

## **Future of nature reserve on Loch Lomond secured**

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Partnership approach safeguards future of top nature site. RSPB Scotland is hoping to secure the future of one of the most important conservation sites in Central Scotland, after successfully purchasing land at the Wards Estate.

Image



Land at the Wards Estate, part of the Loch Lomond nature reserve

Situated close to Gartocharn at the south east shore of Loch Lomond, the estate is home to a rich variety of wildlife that inhabit the woodlands, mires, fens, grasslands and floodplain of the River Endrick, making this one of the most designated wildlife sites in the UK.

The conservation charity has unveiled plans for a 563 acre nature reserve that it will manage in a pioneering partnership with Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and Loch Lomond & The Trossachs National Park Authority (LLTNPA). This major purchase, of which RSPB Scotland will contribute two thirds of the total cost, will be made possible thanks to the partnering organisations plus a generous grant from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF). An appeal for donations from RSPB members and the public has also been launched. It comes exactly 50 years

after this part of Loch Lomond was first declared a National Nature Reserve.

The managing partnership will ensure that the site will be managed as a hot spot for wildlife on Loch Lomond supporting breeding and wintering waders and waterfowl, and nationally rare plants such as the endemic Scottish or Loch Lomond dock. Ospreys are regular summer residents and can be enjoyed by all who visit this very special part of the national park.

It's the first time that a non-government wildlife organisation, a national park and a statutory conservation body have joined forces in this way to acquire and look after a key site for biodiversity in Scotland.

Anne McCall, Regional Director for the RSPB in South and West Scotland said: "We're delighted that we can be part of this exciting partnership, not only saving an area rich in all types of wildlife but also making nature more accessible to the thousands of people that live in the central belt of Scotland and beyond. This reserve will be a perfect companion to our new store at Lomond Shores and we look forward to working with our partners and the local community in the coming months to sensitively progress our plans."

Andrew Bachell, Director of Operations for SNH said: "SNH is pleased to be working with RSPB Scotland and the National Park Authority in looking after a significant portion of the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve. Our new partnership means that this important reserve will be an even better place for wildlife and for people. We hope to see this reserve reaching its full potential as a community and visitor asset in the national park."

Fiona Logan, CEO of the National Park Authority said: "The purchase of Wards Estate by RSPB Scotland and the partnership between RSPB, SNH and the National Park Authority will provide a unique opportunity to show people some of the wonderful nature so close to central Scotland. The purchase of this special and highly designated area means that the land will be managed to deliver the National Park aims. In particular it will enhance the conservation of the area and it will provide visitors with a great experience. We look forward to a positive working relationship with both RSPB and SNH."

## **Notes for editors**

The estate is within the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park and the Loch Lomond National Scenic Area and includes a large section of the Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve, which was held in private ownership until offered for

sale in 2011. It is designated as Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation and is considered to be one of the best examples of an intact mosaic of floodplain wetland habitats in Scotland.

The area is home to a number of wintering wildfowl including Greenland white-fronted geese, greylag geese, pink-footed geese and a small number of whooper swans and supports breeding wildfowl over the summer months.

It is an area not just rich in bird life but also Atlantic salmon, river lamprey, visiting osprey, otters and a host of other wildlife.

The Loch Lomond NNR, of which this estate is a large part, supports 400 species of plant, which is about quarter of all the species that have been found in Britain. The Scottish dock, only discovered in 1936, is located within the reserve. The species grows nowhere else in Britain.

Loch Lomond National Nature Reserve is one of about 50 national nature reserves in Scotland.

RSPB Scotland is part of the RSPB, which speaks out for birds and wildlife, tackling the problems that threaten our environment. Nature is amazing - help us keep it that way. To find out more about RSPB reserves on the [RSPB website](#).

Scottish Natural Heritage is the Government's adviser on all aspects of nature and landscape across Scotland. Our role is to help everyone understand, value and enjoy Scotland's nature now and in the future. For more information on , please visit the [SNH website](#). [SNH media is also now on Twitter](#).

The National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF) is the 'fund of last resort' and receives annual grant-in-aid from the UK Government. It was set up in 1980, to save the most outstanding parts of our national heritage, in memory of those who have given their lives for the UK. NHMF will receive £20m grant-in-aid from the Government between 2011 and 2015 allowing for an annual budget of £4m-£5m.

## **Further information**

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