

GWCT Scotland

Strategic Overview 2025



Game & Wildlife
CONSERVATION TRUST
Scotland

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What are we about?

GWCT Scotland is dedicated to the conservation and sustainable management of Scotland's game, wildlife, and habitats through rigorous applied research, expert advisory services, and evidence-based advocacy. Our goal is to deliver practical solutions that balance biodiversity needs with those of rural communities and sustainable, economic land use.



What makes us unique?

GWCT Scotland uniquely brings together science, policy, and practice.

By connecting science, policy, and practice we aim to empower rural communities to play a central role in biodiversity recovery, creating a countryside where wildlife, habitats, and people thrive together.

- The GWCT is committed to applied scientific research to address the critical challenges of enhancing biodiversity, improving climate resilience, and enabling sustainable agriculture and game management.
- The Trust's Advisory Services empower land managers, farmers, and gamekeepers by providing them with the tools and knowledge to enhance biodiversity, restore habitats, and improve sustainability on the ground.
- Our policy and advocacy aim to ensure scientific evidence guides environmental decision-making, influencing policies that promote biodiversity, and sustainable land management in the wider countryside.

Work Programmes for Scotland

Here we outline six strategic work programmes that form the foundation of how we support wildlife conservation, sustainable farming practices, and biodiversity restoration in Scotland.

1. Sustainable Game Management

- Promote responsible and sustainable management of game species.
- Integrate game management practices that support biodiversity, wildlife habitats, and ensure the long-term health of game populations.
- Empower landowners and managers to integrate conservation-focused practices alongside traditional game management.



2. National Wader Recovery

- Support the restoration of populations of wading birds (such as snipe, lapwing, curlew, and golden plover), which have suffered significant declines in recent decades.
- Collaborate with farmers, landowners, and conservationists to implement measures that protect wading birds through habitat restoration and predator control.
- Promote research and practitioner monitoring to better understand wader ecology and inform recovery efforts.



A large flock of sheep is grazing on a grassy hillside. In the foreground, a black and white dog is visible. The background features a large, rounded mountain under a blue sky with scattered clouds.

3. Greener Farming

- Research environmentally friendly farming methods that enhance biodiversity, improve soil health, and minimise pesticide use while supporting Scotland's net-zero and climate resilience targets.
- Work with farmers, land managers, and communities at a landscape scale to implement wildlife-friendly and regenerative farming techniques.
- Advocate for the use of agro-ecological practices that enhance biodiversity and reduce carbon emissions.

4. Nature Restoration on Farmland

- Restore natural habitats and biodiversity within agricultural landscapes.
- Promote practices that increase and improve wildlife habitats, such as wildflower meadows, hedgerows, and wetland restoration.
- Engage with farmers to increase landscape scale connectivity and facilitate species movement and resilience, especially in the face of climate and biodiversity crisis.



A photograph of a fish, likely a salmon, leaping out of the water. The fish is captured mid-air, with its body arched and its fins spread. The background shows the turbulent, white water of a river or stream. The fish has a silvery-grey body with a hint of yellow on its head.

5. River Restoration & Cleaner Water

- Work to restore degraded rivers and freshwater habitats to improve water quality and biodiversity.
- Advocate for measures that reduce agricultural runoff, prevent pollution, and implement sustainable water management practices that protect aquatic ecosystems.
- Restore riparian zones and reintroduce natural river processes to improve the health of rivers and their ecosystems.

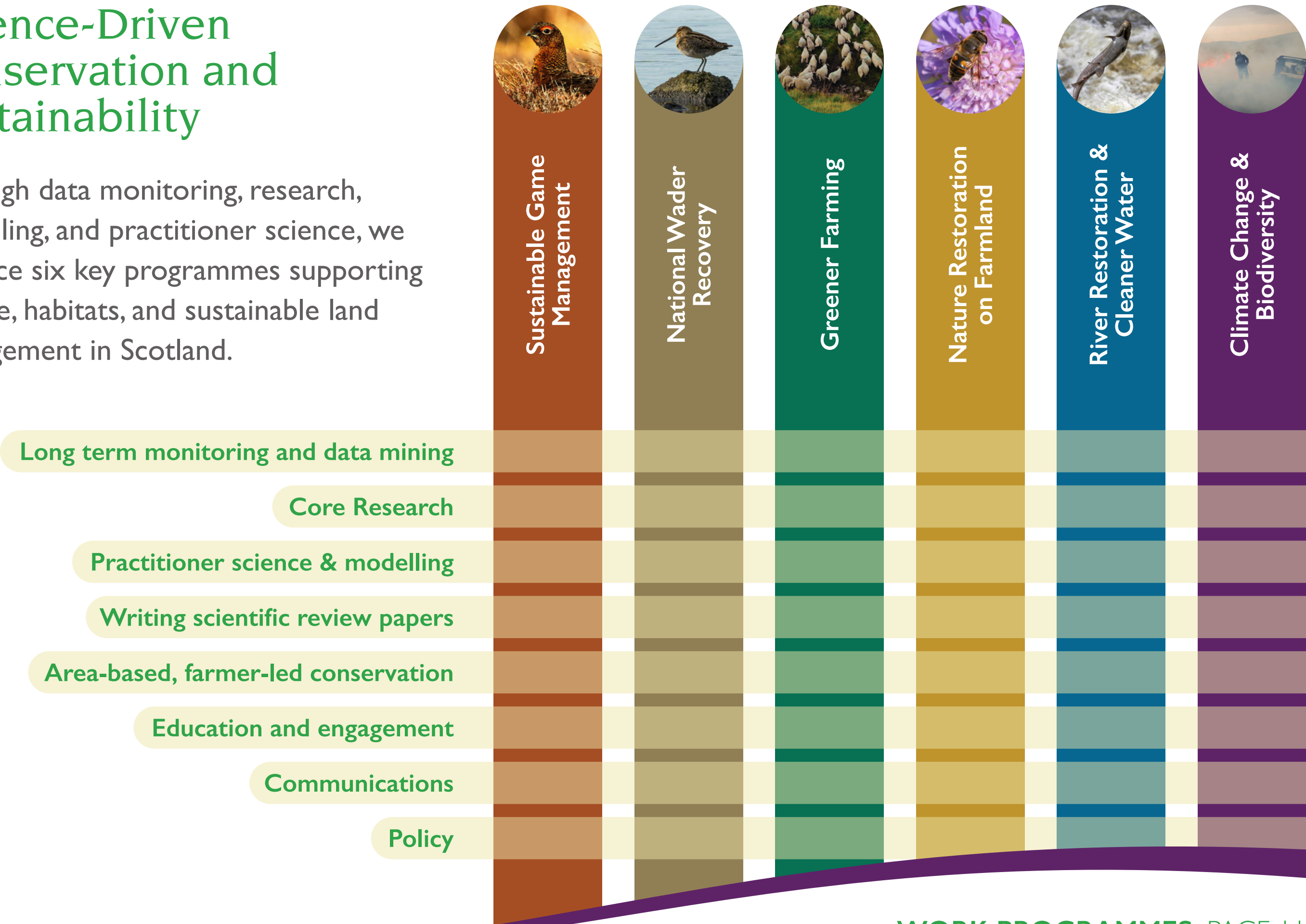
6. Climate Change and Biodiversity

- Understand the impact of climate change on Scotland's biodiversity through research that seeks to explore future climate scenarios and climate policy, in order to advise on mitigation and adaptation strategies.
- Promote upland management that enhance carbon sequestration, such as peatland restoration, muirburn, and hill-fringe woodland expansion, to inform and sustainable land management policies and practice.
- Conduct applied research into habitat creation, protection, and restoration efforts that is aimed at helping wildlife adapt to changing climate conditions.



Science-Driven Conservation and Sustainability

Through data monitoring, research, modelling, and practitioner science, we advance six key programmes supporting wildlife, habitats, and sustainable land management in Scotland.



Our Approach

To drive the conservation and sustainable management of Scotland's game, wildlife and habitats through an integrated approach that combines scientific research, practical advisory services, and evidence-based advocacy.

1. Generate Groundbreaking Research:

Employ rigorous, applied science to identify solutions to Scotland's key environmental challenges, including species recovery, habitat restoration, and climate resilience.

2. Translate Science into Practice:

Use research findings to develop actionable guidance, equipping land managers, farmers, and gamekeepers with knowledge to implement effective conservation strategies.



3. Bridge Science and Policy:

Advocate for evidence-based policies that integrate biodiversity and sustainability into Scotland's land management and climate strategies.

4. Collaborate for Sustainable Land Management:

Facilitate farmer clusters and landscape-scale partnerships to balance biodiversity enhancement with rural productivity through coordinated, stakeholder-driven solutions.

5. Educate and Engage Communities:

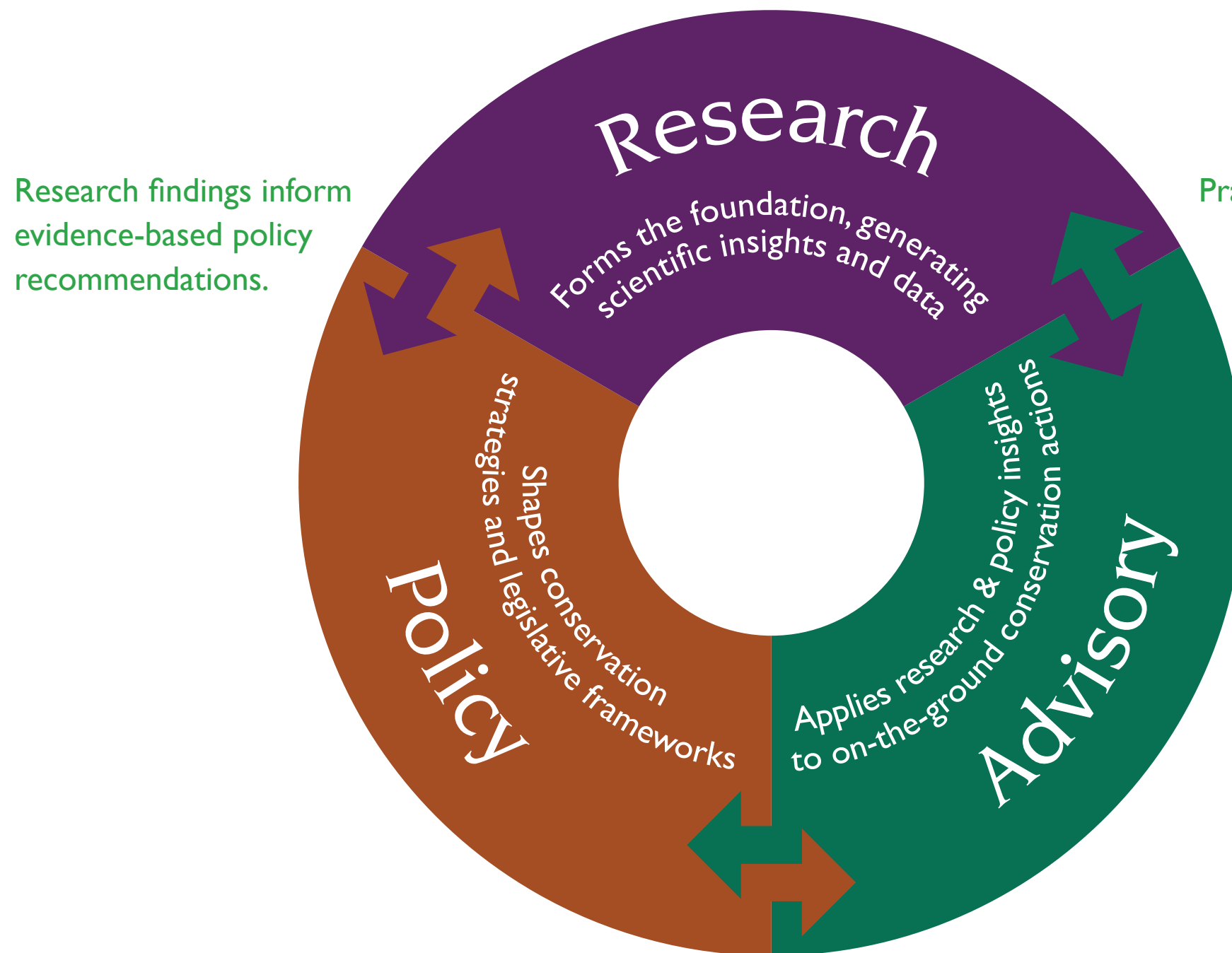
Empower farmers, land managers, and communities through education, training, and outreach to promote shared responsibility and collective action for Scotland's natural heritage.

6. Integrate Climate and Biodiversity Goals:

Develop and promote nature-based solutions that address climate challenges, restore and protect Scotland's ecosystems, and support the recovery of key species.



An Integrated Approach



Research findings inform evidence-based policy recommendations.

Practical challenges and results inform future research priorities.

Connecting applied research, evidence-based policy, and expert advisory services.

GWCT Scotland operates a virtuous circle that ensures our efforts remain grounded, relevant, and effective, creating a dynamic synergy between science, policy, and practice.

Policies guide practical advice provided to land managers and stakeholders.

What can you do?

Support the Future of Scotland's Wildlife and Countryside

At GWCT Scotland, we bridge science, policy, and practice to deliver real conservation impact. Your support is vital in protecting Scotland's game, wildlife, and habitats.



Become a Member

Join a dedicated membership supporting sustainable land and wildlife management.



Partner with Us

Work with our experts to implement science-led conservation strategies.



Support Research & Conservation

Fund projects that restore habitats and protect key species.



Advocate for Evidence-Based Policy

Help us shape policies that integrate biodiversity and sustainability.



Volunteer & Learn

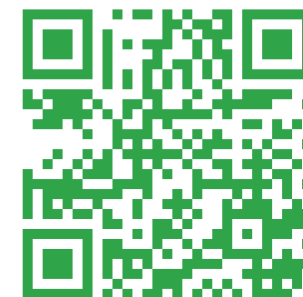
Get involved, attend training, or contribute to field research.



Hire our Scottish Advisory Team

Expert, bespoke advice on game and wildlife management across Scotland.

www.gwctadvisoryscotland.co.uk



Make a Difference Today

- Protect wading birds
- Restore Scotland's rivers, farmland, and uplands
- Promote sustainable game and land management
- Drive solutions for climate and biodiversity challenges

Join Us

To become a member,
donate, or get involved visit:
www.gwct.org.uk/scotland



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