

## Land

**Land provides a wide range of essential goods and services. It needs to be protected to ensure it will continue to provide these in future.**




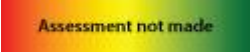
Scotland's land is a fundamental asset. It provides a range of economic, social and environmental benefits vital for our health and prosperity. We grow food and timber on it, build our houses and roads on it, much of our water filters through and is purified by it, it stores carbon and supports a range of habitats and species, some of which are rare on an international scale. In addition, the study of Scotland's rocks has played a significant role in understanding how our planet has evolved and the rocks preserve a hugely important educational resource.

Our distinctive and diverse landscapes play a key role in attracting many visitors to Scotland as well as contributing to many aspects of our daily lives including our cultural identity, health and well-being.

Land is subject to a range of pressures; climate change and activities associated with how land is used and managed are the main pressures. Agriculture, forestry and building developments make the largest contribution to changes in the land.

Our understanding of how the condition of land changes over time is limited and there are few mechanisms to ensure its protection. Ensuring our land is kept in a good state to enable it to provide these benefits is vital for the sustainability of the environment as a whole.

[Click for explanation of diagram.](#)

Topic	Summary
<p><u><a href="#">Landscape</a></u></p>  <p>Scotland's landscape is one of its most iconic assets. It is essential for our health and well-being and thus requires careful management.</p>	<p>Scotland is renowned for its distinctive and diverse range of landscapes. These have evolved over many years as a consequence of natural and cultural forces and continue to evolve today. Highlands and lowlands, urban and coastal; together they create the backdrop against which we live our lives.</p> <p>Landscapes contribute positively to our well-being and to the economic performance of the country.</p> <p>However, we risk damaging our landscapes and losing what we value about them unless more attention is paid to managing change.</p>
<p><u><a href="#">Land use and management</a></u></p>  <p>Scotland's land is primarily rural and is used for a range of agricultural, forestry, sporting and recreational activities.</p>	<p>Land use in Scotland is diverse and has a strong relationship with the quality, appearance and perception of the land.</p> <p>Agriculture is the predominant land use in Scotland, covering around 70% of the land area. Over half of this is rough grazing; only 10% is arable land. Woodland currently covers around 18% of Scotland, most of which is coniferous plantation.</p> <p>Large areas of land are managed primarily for sporting use (deer and grouse). Only about 2.5% of the country is urban and much of this is in the Central Belt.</p> <p>There is an increasing awareness that the sustainable management of our land has a key role to play in our response to climate change and improving the wider environment (e.g. run-off from fields affecting river water quality).</p>

Rocks and landforms



Scotland's rocks and landforms provide economic, social and environmental benefits, and help us to understand our dynamic Earth.

Scotland's rocks and landforms are of national and international importance for demonstrating key geological processes and events in the Earth's history.

They provide essential ecosystem services delivering economic, social and environmental benefits. However, their importance is not widely understood or reflected in current policy. Many of the rocks and minerals protected by legislation are in favourable condition, but that is only a fraction of the wider resource.

Understanding how rocks and landforms change over time has an important part to play in enabling society to understand and adapt to current issues such as climate change and sea level rise.

Soils



Scotland's soils are diverse and rich in carbon; they are vital for Scotland's health, prosperity and environment.

Scotland's soils are very diverse. They provide many environmental, economic and social benefits, supporting the supply of food, wood, clean water and habitat, as well as storing carbon.

The key pressures that soils face are climate change and changes in land use and land management; these can have environmental and socio-economic impacts.

Sustainable soil management should be recognised as part of the solution to a number of key issues that Scotland faces. We need better policy integration, better trend data on the state of soils and good practical soil management solutions.