

## Habitats and Species

Objective		Significant Achievements against Objective, 2017 - 2022
HS1	DESIGNATED SPECIES - Conserve and enhance the Atlantic salmon, Fresh water pearl mussel, sea lamprey and otter populations of the Spey and its catchment. Maintain or improve the condition of water and wetland designated sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SFB input to Scottish Government's Wild Salmon Strategy Advisory Group, publication of the Strategy (<a href="https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-wild-salmon-strategy/">https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-wild-salmon-strategy/</a>) in January 2022, with Implementation Plan under development.</li> <li>• Some work done to establish fish host specificity of FWPM in the Spey.</li> <li>• Cairngorms Freshwater Pearl Mussel Project (CNPA) - surveyed upper Spey to look for remnant populations, genetic analysis of existing populations.</li> <li>• NS Site Condition Monitoring shows Atlantic salmon, otter and sea lamprey all as favourable, FWPM unfavourable.</li> <li>• NS graduate placement to investigate FWPM, 2018.</li> <li>• AECS-funded water margins work should benefit FWPM and Atlantic salmon.</li> </ul>
HS2	MAMMALS - Address issues associated with various mammals as it affects their populations within the catchment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-partner Cairngorms Beaver Group set up by CNPA to look at impacts and solutions around beaver arrival in the future.</li> <li>• Scotland's Beaver Strategy published by NS 2022 <a href="https://www.nature.scot/doc/scotlands-beaver-strategy-2022-2045">https://www.nature.scot/doc/scotlands-beaver-strategy-2022-2045</a> .</li> <li>• Invasive American mink (partly) controlled via SISI.</li> <li>• Otter monitored at all Spey designated sites.</li> <li>• NS hosted volunteer project in 2018 on mapping otter signs in Cairngorms.</li> </ul>
HS3	RIPARIAN, RIVER AND WETLAND HABITATS - Conserve and enhance river, riparian and wetland habitats including river restoration.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat enhancement funding secured for restoring Ruthven Burn from Transport Scotland as part of the A9 dualling.</li> <li>• Insh Marshes under active management and restoration, potential restoration programmes identified, some restored (RSPB).</li> <li>• All SCI projects include progress towards this aim, supported by partners.</li> <li>• SFB Biologists conduct regular assessments of invertebrates as indicator of habitat quality.</li> <li>• Farming subsidies, other grants and growth of the carbon economy have incentivised action by farmers and landowners -peatland restoration, ditch blocking, woodland creation, etc.</li> <li>• Establishment of Cairngorms Connect landscape scale habitat restoration five year programme, includes several catchment projects on public and private land from Abernethy to Gaick.</li> <li>• Large Woody Material installed in the lower River Tromie and Insh Marshes.</li> </ul>
HS4	RIVER AND WETLAND BIRDS - Conserve and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SWWI, GWWI, SAC etc supported multiple AECS applications for managing farms for waders.</li> <li>• Extensive scrapes and other habitat improvements for waders delivered by SWWI/RSPB/CNPA.</li> </ul>

	enhance the riverine and wetland bird populations of the catchment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2018 key wader sites mapped and shared to facilitate early management discussions between SCI, SWWI and landowners.</li> <li>• RSPB - ongoing work to maintain and improve the breeding wader populations in the catchment via local Initiatives, eg habitat improvement projects funded.</li> <li>• Wader survey in Badenoch and Strathspey in 2021, showed a 25% decrease since 2015.</li> <li>• SFB conduct four counts of sawbill ducks per year on Spey, on-going.</li> <li>• NS bird breeding areas protected, some specific conservation programmes eg Goldeneye Study Group.</li> <li>• NS runs the Working for Waders project which shares good practice and fund projects for waders.</li> <li>• Project being developed by Scotland; the Big Picture to investigate reintroduction of Eurasian Crane.</li> <li>• CNPA encourage installation of bird boxes for goldeneye, eg new distillery at Craggan - 10 boxes successfully used last year and this year.</li> </ul>
HS5	INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES - Develop strategies to contain and control existing INNS and prevent the introduction of new INNS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MC have maintenance regime for management, particularly around flood alleviation schemes.</li> <li>• SISI Project Officer hosted by SFB 2017-22, focus on containment and eradication of Giant Hogweed, Japanese Knotweed, Himalayan Balsam, White Butterburr and American Mink, using contractors and volunteers.</li> <li>• Monitoring of Ranunculus ceased in 2018, now considered by some as naturalised.</li> </ul>