

Ecosystem restoration – how reintroduced species can drive it

Each group heard an outline of context, and questioned and commented on that, before discussing three questions. Key points were then chosen.

Key points:

- Need good marketing
- Need to combine eco-restoration and species reintroductions into a whole ecosystem restoration understanding eg. interest in beavers has opened up riparian issues and understanding
- We do already have a good idea about habitat networks and big ecosystem opportunities and can therefore be opportunistic
- Need to identify target audiences. Public support is crucial but there is support for wildlife eg. Spring watch factor.
- It comes down to us to take action. Where is our common ground?

Comments on context:

- There are knock on effects through out ecosystems from reintroductions.
- Public appeal ie. with flagship species
- But is this over-rated and obscures the benefit of whole ecosystem restoration?
- Are beavers a special case?
- Need to sell the benefits to fisheries
- Need for good marketing
- Need to popularise concept of keystone species
- And the need for ecosystem restoration not just promoting wildness
- Winning hearts and minds
- There is still huge potential in Scotland

Is it best to promote reinstatement of iconic species in their own right, or to promote restoration of entire ecosystems, with reinstatement of keystone species as a necessary component?

- Need for both iconic species (to win over the public) and understanding of ecosystems
- The value of professional marketing
- Inclusion in curriculum
- Are we over simplifying the issues to the public?
- Lessons from how public pushed to ban CFCs
- Importance of selling what we have got
- When does a species become iconic?

Can we identify specific parts of Scotland where large-scale habitat restoration could create conditions for reinstating particular iconic species?

- Need to map 'areas of opportunity' – ecological and socio-political
- And then be opportunistic eg. what is for sale?
- Public (local) acceptance is essential
- Combine purchase with influencing landowners
- There are knock-on global effects
- It is the tax payers right to choose

How can we mobilise support from politicians, agencies, NGOs and private individuals to establish rewilding as the primary management objective in particular large areas?

- Identify target audiences
- Funding!
- Who will take it on? Who are we?
- Create a 'rewilding task force' through Scottish Environment Link and RSPB

- Build a rewilding NGO as a channel for funds
- There is much public support for wildlife eg. Spring watch
- Encouraging artistic opportunities
- Promote this conference output widely
- Rewilding starts at home