

Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill

Letter from RSPB's Youth Network for Nature, 12 June 2025

Dear Members of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee,

We are writing to share our views on the Natural Environment Bill. As young people aged 12 – 18 years old from all over Scotland, many of us are anxious about the depleted nature of our country's habitats and wildlife, and worried what they might look like in 2045. We are frustrated that more hasn't been done to halt declines, and embarrassed that the intactness of our biodiversity is ranked so low (218th out of 240 amongst other countries across the globe).

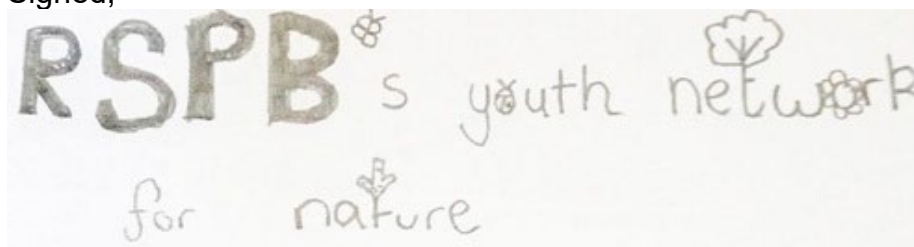
Some of us would like to work in areas like biology and conservation and would hope to have careers in which we can discover new species, rather than cataloguing what has gone extinct. Many more of us value Scotland's natural environment and understand that our land, sea and air is crucial to living healthy and prosperous lives. But it doesn't feel like the future of the environment, our future, is being prioritised. That's why we feel so strongly about the opportunity that the Natural Environment Bill presents. Because, while we are frustrated, we are also hopeful.

By creating nature targets that must be met, we have a chance of seeing this turn around – of seeing a wilder Scotland with its habitats and wildlife in balance. We want to see nature thriving in our cities, our farmlands, our seas and on our mountains. We can't only concentrate on the biodiversity which is disappearing but must also make sure important habitats and wildlife populations that are stable, stay in good condition.

Some of us are from other countries and have seen how things can be different. We are hopeful. But when nature is degraded so are our futures. You have the ability to turn our hope into a reality. We urge you to think long term to ensure the natural environment that we are inheriting is protected by strong laws for future generations.

"Only when the last tree has been cut down, the last fish been caught, and the last stream poisoned, will we realise we cannot eat money." – Cree Indian Prophecy

Signed,

A photograph of a handwritten signature on a light-colored background. The signature reads "RSPB's youth network for nature". The word "RSPB" is written in large, bold, capital letters. The word "youth" is written in a cursive script. The word "network" is written in a cursive script. The word "for" is written in a cursive script. The word "nature" is written in a cursive script. There are small drawings of a flower and a tree next to the words "youth" and "nature" respectively.

