

# Trees for Life

<https://treesforlife.org.uk/>

<https://treesforlife.org.uk/about-us/annual-review-2020-21/>

Generous support from the Orp Foundation has enabled Trees for Life to make significant progress in three of our key rewilding projects:

## **Red Squirrel Translocations**

Trees for Life has been successfully reintroducing red squirrels to the northwest Highlands since 2016. With Scotland, the UK's last remaining stronghold of the endangered native species, these reintroductions are significantly bolstering the north's red squirrel population. So far, the rewilding charity has translocated more than 200 squirrels to create 10 new populations in places like Lochaline, Plockton and Shieldaig. The project's most recent reintroduction sites were Golspie and Spinningdale in Sutherland. All the new populations are thriving and are expected to eventually merge together. Trees for Life still has four more reintroductions planned. This will further strengthen numbers and ensure this pioneering project remains a rewilding success story.

## **Riverwoods**

Scotland's salmon populations are in decline and this is a symptom of serious ecological damage. Working with landowners and the local fisheries and river trusts, Trees for Life - Affric Highlands will restore woodland to loch and river edges, providing vital shade to cool the areas where salmon spawn, while also providing refuges for other fish and invertebrates and potential future habitat for returning beavers. River edge woodland helps to slow river flows, reducing climate change induced flooding downstream. Restoring these riparian woodlands will eventually help to revive the dwindling salmon population with benefits for wildlife and fisheries.

## **Lynx to Scotland**

Lynx is a once native top predator and keystone species that was hunted to extinction in the UK. Its reintroduction to Scotland would help to restore ecological systems and processes that have been absent for centuries. The return of lynx to our landscape would be hugely symbolic as the first top predator to be reintroduced to Scotland, indicating a new relationship with nature.

In 2021, Trees for Life conducted a study to understand people's attitudes toward lynx in two Highland areas. We spoke to many people: farmers, conservationists, gamekeepers, foresters, tourism operators and others. Diverse perspectives emerged, showing that opinions are far more complex than simply being 'for' or 'against'. The study also revealed some gaps in knowledge around the impact of lynx on existing land management and on other wildlife.

We are now working to fill those gaps in knowledge and see if potential barriers can be overcome. As the project develops, this will involve further community consultation. The success of Lynx to Scotland depends on the support of people who live and work in the areas where these iconic animals could be successfully reintroduced.