

Overall summary

Our environment is vital to our success and well-being as a nation and is generally in good condition. We must work together to protect it.



A healthy environment is essential to support our continued existence on the planet.

Scotland's environment is generally in a good condition. It is world-famous and generates wealth for Scotland, both directly (e.g. supporting fisheries, providing water for the whisky industry, growing crops and timber) and indirectly (e.g. benefiting human health, through tourism and the recreation opportunities that a healthy environment affords). A [recent study](#) valued the benefits provided by Scotland's environment to be worth up to £23.5 billion per year.

Many of the [public bodies](#) who are responsible for protecting and improving the environment have worked together to describe the condition of [our environment](#).

The environment is always changing and the website will be regularly updated to reflect this, so that this website provides in one place the most current assessment of the state of Scotland's environment.

Despite the generally good condition of Scotland's environment, there remain some key issues which affect human health, wildlife and our economic success.

Many of the challenges facing Scotland's environment are complex, and can only be solved in partnership; a partnership of public bodies, businesses, non-governmental and research organisations, and you, the public.

The key messages, based upon our assessment of the condition of Scotland's environment are:

Air and climate: Reducing our contribution to climate change



Scotland has ambitious targets for reducing the emission of greenhouse gases. We are moving in the right direction but still have a long way to go to achieve our climate change targets. We are too dependent upon energy generated by burning coal, oil and gas. It will be important that we all use energy more efficiently and change our behaviour to help Scotland achieve its targets.

Built environment: Improving the quality of life



The majority of towns and cities are generally good places to live, but there are still issues with poor air quality, litter and noise as well as areas with poor infrastructure, inadequate amenities and limited access to greenspace. Urban regeneration needs to address these problems, in order to deliver improvements to the quality of life. We must also reduce our resource demands. Good progress is being made in Scotland but we all need to help by changing our behaviour to efficiently use resources and improve recycling rates.

Land: Managing land for multiple benefits



We expect a lot from our land, we have to achieve a balance between protecting the environment and benefits such as the production of food, the management of forests and enjoyment of recreational opportunities. Scotland's [Land Use Strategy](#) promotes this sustainable land use and management; the role of land managers is especially important in achieving the right balance between the environment and our demands from the land.

Freshwater: Improving the condition of our water environment



Our freshwater environment has been progressively improving over the past 60 years. Our expectations are that this trend will continue with wildlife recovering and recreational opportunities increasing. The remaining problems which we need to continue to address include impacts associated with land management and the health of migratory fish stocks.

Marine environment: Reducing the human impact on our seas through marine planning



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Scotland's seas are mainly clean and safe although there are some localised areas of concern. The seas support a diverse array of habitats and contain nationally and internationally important populations of certain species. The seas are also economically productive with a wide range of human activity taking place. There are two significant pressures on the marine area which are widespread: human activity contributing to climate change and fishing which impacts on the seabed and species. Management is being improved through the adoption of Marine Planning and the development of a National Marine Plan.

Over the next three years through this website we will be increasing the opportunities for you to get involved with Scotland's environment.

- we want you to identify the environmental problems you think are most important;
- we will be developing ways to encourage visitors to this site to share information on the condition of your environment, and to help shape actions to improve it.

We'd like you to get involved; to understand, care for and improve Scotland's environment. Please [contact us](#) if you want to:

- comment on our assessment of Scotland's environment;
- give us your views on the environmental issues that we face.