

SCIENCES — BIOLOGY / GEOGRAPHY · P4–P7

# Fiadh-bheatha na h-Alba — Scottish Wildlife

Conservation &amp; Reintroduction — P4–P7

## Scotland's iconic species

1

### Red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*)

Scotland is the UK's main stronghold for red squirrels — approximately 75% of the UK population. Displaced elsewhere by the larger grey squirrel (introduced from America in 1876) and squirrelpox virus. Red squirrels are immune; grey squirrels carry the virus.

2

### Pine marten (*Martes martes*)

A native predator that eats grey squirrels more easily than reds (greys are larger and slower). Where pine martens are common, red squirrels benefit. Pine martens have recovered significantly in Scotland since legal protection.

3

### Red kite (*Milvus milvus*)

Reintroduced to Scotland (Black Isle, Highland) and England from Wales and Spain in the 1990s. Now thriving — the Scottish population has grown from 6 birds in 1989 to hundreds. One of Scotland's conservation success stories.

4

### Osprey

Returned to Scotland naturally in 1954 (after extinction in the UK). RSPB Loch Garten (Cairngorms) hosts a famous nest. Scotland now has over 200 breeding pairs.

5

### Eurasian beaver (*Castor fiber*)

Officially reintroduced to the River Tay (2009) — the first officially sanctioned mammal reintroduction in the UK. Beavers create wetland habitats and slow water flow, reducing downstream flooding.



6

**Rewilding**

Restoring ecosystems by reintroducing missing species and reducing human management. Scotland is at the forefront of UK rewilding — proposals include reintroducing lynx and wolves.

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