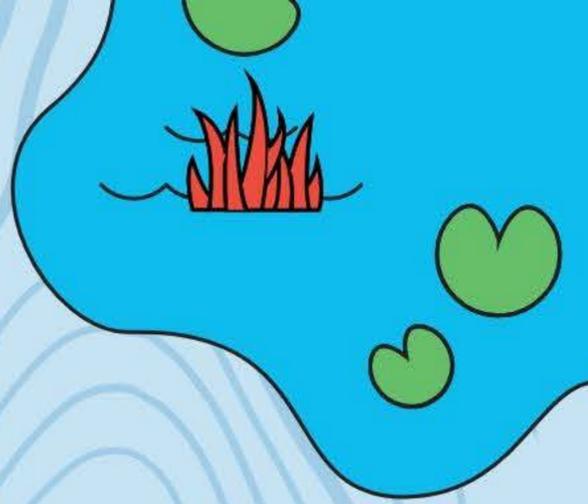




# PUDDLES TO PONDS



## POST-PROJECT REFLECTIONS - SCOTTISH HIGHLANDS EDUCATION THROUGH RESTORATION PROJECT

The 2024 'Puddles to Ponds' project has focused on the power of small bodies of water to become thriving habitats and outdoor classrooms. With the help of funding, we've created 19 new ponds and renovated one large pond. In various locations across the Highlands, from Lochaber to Caithness. While the importance of ponds for biodiversity is well known, this project highlights how these ponds have also served as invaluable tools for educating and inspiring the next generation of environmental stewards.



MAKING LIFE BETTER

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CENTRAL POND RESTORATION at the Highland Folk Museum

PONDS CREATED in Highland Schools



1412 Pupils engaged

## PARTNERSHIP

We partnered with many organisations on this project to ensure the greatest impact. The Highland Council Nature Restoration & Cairngorm Trust for Nature Resilience Funded the Puddles to Ponds Project

### NEW HABITATS INSTALLED

Pre-moulded ponds were installed at 12 school sites, and a total of 46 schools participated in freshwater education sessions. A total of 1,412 children were engaged in learning about pond health. Some schools hesitated to install ponds due to safety concerns at their particular site, but alternative education activities were provided. The enthusiastic response from both students and teachers made the project a success.

amphibian and reptile conservation

### NAME THE TADPOLE

27 highland nursery schools took part in a competition to name the Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Trust's new tadpole character. The winning name was "Losgy" (a play on the Gaelic for frog) dreamt up by the children at Ullapool Gaelic Nursery. This new character joins "Newtrino" as part of ARC Trust educational resources.

## ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

### A RESTORED HABITAT

The restored curling pond at the Highland Folk Museum plays an important role in connecting nearby freshwater habitats like the Sawmill Pond, Loch Imrich, and the River Spey, boosting biodiversity in the Strath. The pond is located within a regenerating woodland, making it ideal for supporting species from the Cairngorm Nature Action Plan. The Cairngorm National Park Junior Rangers worked with High Life Highland Ranger Service to create a baseline species survey & featured on the BBC Landward show.

The High Life Highland Ranger Team invited students to create illustrations for the museum's restored pond interpretation panel, inspired by the wildlife in and around their own local ponds. The winning artworks have been transformed into the colourful, child-friendly interpretation board below, that now helps visitors explore and learn about the museum pond's diverse species. An exhibition at the Inverness Museum and Gallery of the original artworks is planned for 2025.

### LIVING CLASSROOMS

Ponds are living classrooms, offering hands-on learning experiences. Highland students have had the opportunity to observe creatures like dragonfly nymphs and minibeasts up close, enhancing their understanding of freshwater ecosystems.

### Puddles to Ponds

Ponds are small bodies of still fresh water - not salty like the sea.  
The plants and creatures living in and around the pond need fresh water to thrive.  
The plants growing in the pond give oxygen to the water helping to keep it healthy, and minibeasts eat these plants.  
The mini-beasts become food for larger creatures, like frogs and birds.  
In this way, all the creatures can live happily together in and around the pond. This is called an ecosystem.  
Even a small pond will attract wildlife - why not put one in your garden?

The Puddles to Ponds project was created by our Countryside Rangers and supported by many organisations across the Highlands. We are grateful to our partners in cooperation with the Cairngorm Nature Restoration. These are the category winners of a drawing competition with 300 entries from 19 primary schools.



### 7 PONDS CREATED In Community Settings

Seven additional mini ponds were installed by community groups, expanding the project's impact. These ponds support local biodiversity and provide hands-on learning for all ages. By working together to create these small but impactful habitats, the community groups played a key role in expanding the project's reach.

