



A SUSTAINABLE AND RENEWABLE SOCIETY

Policy 3:

The Scottish Government should create more nature reserves to help protect Scotland's nature and biodiversity.

Endorsed by:



Scottish
Environment
LINK



Scottish
Wildlife
Trust

What's this all about?

Young people have told us about how their mental health, physical health and emotional wellbeing could thrive by being in safe and protected green spaces. They believe decision makers must take action to protect our existing resources, green spaces, and the environment, which is unique to Scotland. The Scottish Government must set the example as a climate leader and protect Scotland's natural world.

"Nature plays a vital role in conserving biodiversity by safeguarding endangered species and promoting healthy ecosystems. They also [help] communities to connect with nature and understand the importance of conservation."

– Young person aged 14-17, Clackmannanshire

"The world is slowly dying and I know people are starting to realise but animals and plants are still getting more and more close to extinction."

– Young woman aged 12-13

What are young people in Scotland calling for?

- Young people call for Scottish nature reserves and green spaces to be protected and not exploited for profit or sold for privatisation.

"I love going on walks, but I hate having to walk ages and ages just to find somewhere nice. I quite like a wooded walk but there's no forests near me for a good couple of miles."

– Young woman aged 14-17, Dumfries and Galloway

- Young people call for a commitment from the Scottish Government and Local Authorities to work with them on planning and designing green community spaces, like beaches, parks, and forests.

"These reserves have helped me drastically and made me feel calm whilst I love learning about nature and the world around me. Biodiversity in Scotland is important and with a wide variety of native species that need protecting."

– Young woman aged 14-17, West Lothian

- Young people must be involved in co-designing and introducing a curriculum that highlights the importance of biodiversity, informs children and young people on the importance of nature reserves, and promotes the wellbeing benefits of engaging with nature and being outside.

"The Scottish Government needs to capitalise on existing nature accreditations to invest in local communities. The Flow Country has been awarded UNESCO World Heritage Site but young people have not been informed how this will positively impact them. Education is key to young people valuing nature."

– Young woman aged 18-21, Orkney

- More information and awareness should be given to young people about the opportunities and career paths available within the green sector.

"And endorse and fund rewilding efforts, create more jobs and more education in natural history, ecology, biodiversity protection, etc. We cannot live without nature."

– Young woman aged 22-26, Orkney

Evidence and Support

- In [Together Scotland's State of Children's Rights Report 2024](#), children and young people said one of the things they love most about living in Scotland is its landscape and wildlife.
- [Research by The Wildlife Trusts](#) demonstrated that after participating in outdoor activities in nature, children showed an overall increase in their personal wellbeing and health, as well as an increase in nature connection.

What has SYP done?

Previous [SYP consultations](#) include [SYP's response to The Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee pre-legislative scrutiny on emissions reduction targets \(2024\)](#) and [SYP's](#)

[response to the Scottish Parliament's Net Zero, Energy and Transport Committee's Call for Views on the Circular Economy Bill \(2023\)](#). The [SYP Policy Log](#) includes several policies on the natural environment and biodiversity; circular economy, sustainability, the climate crisis and greenhouse gas emissions.