Rewilding Affric Highlands wins at RSPB Scotland's Nature of Scotland Awards 2025

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Rewilding Affric Highlands has won the Nature and Climate Action Award at RSPB Scotland's prestigious Nature of Scotland Awards 2025.

The charity received the accolade at a ceremony held at the Edinburgh International Conference Centre (EICC) on 20 November, where 53 award finalists from all over Scotland gathered to celebrate with hosts BBC Springwatch presenter Iolo Williams and BBC Scotland Landward presenter Arlene Stuart.

The Nature of Scotland Awards recognise individuals and organisations making a difference across local communities, schools, and businesses to support Scotland's wildlife and natural environment.

Affric Highlands brings together landowners, local communities, businesses, and partner organisations with the aim of restoring nature across more than 200,000 hectares of the central Highlands.

Coordinated by charity Rewilding Affric Highlands, the landscape-scale rewilding initiative stretches from Loch Ness to Kintail, including Glens Affric, Cannich, Moriston, Shiel and Urquhart.

"We're deeply honoured to receive this award. It recognises the extraordinary commitment of our partners, landowners, and the local communities who have embraced this vision for a healthier, more connected landscape,"said Stephanie Kiel, Rewilding Affric Highlands executive director.

"Restoring nature at this scale is a long-term endeavour, and this acknowledgment strengthens our resolve to keep pushing forward. We hope our work shows that collaboration is not only possible but powerful, and that large-scale restoration can deliver real benefits for wildlife, climate, and rural livelihoods across the Highlands."

Through peatland restoration, native woodland expansion, nature-friendly land management, and reconnection of ecological corridors, Affric Highlands is boosting biodiversity, tackling climate change, and creating long-term benefits for people who live and work in the area.

The collaborative approach is helping secure the future of one of Scotland's most iconic landscapes, while demonstrating what is possible when local people come together behind a shared vision for nature, says Rewilding Affric Highlands.

It was announced last week that both the world-famous Glen Affric National Nature Reserve managed by Forestry and Land Scotland (FLS) and the Barrisdale Estate had joined Affric Highlands, bringing the landscape's growing partnership to 21 landowners, covering a combined total of more than 81,000 hectares.

The separate landholdings forming the partnership have all signed a memorandum of understanding and are making their own decisions on what nature restoration activities are right for them, with the Rewilding Affric Highlands team offering advice and support.

The Affric Highlands landscape, which aims to cover over 700 square miles, is mostly owned by 56 large estates, and Rewilding Affric Highlands is encouraging more landowners to join.

The Nature of Scotland Awards, delivered by RSPB Scotland and Headline sponsor NatureScot, have now been running for over a decade.

Anne McCall, director of RSPB Scotland, said: "What a joy to see the Nature of Scotland Awards shining a light on the growing number of passionate and hardworking people doing so much for nature and climate. A massive congratulations to our inspirational winners. It is incredibly heartening to see the terrific conservation work happening in every corner of the country. Thank you for everything you do."

Professor Colin Galbraith, chair of awards headline sponsor NatureScot, said: "This year's Nature of Scotland award winners show the power of people's connections with nature, and how this can inspire innovative conservation action. When we care passionately for our environment great things can be achieved for us all in our daily lives. Congratulations to these nature heroes for their creativity, commitment and achievements that are helping nature and everyone across Scotland."

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Affric Highlands is a member of Rewilding Europe's family of major European-wide flagship rewilding landscapes, which range from Sweden's Nordic Taiga to Italy's Central Apennines.

In April this year, Rewilding Affric Highlands launched as an independent charity, having previously worked as a joint venture led by Trees for Life since 2021, with support from Rewilding Europe. This followed the initiative's first three years as Trees for Life's East-West Wild project, when there was extensive preparation and local consultation.

For more details, see affrichighlands.org.

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