

412% increase in jobs at Scotland rewilding sites, research shows

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Rewilding has boosted job numbers at sites across Scotland by more than 400% while tackling the nature and climate emergencies, new research by Rewilding Britain shows.

An analysis of 13 major rewilding projects covering almost 60,000 hectares between them has revealed a 412% increase in jobs since rewilding began. The varied sample includes sites owned or managed by charities, communities, private landowners, and public bodies.

The first findings of their kind for Scotland come as calls grow for the Scottish Government to declare Scotland the world's first Rewilding Nation and commit to nature recovery across 30% of land and sea.

"These remarkable job creation figures show how rewilding can turbocharge social and economic benefits for people, while offering hope for reversing biodiversity loss and tackling climate breakdown," said Kevin Cumming, Rewilding Britain's Rewilding Director and Deputy Convenor of the Scottish Rewilding Alliance.

"This is yet another powerful illustration of why the Scottish Government should declare Scotland a Rewilding Nation. The choice and the opportunity for the country is huge – for jobs and local economies, and for better health, food production, re-peopling, and access to fresh water and clean air."

Full-time equivalent jobs across the rewilding sites have increased five-fold from 24 before rewilding began to 123 now. The variety of jobs has boomed too, and includes nature-based hospitality and tourism, estate management, ecology, environmental monitoring, rewilding interventions, recreation, and education.

Benefits for people's health and wellbeing, and opportunities for gaining valuable skills and experience, have also surged thanks to combined volunteer numbers at the sites increasing from zero to 435.

The sites began rewilding at different times, and are all over 100 hectares in size. Together they cover a total of 59,496 hectares, of which 43,233 hectares are rewilding. They are all members of the Rewilding Britain-managed Rewilding Network, which brings together and supports projects across Britain.

The largest recorded rise in jobs is at Trees for Life's 4,000-hectare Dundreggan estate near Loch Ness. Since the rewilding charity's purchase of the former deer stalking estate in 2008, jobs have soared from one to 36, while volunteer numbers have risen from zero to 100.

At Dundreggan, Trees for Life is restoring the Caledonian forest and its wildlife. Last year, the charity opened the world's first Rewilding Centre on the estate in the Highlands, to showcase how rewilding can give people inspiring experiences, create jobs and benefit rural communities.

At the community-owned Tarras Valley Nature Reserve in Dumfries and Galloway, jobs have already risen from one to six. The 4,250-hectare nature restoration project on Langholm Moor was created after the town of Langholm raised £6m to buy the former grouse moor between 2020-2022.

The pioneering buyout led to the creation of the vast new reserve to support community regeneration, address climate breakdown, and restore nature. Emerging opportunities include conservation grazing, regenerative farming, restoration of peatlands and native woodlands, and eco-tourism.

Rewilding Britain will continue to add new job creation data from a growing number of rewilding sites as it becomes available.

Despite growing praise for its rewilding progress, Scotland is one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth. Intensive agriculture and climate breakdown are having the biggest impacts on habitats and wildlife, with other threats including non-native forestry, pollution, and introduced species, research shows.

The Scottish Rewilding Alliance's Rewilding Nation Charter at www.rewild.scot/charter, calling on the Scottish Government to declare Scotland a rewilding nation, was launched this spring and has already been signed by thousands of people.

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Rewilding 30% of Scotland can be achieved by restoring habitats including peatlands, native woodlands, wetlands, rivers and seas, with no loss of productive farmland, says the Alliance.

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