

Scottish Natural Heritage is a government body responsible to the Scottish Executive and Scottish Parliament.

Our mission:

Working with Scotland's people to care for our natural heritage.

Our aim:

Scotland's natural heritage is a local, national and global asset. We promote its care and improvement, its responsible enjoyment, its greater understanding and appreciation, and its sustainable use now and for future generations.

## Dumfries and Galloway

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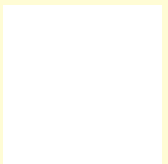
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Photography: Glyn Satterley, Laurie Campbell, Alan Wright, Andrea Craingean, P.A. Macdonald, Mark Hamblin, Rhoda McVey, Solway Firth Partnership.  
Scottish Natural Heritage 2003 • ISBN 1 xxxxxx xxx x • H2Kxxxx



# Dumfries & Galloway - The Natural Place

Our natural heritage makes a unique contribution to our quality of life and our economic well-being. SNH is committed to working in partnership with local communities, businesses, government and voluntary agencies, to ensure that social and economic development is promoted and managed hand in hand with the conservation of our natural resources.



## Communities & Development

SNH is committed to working with the four Local Rural Partnerships within Dumfries & Galloway to empower local communities. We work with partners in the public, private and voluntary sectors to ensure that principles of sustainability are integral to each of the local strategic visions. Through the planning process, we encourage responsible development, beneficial to the local economy, whilst protecting the local natural heritage

## European Funding

SNH works alongside other organisations to ensure that Dumfries & Galloway is fully engaged in European funding programmes, such as Leader Plus that focus on making best use of our natural resources. We offer grants for projects that attract European funding which link natural heritage conservation, community involvement and business development. One example is Making Tracks, aimed at sustainable tourism development. Another is a Special Sites scheme we intend to launch with Leader plus.



## Biodiversity

Biodiversity 'the Variety of Life' is at the heart of our work. SNH has put considerable resources into progressing the Local Biodiversity Action Plan or LBAP. Many of the individual species and habitat action plans are supported by SNH grants including red squirrel, kite and black grouse officers, action for great crested newts and bats, slender naiad and osprey amongst many others. Critically we agreed to jointly fund an LBAP project officer with Dumfries & Galloway Council to co-ordinate actions such as raising awareness, LBAP development, work on Local Wildlife Sites, biological recording and links with other plans and processes.



# Solway Firth Partnership

The Solway Firth Partnership provides a forum for many groups, organisations, agencies and individuals on both sides of the border surrounding the Solway. It works with local people to secure a sustainable future for the Firth, which will allow economic development, while respecting its' unique natural and cultural heritage. The partnership organises many events including an annual conference, activities for public and schools celebrating World Ocean's Day and publications including the quarterly 'Tidelines' highlighting news, views, events and advice.



## Southern Uplands Partnership

SNH is a major funder of the Southern Uplands Partnership which takes a strategic look at environmental, economic and social landuse issues across Dumfries & Galloway and the Borders. In consultation with local interests the Partnership is developing a 'Shared Agenda for Land Use in the Southern Uplands' to enable the integrated, sustainable management of resources. Current or recent projects under development include cross border walking and riding routes; small woodland management; red squirrel and black grouse conservation; nature-based tourism; heather regeneration and bracken control; renewable energy, green labelling and local food production.



# Exploring and Caring

Dumfries and Galloway is remarkable for its diversity of wildlife, the unspoiled character of the countryside and wonderful variety of scenery from sea and coast to woodland and mountain. This rich natural heritage is a superb asset for those who live and work here, enhancing the quality of life and providing opportunity for economic development linked to tourism. SNH supports wise use and conservation of precious natural resources and encourages responsible access and enjoyment. A huge range of projects throughout Dumfries and Galloway receive support from SNH to help appreciate, enjoy and care for our natural environment.

## Special Places

From the summits of the Galloway Hills to the Solway Firth, Dumfries & Galloway has an incredibly rich natural heritage – and this is reflected in the range of designated sites in the area.

National Nature Reserves (NNR's) are special, they represent some of the best that Scotland has to offer, where nature takes priority. There are four NNR's in Dumfries & Galloway; Caerlaverock, Kirkconnell Flow, Cairnmore of Fleet and Silver Flowe.

Natura 2000 sites represent a commitment to the conservation of precious natural resources across Europe – SNH is working with land managers to identify and protect a number of sites because of important species or habitats. Most recently, this has involved consultation on two large upland moorland sites in Galloway and Nithsdale, as well as an area important for Great Crested Newts. Luce Bay and parts of the River Bladnoch are also being considered for designation, due to the richness of their natural features.

The Nith Estuary, Fleet Valley and East Stewartry Coast are recognised as being of outstanding visual quality and are designated National Scenic Areas (NSAs). Through public consultation, and in partnership with Dumfries & Galloway Council, three new Management Strategies, one for each area, have been produced. These are part of a national pilot project developed by SNH to give advice about how these valued landscapes can be managed in the 21st century.



## Species and Habitats

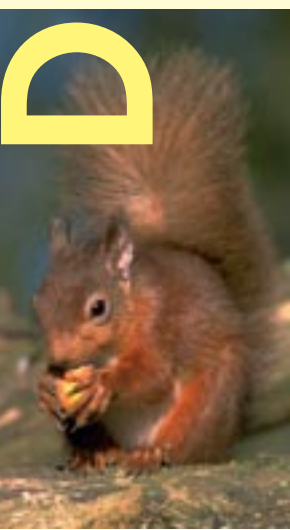
Some species and habitats are under so much pressure that we have developed special projects to care for them.

Red Kite have been reintroduced into Galloway in an exciting joint project with RSPB – visitors and locals can now watch these graceful birds of prey with their distinctive forked tails, as they quarter the Stewartry skies.

Dumfries & Galloway is an important stronghold for Red Squirrels, and we support two project officers who are working to maintain populations across Southern Scotland.

We are working with RSPB, WWT, Forest Enterprise and estate owners to support internationally important populations of raptors, waders and other birds, such as Black Grouse, living on the moorlands of the Southern Uplands. Merse- and Moorland Management Schemes promote traditional land management practices including muirburn, swiping, predator control and grazing.

SNH works closely with a number of organisations to integrate commercial and environmental interests in the rich marine habitats of the Solway Firth. Our work with cockle fishing interests, DGC and RSPB and others is leading towards a sustainable, regulated cockle and mussel fishery.



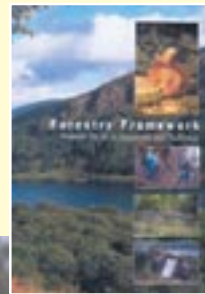
## Farming

SNH continues to provide grant in support of the Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group and to the newly formed Dumfries & Galloway Countryside Initiative which aims to ensure each child in the region visits a farm, linking into the National Curriculum. We support the implementation of the Farm Business Development Scheme. SNH delivered grants of £720,000 to help local farms recover from the effects of Foot and Mouth Disease. A report on what was achieved on the 160 participating farms is to be published soon.

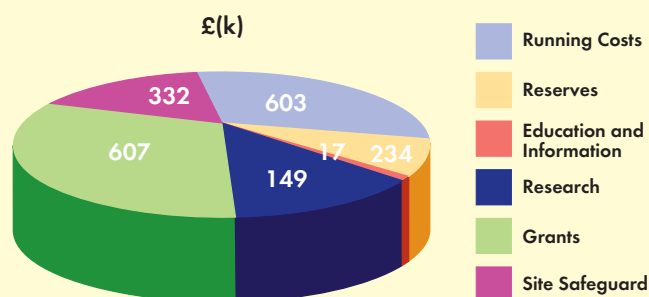


## Forestry

A free summary leaflet highlighting the distinctive character of Forests and Woodlands in Dumfries & Galloway and the opportunities for various uses is now available following the work done to produce the Local Forestry Framework documents. We are now working with the Forestry Commission and others to develop a framework to consolidate and improve our ash woods, given their importance in south west Scotland.



## The SNH Dumfries and Galloway Area Budget



## Out and About

To explore, you need to get out there – walking, on a bike or a horse! SNH is working with local communities, landowners and other bodies to make the new Access Legislation work for everyone. We will work with Dumfries & Galloway Council, and the Local Access Forum, to promote responsible behaviour, as set out in the Scottish Outdoor Access Code.



With our partners, we are developing path networks across the area – these paths are near to where people live, to help them walk to the shops, to work and school, or just to enjoy the countryside. This is also attracting more visitors to the area, as more and more paths and opportunities are developed. This has resulted in an additional +£10 million being spent locally by visitors.

One of only four Long Distance Routes in Scotland – and regarded as the toughest – the Southern Upland Way (SUW) stretches from Portpatrick near Stranraer to the east coast – 212 miles away. SNH works with the local councils to make sure that the route is maintained, so that walkers can enjoy the Southern Uplands at their best. During 2004, we are planning to mark the 20th Anniversary of the SUW, with a year-long programme of events, aimed at visitors and locals alike.



## Raising Awareness

Helping people to appreciate the natural heritage of Dumfries & Galloway is one of our most important aims.

SNH supports education programmes for both schools and communities – such as the 'Salmon in the Classroom' project run by the West Galloway Fisheries Trust, the RSPB Mersehead and WWT Caerlaverock nature reserves, education officers and visitor centres.

We help schools develop their grounds for environmental education and wildlife – many local schools, such as Sheuchan, Hardgate and Rephad Primary Schools and Annan Academy, have received grants to help projects get underway. We supported the community of Shawhead in organising workshops for children, encouraging them to look at their local environment and put what they experience into poetry, drama, music or art.

SNH provides grant aid for a number of Ranger Services throughout Dumfries and Galloway, providing over 200 walks and events throughout the year. We support the continued development of these services, for example, this year new visitor facilities at Mull of Galloway and Grey Mare's Tail have been opened.

