

Press Release

11 May 2009

Glenlivet event focuses on plight of the water vole

The Crown Estate and the Cairngorms Water Vole Conservation Project are teaming up to celebrate National Biodiversity Week with a community event looking at water vole conservation at Glenlivet Estate. The event, to be held on Thursday 21 May, at the Glenlivet Estate Office in Tomintoul and will start at 10am with an introductory talk about water voles and the work of the project. The group will then move outside to get hands-on and learn about how to find water voles in the wild.

The Cairngorms Water Vole Conservation Project has become the biggest of its kind in mainland Britain and aims to safeguard Scotland's threatened native water vole by tackling the threat of alien invasive mink across a 6,440 sq km area of the Cairngorms. The Crown Estate is just one of the many partners working with the project to help monitor and reduce the mink population and carry out water vole surveys.

Water Vole Conservation Project Officer, Llinos Davies said: "If we can remove the invasive mink from the Cairngorms it will be good news for local biodiversity."

The water vole is listed by Scottish Natural Heritage for action under the Species Action Framework and is a priority species on the UK Biodiversity Action Plan due to its loss of habitat and the impact of mink. This event is one of many that will run during Scottish Biodiversity Week, a national event which aims to increase awareness, understanding and enjoyment of biodiversity and engage many more people in its conservation and enhancement.

Countryside Manager for The Crown Estate, Vicky Hilton said: "There is already much work going on with this project in the Glenlivet area, several members of our local Glenlivet Wildlife Recording Group monitor mink rafts and report their findings to the project, but we are always looking for more volunteers from the local community to help get involved in projects like this.

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“This event is a great way for people to find out more about some of the wildlife on their doorsteps and is one of a series that we will be running here at Glenlivet over the year. The event is free and anyone is welcome to come along to either or both parts of the event, although you will need outdoor clothing/wellies for the outdoor session.”

The Crown Estate is committed to working to conserve and enhance the biodiversity of its estates, and this is just one of many similar projects ongoing. Head of Countryside Management for the Rural Estates Andrew Wells, said: “The Crown Estate acts as steward for many remarkable parts of the Scottish and UK countryside and we work closely with communities, farmers and public agencies to protect and enhance the special natural heritage features on our estates. The Glenlivet Estate is important for a wide range of upland wildlife and habitats and we are grateful for the support of the CNPA and local people in helping with this very worthwhile project.”

For further details about this event or future wildlife events at Glenlivet contact Vicky Hilton at the Glenlivet Ranger Service on 01479 870070 or email info@glenlivetestate.co.uk

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Notes to editors:

- The Cairngorms Water Vole Conservation Project is part funded by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and co-ordinated by Aberdeen University. The project has support from a coalition of committed parties including SNH, the Cairngorms National Park Authority (CNPA), local fishery management interests, local communities, landowners, farmers and conservation bodies, with funding support from the Tubney Charitable Trust and the Natural Environment Research Council. For more information about the project see: <http://www.watervolescotland.org/>
- Scottish Biodiversity Week is promoted by Scottish Natural Heritage and its partners in the Scottish Biodiversity Forum (SBF). The SBF is a broad based, working partnership of Government, it's agencies (Scottish Natural Heritage and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency), local authorities, voluntary bodies, farmers, fishermen, foresters, businesses and scientists. For more information see: <http://www.snh.org.uk/biodiversityweek>

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