Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund

Impact Report 3

2024-2025

Foreword

It has been a significant year for NatureScot and the work we deliver, particularly in the marine environment. From the publication of the Scottish Biodiversity Strategy Delivery Plan to the challenges of supporting a transition to net zero, the policy landscape has moved at a pace. SMEEF, and the projects it is funding, are a great demonstration of what can be achieved by working collaboratively with communities and industry. The 14ha planting target for the seagrass programme is ambitious but given the commitment from both local groups and the funding partnership with SSEN I am optimistic that the target can be achieved.

NatureScot continues to be proud to host this dynamic programme and we are keen to see it expand, delivering for nature through high integrity funding partnerships.

Nick Halfhide
Chief Executive, NatureScot

Introduction

Reflecting on the last year, I am struck by the progress made by our small and hard-working SMEEF team as we see a range of funded projects underway and biodiversity benefits being delivered. Our ambition was always to build a long running programme funded from private sources, delivering at scale and this year that ambition has begun to be realised.

Our financial forecast on page 6 now shows the multiyear commitments in place amounting to more than £4m of spending, which is allowing us to make grants that reflect the needs of the developing community of marine enhancement specialists across the country.

We are very proud of the positive impact we are having on nature recovery, but equally on people and coastal communities – on page 12 you will see the latest numbers from our seagrass programme which has enabled the employment of 19 people.

I am delighted that a new Seabirds Officer will be joining us shortly, along with a new Grants Manager and as the team grows we will be able to deliver more – more fundraising, more grants and more impact. I really do believe that SMEEF is uniquely placed to help deliver – we have shown that our approach of blending public sector knowledge and private sector finance is highly effective. If you would like to join this growing success story the team is ready and waiting to hear from you.

Cathy Tilbrook
Head of Sustainable Coasts and Seas, NatureScot
Chair of SMEEF Steering Group

How does SMEEF work?

SMEEF has a robust governance system which aims to give both contributors and grantees confidence. A Steering Group is at the heart of our decision-making structure and is made up of representatives from NatureScot, Crown Estate Scotland and the Scottish Government's Marine Directorate. The Steering Group defines the ethical contributions policy and ensures that grant giving is aligned with national strategies and policy.

Our Ethical Contributions Board assesses the source of contributions and a separate Grants Panel decides the grant allocations. We also maintain contact with scientific experts through a close partnership with the Scottish Blue Carbon Forum and MASTS; and operate a wider mailing list for anyone with an interest in SMEEF's activities. Finally, there is the Contributor's Forum which meets regularly to be updated on activities and to share experiences.

Fundraising

The activity of the Ethical Contributions Board (ECB) continues to develop and to respond to the nature of contributors and the wider risk environment. This period has included specific work on higher risk sectors and testing revisions to our approach adopted in the prior period. We feel these are working well but remain vigilant and have included several checks and balances to give assurance over time. This includes ensuring the necessary tools and processes are in place should our view change and we feel we need to act. Complex as this work can be, this is exactly what SMEEF is seeking to do; to operate in unique part of the landscape to unlock and access funds for the benefit of the marine environment that others are unable to access.

The ECB has also been working to ensure we are fit for the future with a review of our governance and skills. This has led to several adjustments being adopted including an increase in membership and beginning a process to recruit a second independent member in addition to the Chair.

James Stewart
Independent Chair of ECB
Director, One Planet Consulting

Credit to 2024/25 donors

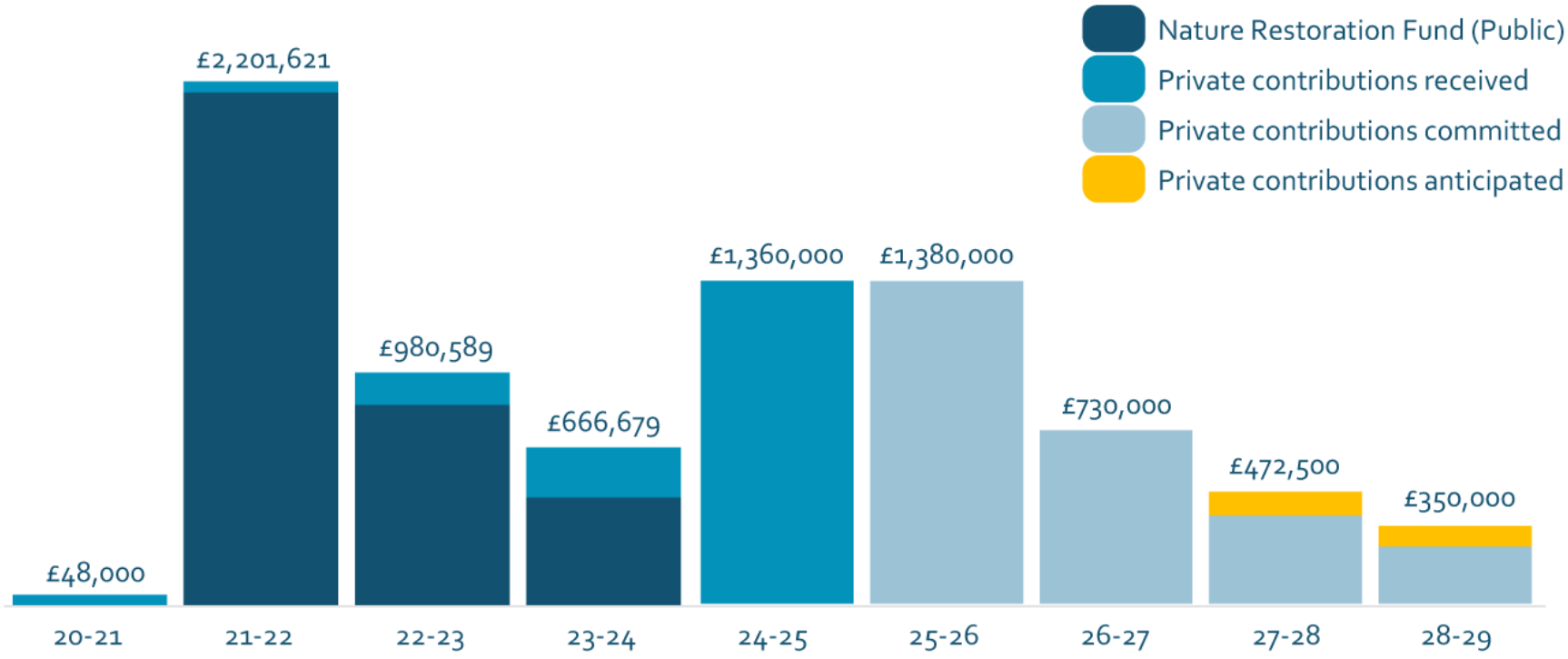
SMEEF could not function without the kind and generous support of businesses across Scotland who have made contributions. The donations are made completely voluntarily and not linked to any formal requirement of the development licensing and consenting process.

SMEEF funders list

24/25	Ossian Offshore Wind Farm Limited Stromar Offshore Wind Farm Limited Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution Limited Muir Mhor Offshore Wind Farm Limited Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited Broadshore Offshore Wind Farm Limited Thistle Wind Partners Limited Orsted Power (UK) Limited CampionWind Limited MarramWind Limited Morven Offshore Wind Limited
23/24	Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited Muir Mhor Offshore Wind Farm Limited Bellrock Offshore Wind Farm Limited Broadshore Offshore Wind Farm Limited Scottish Power Renewables (UK) Limited Scottish Hydro Electric Power Distribution Limited
22/23	Scottish Power Renewables (UK) Limited Orsted Power (UK) Limited Stromar Offshore Wind Farm Limited
21/22	EDF Energy Renewables Limited SB Offshore Energy Limited UK Mainstream Renewable Power Limited Simply Blue Energy (Scotland) Limited RWE Renewables UK SSE Renewables Services (UK) Limited Offshore Wind Power Limited
20/21	Red Rock Power Limited Vattenfall Wind Power Limited Scottish Power Renewables (UK) Limited Ocean Winds UK Limited

Fundraising at a glance

SMEEF was established to pool new finance from a range of sources to form a substantial and long running marine enhancement grant fund. The programme benefited from Nature Restoration Funds in the first two years of operation allowing a pipeline of projects to get established. SMEEF is currently allocating funds raised entirely from private contributions.



The SMEEF Grants programme

The grants panel met and dealt with issues by correspondence during the year. We have been well supported by the whole SMEEF team. It's been good to receive progress updates on grants previously awarded and their success signals that the scrutiny and decision-making process is robust.

As reported in the last impact report the move away from general application rounds to those focused more on thematic areas was anticipated and the first of these, for seagrass restoration, was launched. The panel received 8 applications from a range of community and business partnerships across the country. We received specialist support from the seagrass advisory network and from the SMEEF seagrass project officer which was invaluable. The grant review process raised issues around the readiness of organisations to undertake the work, the suitability of the target areas for restoration, differences in restoration techniques and the value for money across the hectarage to be restored. After detailed consideration, and some further clarifications being sought from applicants, 4 applications which will aim for the restoration of 7 hectares of seagrass at a value of £1.4m were offered.

It was pleasing to see knowledge exchange sessions taking place between grant applicants and existing seagrass restoration projects, such as Restoration Forth. This helps ensure lessons learnt in projects are shared. As well as restoring seagrass the project awards also helps support green jobs and skills development. This is important for rural communities and also helps build capacity to respond to the urgency and pace of action required to reverse declines in nature.

Looking forward the next theme that will be launched will be Seabirds resilience with the priorities being informed by the Scottish Seabird Conservation Action Plan. Many of our seabirds have been declining and partnership projects can help to address these declines and increase resilience of our internationally important seabird populations. The Grants Panel looks forward to reviewing project applications under this theme in the coming year.

Susan Davies FRSB
Chair, James Hutton Institute
Independent Chair of SMEEF Grants Panel

Monitoring and Reporting

Our approach to reporting

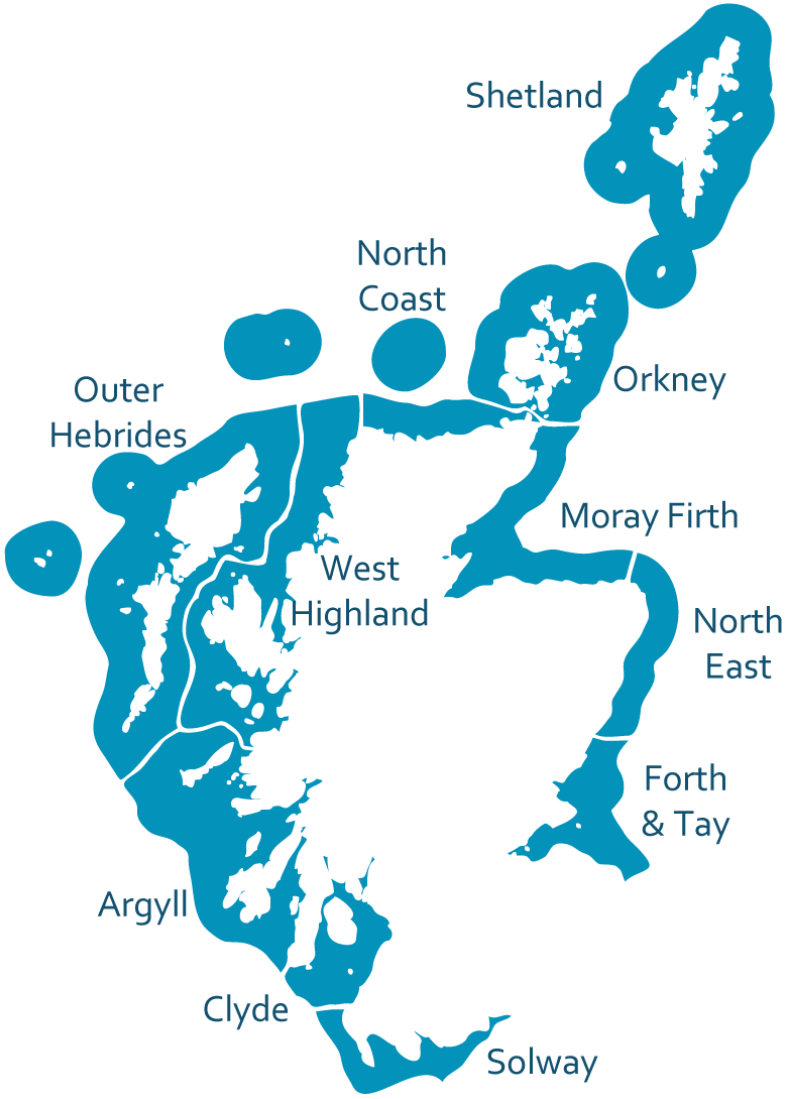
As a developing organisation SMEEF has been fine-tuning our approach to reporting, in particular we are linking our work more strongly to relevant policy and have further defined our core themes to guide our approach.

Grant spending is recorded by three factors:

1. Which of our four main funding themes it falls into, and whether they also fall into one of two categories: 'Research' or 'Project Development'.

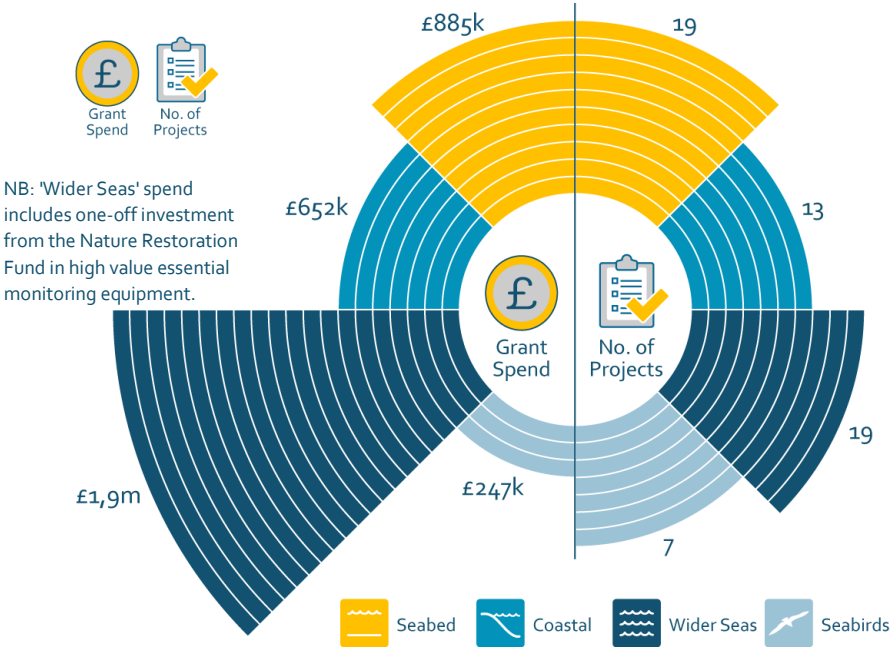
2. Which area of the relevant draft policy the grant is most relevant to.

3. Which of the 11 Scottish Marine Regions the grant most applies to. If the grant is widely applicable it will be listed as 'Scotland-wide'.

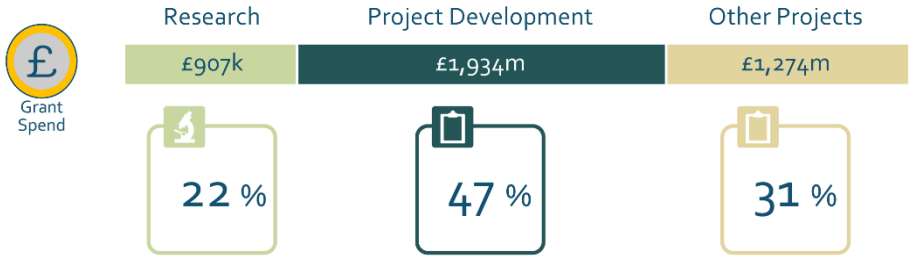


At a glance: 2021-25

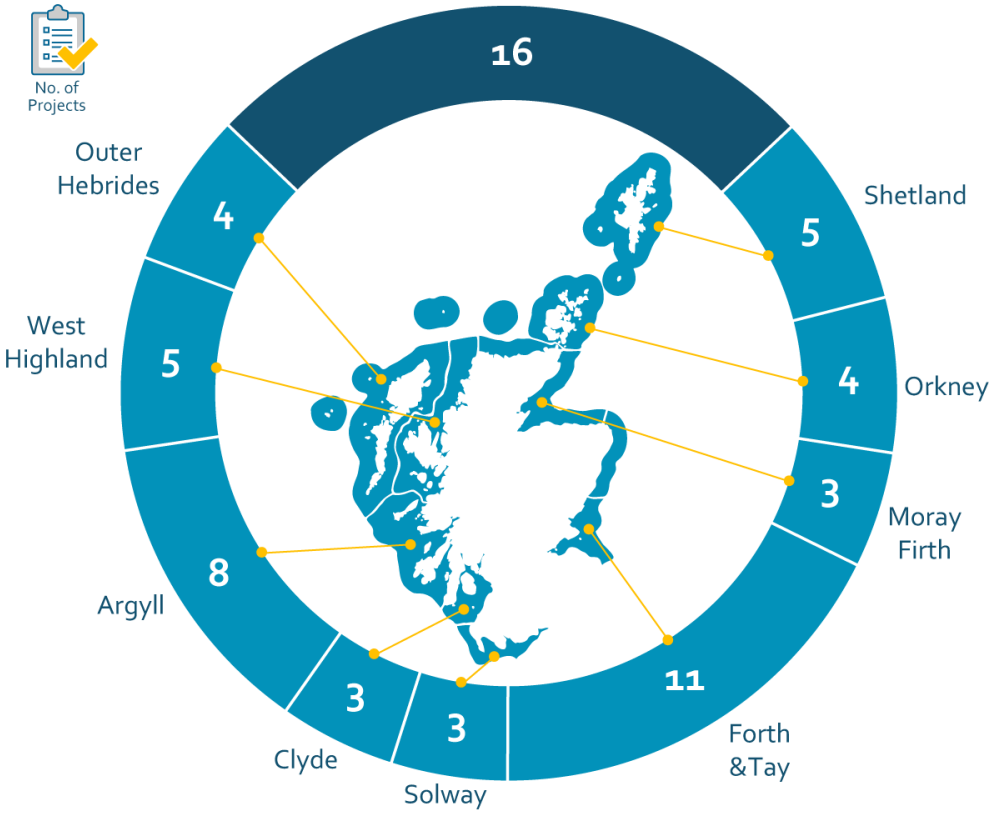
The following two pages give an overview of all grant spending since SMEEF started.



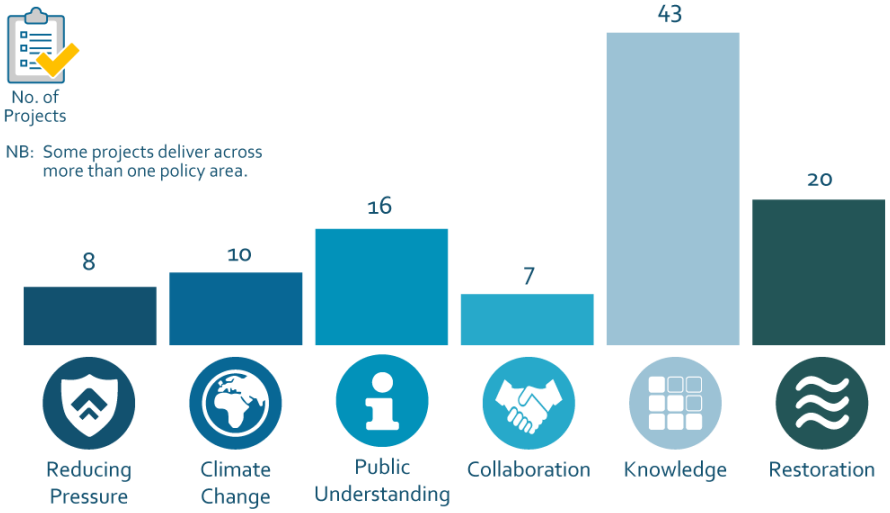
NB: 'Wider Seas' spend includes one-off investment from the Nature Restoration Fund in high value essential monitoring equipment.



Marine Region



Policy Priorities



Links to national strategies

The number of SMEEF projects, between 2021 and 2025, that focus on delivering the aims and objectives of key national strategies.

No. of Projects

NB: Projects can deliver across more than one policy area.

Cetacean conservation strategy

- 3 Manage the main pressures to cetacean populations
- 5 Identify pressures and vulnerabilities of cetaceans
- 5 Increase collaboration for cetacean conservation
- 6 Better understand cetacean population status and trends
- 6 Increase public understanding of cetacean populations

Scottish Seabird Action Plan

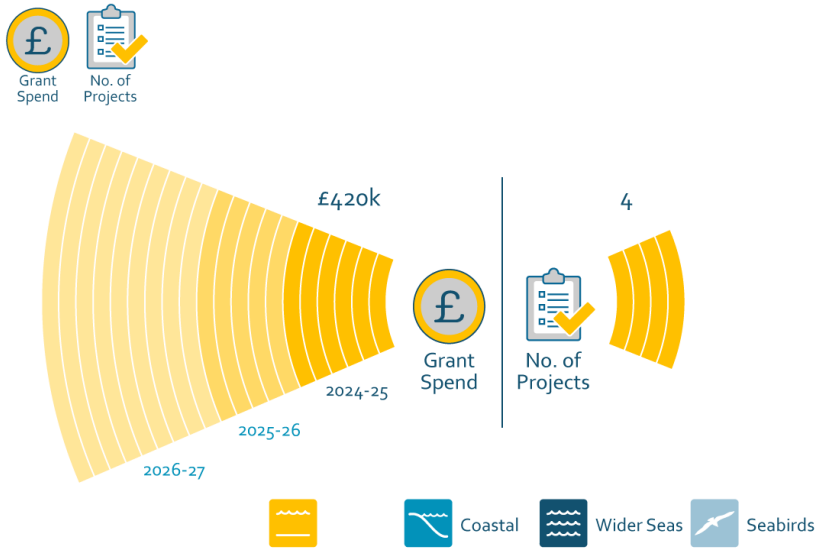
- Celebrating Scotland's seabirds
- 7 Building the evidence
- 10 Restoring and improving seabird habitats
- 11 Maximising resilience and survival
- 12 Ensuring plentiful food supplies
- 14 Making a global contribution

Scottish Biodiversity Strategy

- 2 Action on marine litter and plastics
- 2 Protect and recover wild Atlantic salmon and migratory fish populations
- 3 INNS surveillance, prevention and control
- 13 Climate change resilience and adaptation in coastal and marine systems
- 21 Connection between people and communities with nature
- 26 Manage pressures on seabirds, marine mammals and elasmobranchs
- 32 Ecosystem restoration

At a glance: 2024-25

This page gives an overview of grant spending since the last Impact Report in 2024. SMEEF has not run a full open grant round in this reporting period instead choosing to focus our efforts on delivery of the Seagrass Meadows Scotland programme. Although these projects will begin planting this summer they are listed as 'Project Development' due to the amount of survey and other preparation work which is needed.



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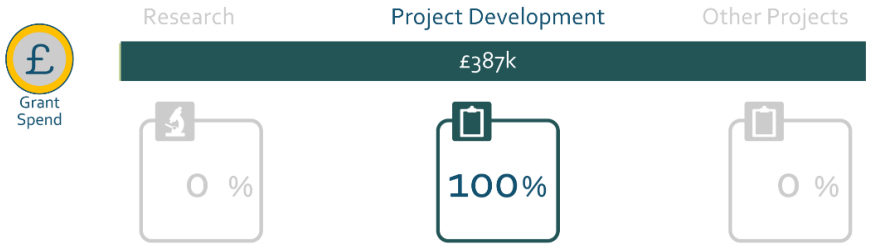
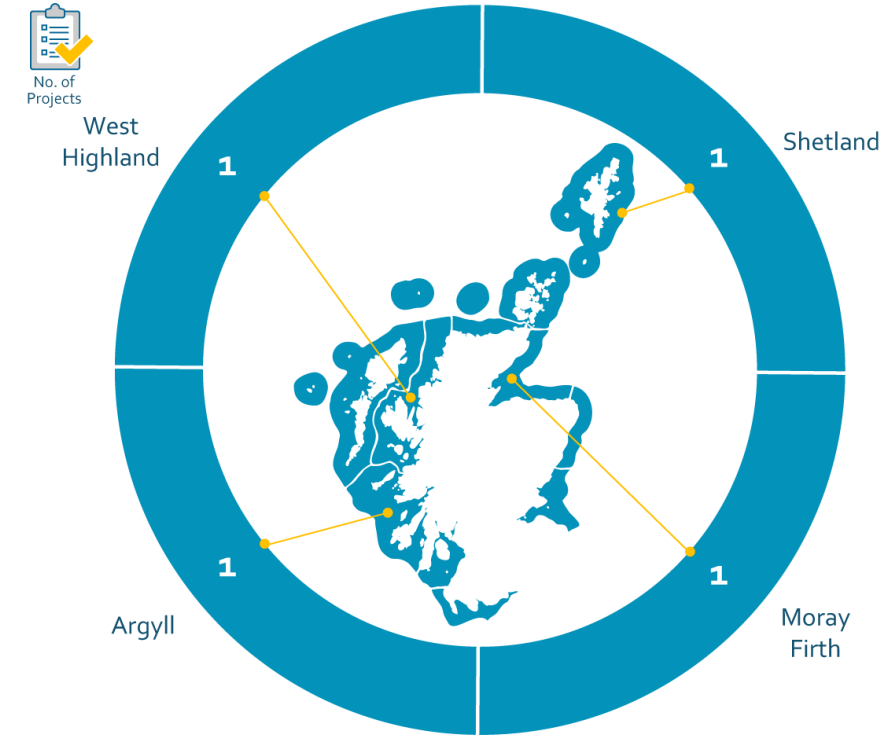


Marine Region



Seagrass Meadows Scotland grants programme 2025-28

Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund

Seagrass Meadows Scotland

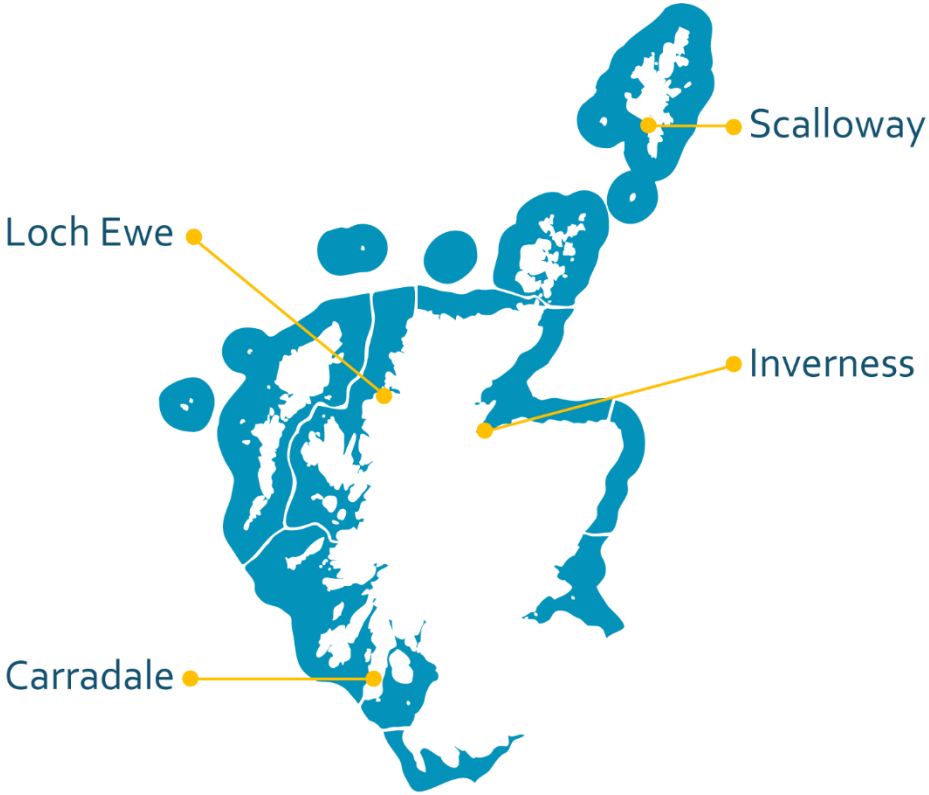
Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks

SMEEF launched Scotland's most ambitious seagrass planting programme on World Seagrass Day 2025. The unique partnership between SMEEF and SSEN Distribution will see £2.4 million distributed to help restore nature in Scotland's seas.

Seagrasses have been declining globally since the 1930s, with estimates that 7% of seagrass meadows are being lost each year. The partnership aims to plant 14 hectares of seagrass over the next three years, supporting both nature and coastal communities. The project launch received strong media attention, including radio and BBC TV coverage with an equivalent advertising value of £2.2m!

To date grants have been awarded to four organisations spanning the length and breadth of Scotland, from Shetland to the Kintyre peninsula. The organisations and their projects are:

- Mossy Earth's Wilder Firths project
- Kintyre Coastal Network's East Kintyre Biosphere
- Wester Ross Fisheries Trust's seagrass planting project
- University of the Highlands and Islands – Restoring Shetland's Marlee Meadows project.



Mossy Earth - Wilder Firths (Linneachan nas Fhiadhaiche)

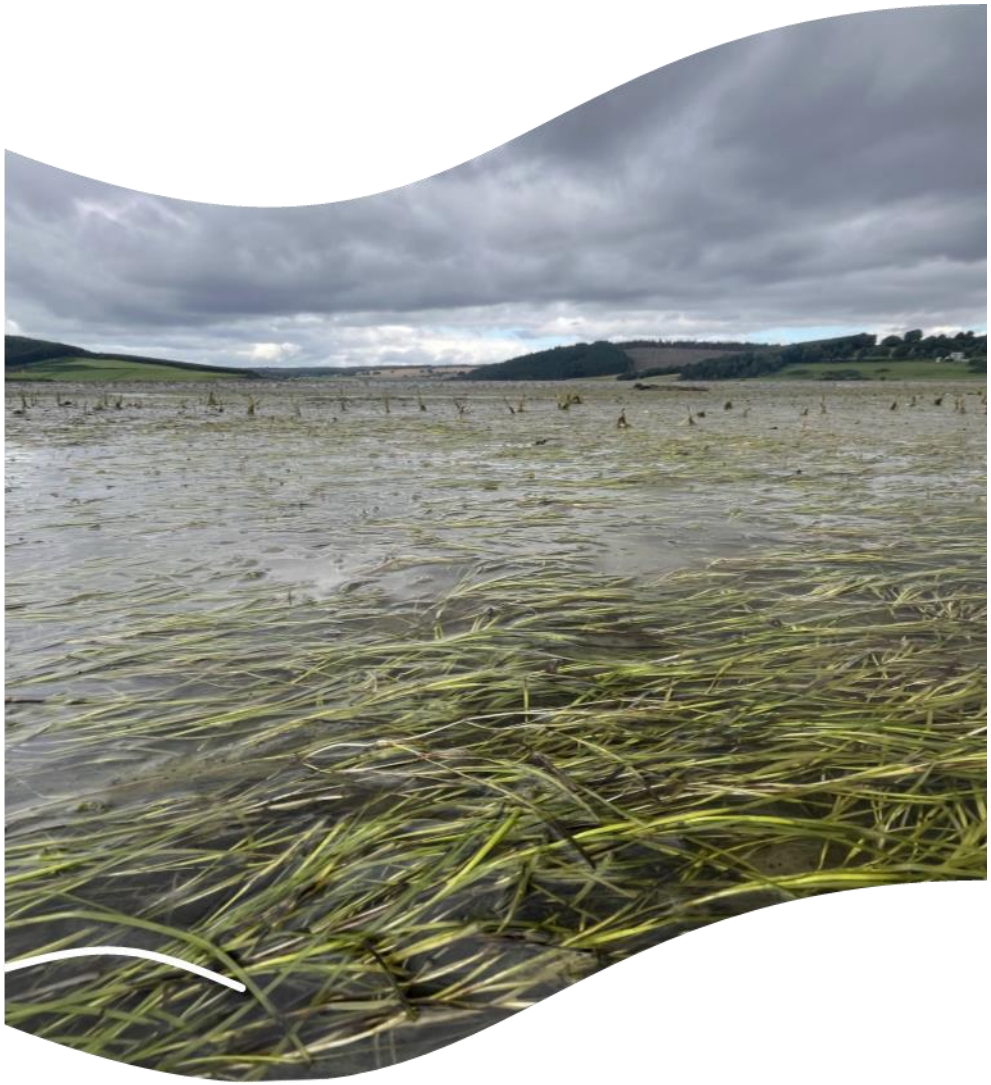
£544,558

The vision of Wilder Firths (Linneachan nas Fhiadhaiche) is for the firths surrounding the Black Isle to be home to a resilient mosaic of biogenic habitats that support diverse and thriving ecosystems. Central to achieving and sustaining this vision are local communities that are connected to and invested in their coastal environment. The initiative is led by Mossy Earth and their locally based team.

Historically overlooked in the area, seagrass meadows are one of the focus habitats of Wilder Firths alongside native oyster (Ostrea edulis) reefs. Seagrass species in the area are dwarf eelgrass (Nanozostera noltei), common eelgrass (Zostera marina) and beaked tasselweed (Ruppia maritima). Common eelgrass encompasses variants that are found either intertidally or subtidally, whereas dwarf eelgrass and beaked tasselweed are only found in the intertidal zone.

Following extensive baseline and investigative surveys and trial seagrass translocations undertaken in 2024 supported by the Scottish Government's Nature Restoration Fund (NRF), managed by NatureScot, the delivery of planting 4.2 hectares of intertidal seagrass meadow over three years will be supported by SMEEF.

As well as collecting and planting seed with other members of the local community, the team will trial more experimental approaches such as transplanting seagrass with sediment (coring) and mechanised planting. Small scale trials of intertidal seagrass coring, a method previously used by Restoration Forth, indicate that the method could be an effective way to restore seagrass meadows when compared with other methods such as seeding or transplanting bare root seagrass plants.



Kintyre Coastal Network - East Kintyre Biosphere

£109,402

Seabed

Reducing Pressure | Climate Change | Public Understanding | Collaboration | Knowledge | Restoration

The projects aim is to locate and expand the presence of seagrass in the seas around Kintyre. The Biosphere project incorporates partnerships with terrestrial conservation groups operating in the same location, to create a corridor from peat to seabed, allowing ecosystems and biodiversity to flourish.

The focus of this project is on Carradale and Torrisdale Bays on the east side of the Kintyre peninsula. The bays have areas of semi sheltered water, with the right substrate to support seagrass meadows. Locals talk of, in the past, having to wade out through seagrass to swim, with seagrass plants washing up on the shore. Community members have been trained in survey techniques and have identified areas where some fragmented seagrass persists.

The project intends to expand the beds by either collecting and transplanting rhizomes, or through seed collection and dispersal. The project hope to increase the area of seagrass by one hectare over a three-year period. The project will involve local school children, community members, and contribute to both marine conservation and carbon capture. It will form a small, but valuable, part of worldwide efforts to restore seagrass habitats.

Wester Ross Fisheries Trust – Seagrass Project

£134,870

Seabed

Reducing Pressure | Climate Change | Public Understanding | Collaboration | Knowledge | Restoration

The aim of this project is to restore a seagrass bed at Inverasdale, Loch Ewe, Wester Ross. The restoration area is within the Wester Ross Marine Protected Area, where living fragments of a former seagrass bed were present until around 2010. An initial area of 0.5ha will be targeted, with potential for additional restoration of seagrass beds over a greater area within the Loch Ewe area over future years.

A key element of the project will be the development of methods using seagrass fragments washed up on local shores after storm events as the main donor material for restoration. Cultivation of these fragments and rhizomes will take place in nursery ponds close to the restoration site. This will keep transportation distances of the seagrass low and minimise the use of non-local materials. Shoots washed up by Christmas Day storms were collected by dedicated volunteers and planted in the nursery tanks. Their hard work has paid dividends, and new shoots are already appearing to greet the spring sunshine.

The project will be delivered by Wester Ross Fisheries Trust (WRFT), based in Gairloch. WRFT are a registered charity focusing on the conservation and enhancement of native freshwater fish and their inland and coastal water environments. As seagrass is an important habitat for young sea trout and other migratory salmonids, this project is key to wild fish conservation work. The project will include partnership with local marine conservation groups and community volunteers.

UHI Shetland - Restoring Shetlands Marlie Meadows

£302,756

Seabed

Reducing Pressure | Climate Change | Public Understanding | Collaboration | Knowledge | Restoration

The Shetland Islands are the UK's most northerly archipelago. In a select few sheltered, shallow voes, protected from the full force of the Atlantic waves, we find seagrass meadows (or marlie or marlok in Shetland dialect). These seagrass beds are an important and diverse habitat, but most of the beds which were present in the early 1900s have now been lost from Shetland. The 'Restoring Shetland's marlie meadows' project aims to restore 1.2 ha of subtidal seagrass beds in west Mainland.

This project aims to trial shoot transplantation methods in areas where seagrass was historically abundant, thereby enhancing resilience across multiple sites. This project builds on previous SMEEF-funded work by University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Shetland, which identified 14 seagrass beds in Whiteness Voe, and one small remnant bed in Weisdale Voe. Drone surveys and community efforts helped map approximately 1.59 hectares (15,900 m²) of subtidal Zostera marina meadow. However, this is a small fraction of the seagrass that would have existed in the past. UHI Shetland aims to collaborate with local organisations and the community to increase the abundance of seagrass habitats, monitor the condition of existing beds, and raise awareness of this vital ecosystem.

Grant updates 2023-24

SMEEF's major focus of work in 2024-25 was in delivery of existing grants and allocation of new grants to seagrass restoration (see previous section). This section gives updates on the existing grants which are almost all now complete. In 2025-26 we will be opening new grant rounds and we look forward to telling you about that in our next Impact Report.

Seal Surveys – Sea Mammal Research Unit

£25,000

Wider Seas

Seals are key indicators of ecosystem health so wildlife managers need effective ways to monitor seal behaviour and numbers in remote and inaccessible sites. The University of St Andrews Sea Mammal Research Unit were awarded £25,000 to develop their programme for surveying seals with static sensors at the designated seal haul out at Ythan Estuary, Forvie National Nature Reserve. Autonomous Camera Monitoring (ACM) systems can provide an answer, they operate remotely and can provide 24hr coverage. Previous supply chain issues for accessing thermophile infrared array (TIA) sensors have now been overcome, the system has been trialled in the field and the ACM adapted to the Scottish climatic conditions with flexible solar panels. Longer deployments of the system are currently being trialled, and it is anticipated that a wide range of stakeholders will benefit from the findings; those interested in cost-effective monitoring seal numbers, regulators, researchers investigating seal behaviour and ecology, and local community groups and schools.

WOSHH-eDNA-Sound Project- Edinburgh Napier University

£44,690

Wider Seas

SMEEF invested **£27,898** into the important hunt for Scotland's historic herring populations with the WOSHH-eDNA-Sound project, enhanced with a further **£16,791** from the NRF. The project was designed to detect if, when and where large spring-spawning herring shoals are present in West of Scotland inshore waters. Using environmental DNA (eDNA) and passive acoustic monitoring devices (PAM) deployed by local fishers, evidence was found of spring-spawning herring, spawning habitat on maerl beds and of a biodiversity indicator possibly linked to the return of large spawning herring shoals. A key part of the project was engagement with local communities where in the past herring determined the pattern of daily life.

Horse Mussel Reef Survey - Berwickshire Marine Reserve

£31,942

Established by the local community in 1984, Berwickshire Marine Reserve (BMR) is the first and only voluntary marine reserve in Scotland, home to protected flora and fauna including the priority marine feature horse mussel beds (*Modiolus modiolus*). SMEEF's grant of **£21,722**, with a further extension from the NRF of **£10,220**, has been used for equipment to undertake a baseline mapping exercise and site condition assessment of these beds. The extensive surveys have provided a firm foundation for future management plans for sustainable marine activity and mussel bed recovery along with help from a newly engaged local community.

Shetlands' Lost Seagrass – UHI, Shetland

£32,561

'Searching for Shetland's Lost Seagrass' has become a community concern and activity thanks to a **£32,561** grant from SMEEF, including **£7,771** from the NRF. The marine team at UHI Shetland had discovered that relying on historical database records of seagrass distribution was unreliable. They knew that most of the beds that had existed in the early 1900's had been lost, but what remained? A multi-method project using aerial footage from drones and science-led community surveys was developed to establish a current, accurate baseline for the distribution and abundance of subtidal seagrass across the Shetland Islands.

As well as providing important scientific data, this 2-year programme's training and engagement with the local community, volunteers and stakeholders has resulted in increased knowledge about this vital marine resource. The crucial role seagrass plays in improving water quality, increasing coastal protection, and providing carbon storage and biodiversity is now also better understood by the wider Shetland community, which has resulted in increased local commitment to protecting and increasing seagrass beds.

The SMEEF funding included training in drone flight, survey and analysis techniques. Ariel imagery from drone surveys gave access to crisp images that can be used for mapping the existing seagrass beds and allowed comparison with historical records. Innovative techniques were employed to ground truth the data with community volunteers using snorkel, paddleboard and kayak surveys to locate and map the edge of seagrass beds. Local industry also contributed ensuring the deployment of environmental loggers in the vicinity of the seagrass beds in Weisdale and Whiteness Voe. In all 1.59 hectares of subtidal Zostera marina meadow were mapped across 14 beds in Whiteness Voe and Weisdale.

The findings from this fruitful collaboration of science and community have directly led to the team successfully securing further funding from SMEEF for a new three-year seagrass restoration project. 'Restoring Shetland's marlie meadows" aims to plant 1.2 ha of subtidal seagrass beds in West Mainland. The scientific data, new skills and participatory ethos built during this project will be taken forward into active restoration in the coming years.

Craigleith Invasive Species Project – Scottish Seabird Centre

£24,993

Seabirds

Reducing Pressure | Climate Change | Public Understanding | Collaboration | Knowledge | Restoration

When puffin numbers on the small island of Craigleith in the Firth of Forth, declined steeply from 5,000 pairs to less than 1,000 in the late 1990's the Scottish Seabird Centre knew they had to take action. The SOS Puffin Project was launched to stop the main threat, the invasive spread of a non-native plant, the tree mallow, as its rapid growth was choking access to puffin burrows and preventing them from successfully rearing their young.

The project's cry for help has been answered over the 18 years by thousands of volunteers and SMEEF has been helping fund ongoing conservation and research work to help these charismatic birds thrive. The committed, volunteer workforce have been coming back year after year to cut down the tree mallow and count the occupied puffin burrows. But safe access to the island isn't easy, boats and life jackets need to be maintained and staff need to lead the teams.

Scientific monitoring and studies from the Seabird Centre team and the SRUC have resulted in key findings, suggesting that burrowing actions resulting in bare earth encourages the mallow seed to germinate. Important vegetation monitoring is ongoing, using both drone imagery and field mapping to create accurate vegetation maps of the island, while small scale nettle control measures have been trialled. All this hard work has paid off with mallow coverage down from 80% to 6%, natural vegetation is recovering and the 2024 puffin counts have estimated 5000 breeding pairs again.

> " SMEEF is proud to have played a part in this great conservation success story. We are here to test new approaches to marine enhancement but also know we need to support ongoing activities which we know work!"
>
> *Chris Perkins, SMEEF Finance Officer*

Flapper Skate Survey – UHI, Shetland

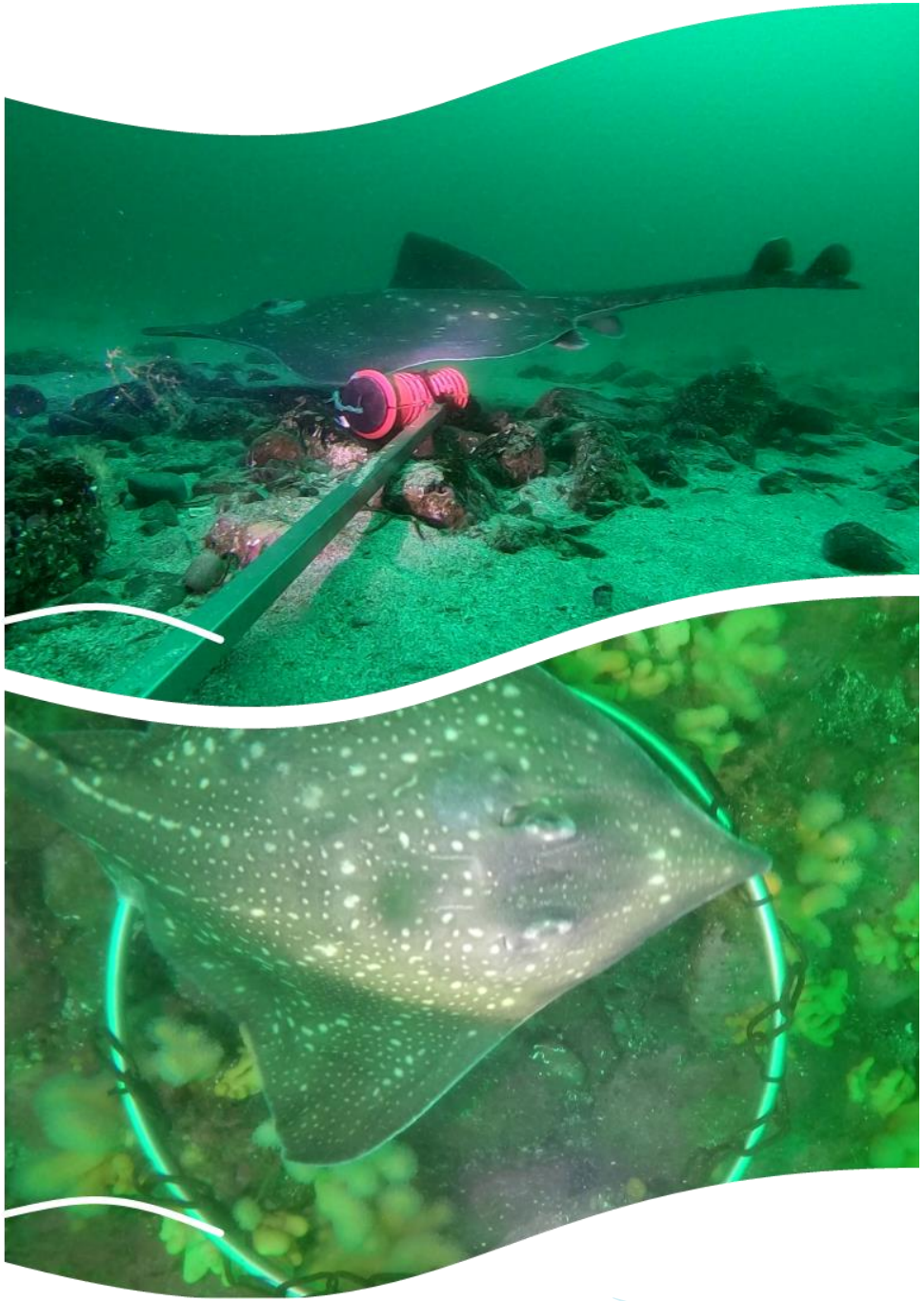
£23,683

Wider Seas

Sharks, skates, and rays, collectively known as elasmobranchs, are recognised as some of the most threatened marine vertebrates and they are facing global decline through habitat loss, marine pollution and fisheries overexploitation. University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) Shetland were awarded £23,683 for a 2-year study to provide a baseline assessment of population, distribution, movement, and critical habitats of the Flapper skate (*Dipturus intermedius*) around Shetland and Fair Isle.

Previous anecdotal evidence of an increase in numbers needed to be investigated and backed by scientific data to successfully manage this critically endangered species in Shetland waters. The UHI team collaborated with the local fishing community to ensure that their capture-mark-recapture scheme worked, with tagged skate being reported and returned alive. The study tagged 127 skate in 37 locations across Shetland and Fair Isle. Skate lengths were recorded ranging from 37cm for small juveniles to 212 cm for the impressive, mature adults. A further data collection method, Baited Remote Underwater Video Systems (BRUVS), was used, allowing for enhanced ID from spot pattern recognition of the skate. These two complementary methods provided unique insights proving that flapper skate were abundant in both areas and in particularly high abundance in Fair Isle.

This study is the first to present detailed population ecology information on flapper skate in Shetland and Fair Isle inshore areas, showing distribution patterns, critical habitats, and giving behavioural insights. With the SMEEF funded study at an end, it is anticipated that data collection will continue from recaptures and the good relationships established with local anglers will result in on-going collaboration. This important dataset will continue to inform conservation and management strategies long into the future.



Lost Creels Project – Scottish Association for Marine Science

£33,176

Wider Seas

The Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS) wanted to address the growing problem of marine animal entanglement in fishing gear which poses a real threat in Scottish waters. Becoming entangled in lost or abandoned fishing gear impairs an animal's ability to breath, swim, feed and breed and can be fatal. Creel fisheries, using baited pots laid on the seabed to catch shellfish, are an important part of our inshore, and less commonly, offshore fishing sector. Unfortunately, it has been found that fleets of creels, with associated miles of rope, have been involved in accidental entanglements of mammals such minke and humpback whales and basking sharks.

With £24,950 funding from SMEEF and £8,226 from the NRF, SAMS accessed specialized equipment needed to study where abandoned, lost or derelict creel fleets are located in Scottish waters and their associated risks.

The Creelmap project's aims were to evaluate different side-scan sonar (SSS) systems and on-site observations by a Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV) to assess whether they can detect and locate derelict creel fleets, an essential first step towards recovery. Several different methods were tested, and it was found that they could reliably use SSS to identify derelict creels and discriminate ground lines. Further work is needed to make the approach suitable for deeper waters.

> "Having confirmed the ability of this approach to detect and observe derelict creel fleets, the door is now open for future work to better map and study this lost fishing gear. This will help us understand its role as a potential whale entanglement hazard and enable novel gear recovery techniques."
>
> *Dr Steven Benjamins, Marine Mammal Ecologist, SAMS*

The SAMS BlueROV2 unit with its 150m tether. © Scottish Association for Marine Science.

Nature Enhancement at Offshore Energy Sites - University of Glasgow

£48,101

The Nature Enhancement at Offshore Energy Sites (NEMOES) project is being run by the University of Glasgow, this research project was awarded funding of £48,101. The project is using precision modelling to predict and investigate marine ecosystem responses to the effects of windfarm installation on the surrounding flora and fauna. The project has been exploring a variety of modelled scenarios including re-purposing the Isle of Muck, West of Scotland (WoS) Ecopath with Ecosim (EwE) model to explore the changes to benthic substrate (seabed) from the hypothetical addition of fixed foundations for wind turbines. The team are further developing a new high resolution Ecospace model for the region northwest of Islay and for a northern North Sea region. A final investigation will look at the effects of seeding native oyster (Ostrea edulis) beds within windfarm development sites through explicitly describing native oyster within the models.

Studying natures response to habitat alteration in these offshore renewable sites will result in much needed data on how the marine ecosystem reacts, which will directly shape future development.

Climate Action Coastlines - Highland Council

£70,798

Climate Action Coastlines is a programme to inform understanding of coastal ecosystem management, restoration, and habitat creation. A SMEEF grant of **£25,000** and a further **£45,798** from the NRF, gave access to new equipment to assess carbon stock on coastal wetlands. Working in the lab and out in the field, the new portable analyser of greenhouse gas emissions provides vital data from across the study sites. Reporting on soil carbon and greenhouse gas flux from the RSPB Nigg Bay coastal realignment site and monitoring of wetland elevation on the saltmarsh at Loch Fleet, Dornoch has resulted in important data being fed into a more accurate national picture of carbon stocks.

Meet the Team

The SMEEF team has grown significantly this year with a new post to focus on grant management and dedicated posts to support our work under the Seabird and Seabed themes.

Sarah Brown
Partnerships Manager
Fundraising, strategy, oversight

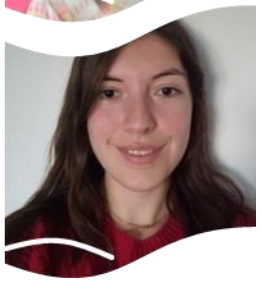
David Conneely
Grants Manager
Grants, strategy, oversight

Chris Perkins
Finance Officer
Due diligence, ethical contributions

Katherine Knight
Seabed Officer
Grants, stakeholder engagement, community development

Hettie Pike
Seabirds Officer
Grants, stakeholder engagement, community development

Sharon Green
Coordinator
Communications, engagement, team support



Irene Mineo
Administrator
Logistics, payments, administration

Founding Partners

NatureScot NàdarAlba
Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

Crown Estate Scotland
Oighreachd a' Chrüin Alba

Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba
gov.scot

Scottish Marine Environmental Enhancement Fund

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