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Media release

Pioneering south of Scotland golden eagle conservation project wins prestigious UK ecology & environment management award



The groundbreaking South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project, which is boosting the low population of golden eagles in the area, has been awarded the prestigious Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Tony Bradshaw Award for Outstanding Best Practice.

Recognising best practice in the industry, the esteemed CIEEM award is only presented to “exceptional projects that set an overall impressively high standard”. The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project was considered for the award as winner of the institute’s Best Practice in Stakeholder Engagement title.

Announcing the award, Jason Reeves, Head of Policy at CIEEM said: “We are thrilled to announce that the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project is this year’s very worthy recipient of the CIEEM’s Tony Bradshaw Award for Outstanding Achievement.

“Our vision at CIEEM is to create a healthy natural environment for the benefit of current and future generations, and The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project is a fantastic example of this. Through exceptional stakeholder engagement and partnership working, the project has demonstrated how we can all make a difference by working together to create a world rich in biodiversity for the benefit of us all – now and in the future.”

Speaking of the project’s win, Michael Clark, Chair of the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project Board, said: “We are absolutely delighted that the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project has been awarded the prestigious Tony Bradshaw Award for Outstanding Achievement. This is testament to the hard work of our pioneering project team and the support of all our partners – from ecologists, raptor experts, vets, funders, landowners and land managers to 14,000 plus community volunteers and special project participants.

“From taking the local population of golden eagles to the highest number recorded here since the early 19th century to creating the UK’s first Golden Eagle Town and Festival in Moffat and opening the first mainland Eagle Information Point in Philiphaugh, the work of the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project team really is exemplary and has become a beacon for wider support for sustainable conservation management in rural communities.”

Francesca Osowska, NatureScot’s Chief Executive, added: “The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project is a very deserving winner of the Tony Bradshaw Award. NatureScot’s role is to protect and restore nature across Scotland. So we’re passionate about returning golden eagles, a vital part of Scotland’s wildlife, to places where they used to thrive. This ground-breaking project has accomplished so much over just a few years, bringing a viable population of golden eagles back to south Scotland and inspiring other similar initiatives around the world. It’s wonderful to see a success like this. This is brilliant partnership working, and a great support for the local green economy.”

The National Lottery Heritage Fund provided key funding for the project. Heritage Fund Director for Scotland Caroline Clark said: “Thanks to National Lottery players we were able to support this project with a £1.5m grant. We continue to work closely with projects that we fund so our team have seen first-hand what a success this partnership is proving to be, and how much communities across the South of Scotland have embraced and supported the new arrivals.”

“It is fantastic that they have been presented with the Tony Bradshaw Award, well deserved recognition of the work being done by everyone involved in The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project to protect Scotland’s outstanding wildlife and landscapes.”

Earlier this year it was revealed that the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project was the first project in the UK to successfully translocate free-flying young golden eagles (aged between 6 months and 3 years) to boost a low population of this iconic bird. These new additions brought the total number of golden eagles in the south of Scotland to around 33 – the highest number recorded here in the last three centuries. The released eagles have all settled in south of Scotland, with frequent sightings of interactions including with other native eagles.

Project partners RSPB Scotland, Scottish Land & Estates, Scottish Forestry, NatureScot and the Southern Uplands Partnership, worked on the project together for more than 11 years before releasing the first eagle chicks in 2018. Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, project partners and the Scottish Government, the initiative is a key project under *‘Scotland’s Biodiversity. A Route Map to 2020’*, supporting the Government’s *‘2020 Challenge for Scotland’s Biodiversity’*.

The second Moffat Eagle Festival takes place from 16 to 18 September 2022.

For the latest project and festival news, or to donate to the charity initiative, visit:

www.goldeneaglessouthofscotland.co.uk

Ends

Notes to Editors

About the South of Scotland Golden Eagles Project

- Before the project began, there was only between two and four pairs of golden eagles across Dumfries and Galloway and the Scottish Borders, however a supporting study by NatureScot shows that the local habitat is suitable for up to 16 pairs.
- Since 2018, the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project has successfully translocated:
 - 12 golden eagles juveniles collected at around 6- 8 weeks of age from the Scottish Highlands to the south of Scotland.
 - 7 sub adult golden eagles (aged between 6 months and 3 years)
- The first 12 birds have settled into their new habitats and are fending for themselves.
- Covid-19 restrictions prevented the charity from translocating eagle chicks in 2020.
- During the first Covid-19 lockdown in 2020, Beaky was the first of the project's eagles to venture south of the border and visit the North Pennines area, where there have been no breeding pairs of eagles for many years. She was also later seen demonstrating potential courtship behaviour with Skan, one of the male eagles translocated to the area by the project.
- The project has identified that the best way of enhancing this fragmented and vulnerable population of golden eagles is through increasing the supply of young eagles, which will eventually recruit into the breeding population.
- Recent satellite tagging work of golden eagles in Scotland has shown that the south of Scotland golden eagle population is greatly isolated from larger populations of this species from the Highlands.
- For the next two to -three years, the Project will continue to translocate juvenile and subadult golden eagles under the conditions of the novel research licence.
- For the first translocations, the project team:
 - used tried and tested methods for rear and release of the young golden eagles derived from previous white-tailed eagle and red kite reintroduction projects, and through the cooperation of raptor experts and estates.
 - collected single eagle chicks from broods of young in the Highlands and raised and released them in an undisclosed location in the southern uplands.
 - focussed on ensuring former and potential nesting sites are re-occupied; to identify any additional habitat management measures that will bring further improvements in food supplies in these areas; and wider work with local communities, schools, and enterprises to bring much wider benefits.
- Each released golden eagle is satellite tagged by licensed individuals to ensure the project team builds up as much information as they can on the ranging behaviour, survival, and health of the birds.
- Project staff work a variety of expert advisers, including specialists from the Edinburgh University Dick Vet School, and from Ireland and Spain who have been heavily involved in successful raptor reintroduction programmes.
- In 2019, the project revealed that over 10,000 volunteers and special project participants of all ages (aged 4 to 92) have taken the golden eagles under their wings, as they've supported the project through a wide range of tasks and initiatives.
- In September 2021, the project worked with Visit Moffat to host the UK's first ever golden eagle festival to celebrate the town of Moffat becoming the country's first official Eagle Town. The programme included a keynote speech from Gordon Buchanan.
- In May 2021, the project opened the UK mainland's first ever golden eagle information point. Designed by award-winning exhibition designers Studioarc, in partnership with the project team, the new Eyrie: Eagle Information Point is located in the new Waterwheel Tearoom in Philiphaugh Estate, near Selkirk.

- Those who have participated in the initiative to date come from a range of backgrounds and organisations, including: the UK's first ever Golden Eagle Scout Champions at the Scottish Borders Scouts; over 360 pupils from primary schools across the south of Scotland and one in the Scottish Highlands; Borders College; the Scottish Raptor Study Group; Kielder Bird of Prey Centre; HMP Dumfries; and local businesses like Wild Tree Adventures.
- The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project is:
 - supported by Scottish Land & Estates, RSPB Scotland, Scottish Forestry, NatureScot, and The Southern Uplands Partnership.
 - funded by:
 - £1.5 million from The National Lottery through the Heritage Lottery Fund;
 - the Scottish Government; and
 - Scottish Power Renewables.
 - licenced to undertake the work by NatureScot (formerly Scottish Natural Heritage).
- The project also previously received more than £150,000 match funding from the Scottish Government and the European Union – LEADER 2014-2020 programme.
- The Project's Scientific Advisory Panel provides the project with expert scientific, veterinary and technical advice (particularly to ensure eagle health and welfare). Members also advise on wider specific scientific and land management/land use issues. Members include:
 - Dr Neil Anderson (Chair), The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh
 - Dr Rob Ogden (Deputy Chair), The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies and The Roslin Institute, University of Edinburgh, and SNH Scientific Expert panel
 - Dave Anderson, Scottish Raptor Study Group
 - Roy Dennis MBE, Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation
 - Professor Miguel Ferrer, Spanish National Research Council
 - Dr Alan Fielding, SNH Scientific Expert Panel
 - Dr Gidona Goodman, The Royal (Dick) School of Veterinary Studies, University of Edinburgh
 - Professor Anna Meredith FRCVS, University of Melbourne Faculty of Veterinary and Agricultural Sciences, Australia
 - Stephen Murphy, Natural England
 - Professor Ian Newton OBE FRS FRSE
 - Lorcan O'Toole, Golden Eagle Trust Ireland
 - Professor Chris Quine, Forest Research
 - Chris Rollie, RSPB and Scottish Raptor Study Group
 - Dr Ewan Weston, Scottish Raptor Study Group
 - Dr Phil Whitfield, Natural Research
 - Ray Lowden, Falconer, Kielder Bird Of Prey Centre
 - Dougie McKenna, Senior Ecologist and Falconer, Stones Wildlife Management
 - Robin Reid, Scottish Raptor Study Group
- Thanks to National Lottery players, the Heritage Lottery Fund invests money to help people across the UK explore, enjoy and protect the heritage they care about - from the archaeology under our feet to the historic parks and buildings we love, from precious memories and collections to rare wildlife.

About CIEEM

- CIEEM is the leading professional membership body representing and supporting ecologists and environmental managers in the UK, Ireland and abroad.

- CIEEM’s annual Awards celebrate the outstanding work of ecologists and environmental managers. They inspire the next generation, recognise skills of outstanding individuals and remind those working in the profession of why they do what they do.
- Its gold standard annual award for outstanding best practice is named after the late Professor Tony Bradshaw FRS. Tony played an instrumental role in founding CIEEM and served as the inaugural President of the Institute from 1991-1994.
- For the full list of this year’s award winners see: <https://cieem.net/about-cieem/cieem-awards/cieem-awards-2022/>

About the National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **inspire, lead** and **resource** the UK’s heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future.

www.HeritageFund.org.uk.

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