operation. This long-term approach will provide invaluable insights into how marine mammals behave over time and how they adapt to change. Furthermore, similar marine mammal monitoring commitments have been made on other projects. East Anglia TWO offshore windfarm also deployed buoys equipped with hydrophones in early 2026, and will continue collecting underwater sound information during the project construction stages.

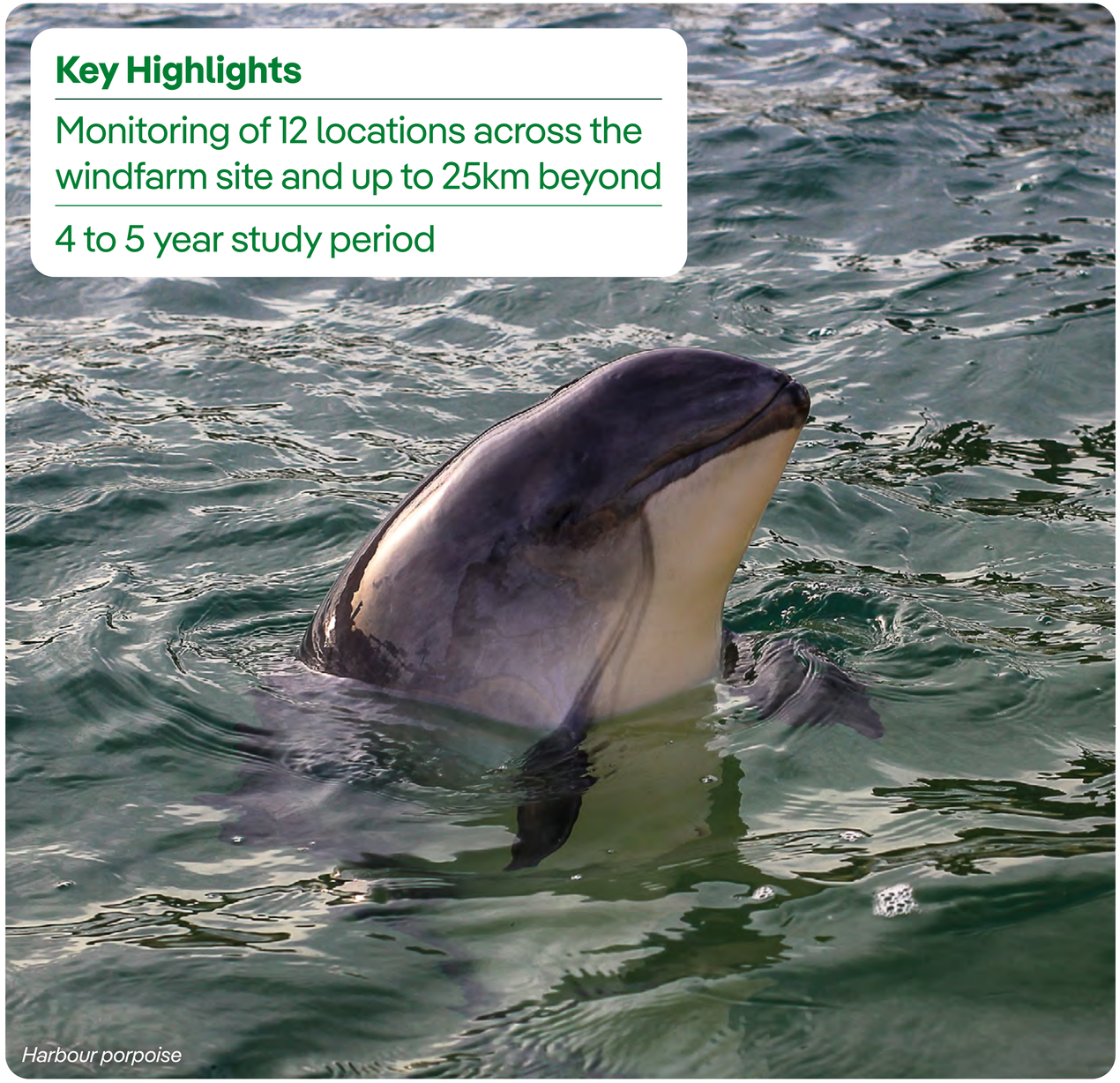
Delivered in partnership with leading specialists in underwater sound and marine science, this extensive study highlights SPR's strong commitment to protecting and supporting ecology and the environment around its offshore renewables projects.

ScottishPower Renewables Offshore Windfarm

Key Highlights

Monitoring of 12 locations across the windfarm site and up to 25km beyond

4 to 5 year study period



Harbour porpoise

Northern Gannets

Helping seabirds and offshore wind thrive together

Recent monitoring at offshore windfarms shows very low bird collision rates, offering encouraging evidence that differs from current modelled estimates used in planning. Addressing this evidence gap is essential to reduce consenting risk and support the continued growth of offshore wind.

ScottishPower Renewables (SPR) collaborated with the Carbon Trust as a project partner of the Prevalence of Seabird Species and Collision Events in Offshore Windfarms (PrediCtOr) project. This project aims to create a coordinated approach to reducing uncertainty in bird collision risk while enhancing post construction monitoring at offshore windfarms.

The project brings industry and experts together to improve how bird collision risk is measured and understood. It will develop a shared data framework, establish best practice for monitoring and data collection, and provide clear recommendations for future study design. The project also aims to accelerate the adoption of innovative seabird detection technologies.

By building a stronger, more consistent evidence base, PrediCtOr will improve confidence in collision risk assessments and support more informed decision-making. Ultimately, it will help ensure offshore wind development and biodiversity protection progress hand in hand.

Conclusion

Across our portfolio, ScottishPower is demonstrating that the transition to clean energy can, and must, go hand in hand with restoring and protecting nature. From restoring ecosystems and reconnecting habitats, to supporting wildlife and collaborating with communities and partners, we're ensuring targeted, practical action can deliver meaningful change on the ground.

These initiatives give a sample of the action for nature being delivered across ScottishPower. Collectively, they represent the restoration and enhancement of around **2,500 hectares of habitat** (that's roughly equivalent to 3,500 football pitches), spanning peatlands, wetlands, grasslands, heathlands and woodlands. This scale of delivery not only contributes to local biodiversity gains but also demonstrates how large infrastructure operators can drive landscape-scale recovery by embedding nature into project design, operations and long-term management. This is only a small taste of the action for nature undertaken by ScottishPower, our initiatives highlight how ScottishPower is helping to raise sector-wide ambition, showing what is possible across the renewable energy and networks industries.

Our work aligns strongly with global, UK and devolved policy priorities. It supports delivery of international commitments such as the Kunming–Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, contributes to UK ambitions for nature recovery and Biodiversity Net Gain and supports species recovery and climate resilience. By restoring carbon-rich habitats like peatlands and improving ecosystem connectivity, these actions also reinforce the UK's pathway to net zero.

Above all, Action for Nature reflects ScottishPower's long-standing and evolving commitment to nature conservation, restoration and enhancement. Through our Action 2030 strategy and Nature Action Plan, we're not only managing environmental impacts but actively creating positive outcomes for nature, helping biodiversity recover, strengthening ecosystem resilience and ensuring that the energy transition delivers lasting benefits for both nature and people.

Ultimately, we're delivering a **cleaner, greener and better future – quicker.**

Glossary

Term	Meaning
Biodiversity Metric	The statutory biodiversity metric is the way of measuring the biodiversity value of habitats, in standardised biodiversity units, for the purposes of BNG.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Development that leaves nature in a measurably better state than before.
Biodiversity Unit	Biodiversity units' are used to describe relative biodiversity value. There are three types of biodiversity units: area habitat units, hedgerow units and watercourse units. Each of these are calculated in separate 'modules' of the biodiversity metric.
Connectivity	The ability of species and ecological processes to move unimpeded, enhancing their persistence and resilience.
Conservation	Preserving or protecting something, e.g. nature or resources.
Ecology	A branch of biology concerned with the relationships between organisms and with their surroundings.
Ecosystem	A community of organisms and their physical environment.
Ecosystem services	The services essential for a thriving society and stable economy that nature provides us.
Electricity network	The system of interconnected equipment, such as cables or substations, that transmits and distributes electricity from source generation to end user.
Habitat	The home or environment of organisms.
Hectare	A metric area measurement, equal to 10,000 square meters.
Holt	A den, burrow, or resting place of an otter

Term	Meaning
Hibernacula	Sheltered locations where organisms, especially animals, spend the winter in a dormant or inactive state.
Hydrology	A branch of science concerned with the properties of water and its movement in relation to land.
Infrastructure	The structures and facilities needed to enable societies and enterprises to be successful. Infrastructure can be linear (e.g. power lines) or non-linear (e.g. substations).
Nature inclusive design	The integration of ecological considerations into the design of the built environment.
Offshore	Situated or occurring at sea away from the shore.
Offsite	Situated away from a particular place or site.
Onshore	Situated or occuring on land.
Onsite	Situated at a particular place or site.
Renewable generation	Producing energy from replenishing sources, such as the wind or sunlight.
Resilience	The ability to withstand and recover from challenges or difficulties.
Scarifying	The mechanical process of breaking up dense turf, removing accumulated dead organic matter ("thatch" and moss), or disturbing the topsoil. It physically opens up the ground, allowing air, water, and seeds to reach the soil surface.
Significant Enhancement	Scottish Fourth National Planning Framework 'Development proposals will contribute to the enhancement of biodiversity, including where relevant, restoring degraded habitats and building and strengthening nature networks and the connections between them. Proposals should also integrate nature-based solutions, where possible.'

We hope you have found Action for Nature informative and useful.

For more information or engagement, please contact sustainability@scottishpower.com

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