

Headline Asks:

Action for nature's recovery must be at the heart of the new Scottish Government. This briefing sets out Plantlife's key asks to political parties for their 2026 election manifestos.

The next Government must prioritise delivery of **new statutory targets for nature recovery** and **set out a roadmap** for meeting the targets. Key steps to achieve this include:

- **Urgently setting statutory targets** in secondary legislation, based on the Natural Environment Bill (to be passed prior to the election)
- Funded package of **farm support** that will deliver for nature, climate and farmers
- **Grassland Strategy** to unlock the value of the 34% of Scotland's land which is grasslands
- Meaningful long-term, upscaled funding and action to **regenerate Scotland's rainforest**
- Multi-year **funding for species recovery**, including wild plants, lichens and fungi
- Legislation to **end sales of horticultural peat** without further delay

Setting out a Roadmap for Nature's Recovery

Setting statutory biodiversity targets is key to securing [long-term action for nature's recovery](#) by future Governments. The targets framework set out in the Natural Environment Bill must be translated into specific targets in secondary legislation once the Bill is passed. This should include consultation with stakeholders on technical aspects of the legislation.

Also needed is a roadmap with a clear step-by-step approach to achieving these targets to ensure that strategic and urgent action is taken. Nature Networks should be used as a key delivery mechanism, with ongoing monitoring and regular progress reports to Parliament.

Supporting Farmers to Deliver for Nature and Climate

Two-thirds of Scotland's land is farmed. This land includes a rich mosaic of habitats with huge potential to support nature's recovery alongside food production. Farm support is therefore a key tool in delivering national and global targets for nature and climate.

The new Government must urgently drive forward the farm payments scheme and give clarity on how public money will be invested for nature, climate and farmers.

A [package of farm support](#) in the Agriculture Reform Programme must provide a coherent and crystal-clear structure including:

- Robust regulation to give farmers absolute clarity on what is required of them
- Elective (Tier 3) and Support (Tier 4) elements which are properly resourced and strategically aligned to deliver for nature and climate.
- Advice and guidance for farmers to identify complementary packages of actions which will most effectively deliver for strategic nature recovery.

Meadow-making by Farmers, Crofters and Communities

From machair to meadows, [species-rich grasslands](#) are intrinsic to Scotland's biodiversity, history, and identity. They are at the heart of sustainable farming businesses that produce nutritious food, and are the ultimate multitaskers in tackling climate change, air and water pollution. Yet unlike trees and peatland, there is no national strategy or plan for grasslands.

The Government must enable farmers, crofters, and local communities to double the area of wildflower-rich grassland habitats. More broadly, a Grassland Strategy will help to unlock the value of more than a third of Scotland's land. This will make the most of this major land use for nature, climate, farming and people.

Saving Scotland's Rainforest

[Scotland's rainforest](#) and its species are globally significant and rare. Yet they are threatened by overgrazing (mainly by deer) and invasive species, in particular invasive *Rhododendron ponticum*, as well as climate change and air pollution.

While current funding is very welcome, the Alliance for Scotland's Rainforest suggests full restoration could cost £500m. A commitment from the new Government to deliver meaningful, long-term upscaled funding and action will help restore and safeguard Scotland's rainforest at scale. This could be achieved by establishing a long-term, blended public/private (50/50) Rainforest Restoration Fund.

Stopping Species Extinction

Long-term, funding is needed to prevent species extinction and restore the unique diversity of [Scotland's wild plants, fungi and lichens](#). This should include targeted funding for species recovery as well as broad habitat restoration. The new Government should increase investment in species recovery through the Nature Restoration Fund (NRF), the Facility for Investment Ready Nature in Scotland (FIRNS) and Peatland ACTION.

Ending Peat Sales

Despite long-standing political commitments to end this destructive trade, the sale and supply of peat for horticulture and gardening is still legal. Allowing peatlands to be destroyed in this way undermines the Government's multi-million pound investment in peatland restoration. Voluntary progress towards peat-free growing has stalled and [legislation is needed to end peat sales](#), providing the horticulture sector with business certainty and a just transition.

The new Scottish Government must work with the UK Government and other devolved administrations to agree a UK-wide approach to legislation to end peat sales by 2030.

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