

Highland Mammals: past and present

The High life Highland Countryside Rangers theme for 2021/22 in their work with Highland Schools will be Highland Mammals: past and present. In previous years, the themes have been golden eagles and freshwater eels. This year we are looking at mammals, of which the Highlands host unique and endangered species. We aim to make pupils more aware of the large range of the special mammal species that occur within the Highlands, from water voles to Scottish wildcats, and from otters to pipistrelle bats. We will be looking particularly at those priority species for conservation as identified in the new Highland Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-26. Nature is under pressure as never before but there are things we can do, and our first step is to educate our young learners about what mammals we have.



There are 40 species of Mammals living in the Highlands today. We have lost species in the distant past such as the Lynx and Beaver, some are also currently teetering on the edge of extinction such as the Scottish wildcat but due to its wilderness the Highlands have always been a refuge for many mammals, and we hope to conserve it for many years into the future. Happily now, beaver will be back in the highlands in years to come as it spreads north.

By taking part, we enable pupils to build on their connection with nature and learn how to show care and respect for our natural world. We hope it will lead to practical conservation tasks such as habitat improvements, wildlife gardening, tree planting and school grounds improvement.

All these visits to schools and outdoor sessions with the Ranger around the theme Highlands Mammals will be offered for free.

If any teachers in the highlands want to get involved and find out who their local ranger is, please go to www.highlifehighland.com/rangers/



Donald Mitchel – Ranger for Northwest Sutherland