



Orkney  
**Native  
Wildlife**  
Project



# Protecting Orkney's native wildlife



# What is the Orkney Native Wildlife Project?

**Orkney is unique. It is rich in nature's gifts which delight the senses and enrich the soul.**

These beautiful isles are an incredibly important breeding ground for birds rarely seen elsewhere in the UK. This is why we exist - to protect Orkney's native wildlife.

A non-native animal is one not naturally found in an area.

Invasive species have contributed to **40%** of extinctions in the world over the last **400 years**.

In **Orkney** the invasive species is the **stoat**.



Invasive species have normally been introduced by human activity, whether on purpose or by accident.

Stoats are not native to Orkney and are skilled hunters exploiting the local wildlife which is not used to coping with these predators.

**2010**

Stoats first recorded in Orkney

**2014**

Stoat impact assessed

**2016**

Partnership between NatureScot and RSPB Scotland

An independent study warned of the devastating impact on local wildlife if nothing was done about stoats in Orkney.

The eggs and unprotected chicks of ground-nesting birds and seabirds are particularly vulnerable. They are easy prey for stoats, which eat birds, eggs, and small mammals like our unique Orkney vole – found nowhere else in the world.

The stoat's impact on our wildlife, already under threat by many other threats such as climate change, pollution and habitat loss, is devastating.

**All is not lost.** Our ambitious mission is to remove stoats to restore Orkney to when it was free of this predator. To do nothing risked Orkney's ecology being changed forever.

So, the world's largest eradication programme in a populated place was born.



**How can you help us protect Orkney's native wildlife?**

**Easy! Join in and tell us when and where you have seen an Orkney stoat.**



**2017**

**The Orkney Native Wildlife Project is formed**

**2018**

**Preparation begins**

**2019**

**Project begins**

Months spent testing trapping methods, community consultations and applying for essential funding.

Team recruited and project trapping begins.



## Seen a stoat?

**All stoat sightings are important and we are grateful for every one. Please let us know if you have seen a stoat – dead or alive – as soon as you possibly can.**

Each sighting is assessed and passed to the field teams. They use experience, effort, skills and dedication to target the area to find and catch the stoat where it was last seen.

This information helps us adapt our trapping methods and keep an eye on our progress. Our evaluation of the Orkney experience is knowledge we share with other conservation projects around the world.



Your information **helps us succeed** in removing every stoat from Orkney, and directly helps **Orkney wildlife to thrive.**



Tell us **as soon as possible when, where and what time** you saw a stoat. There is a useful guide to help identify them on our website.

**[www.orkneynativewildlife.org.uk/report](http://www.orkneynativewildlife.org.uk/report)**

Prefer to telephone? Then please do on **01856 881451.**



## What else do we do?

**Biosecurity is the description for the ways and means that help prevent the spread of invasive non-native species – in our case this is the stoat.**

As a human-made problem, it is our responsibility to do something to fix this. It is critical to stop stoats spreading across Orkney now, as well as preventing their return.

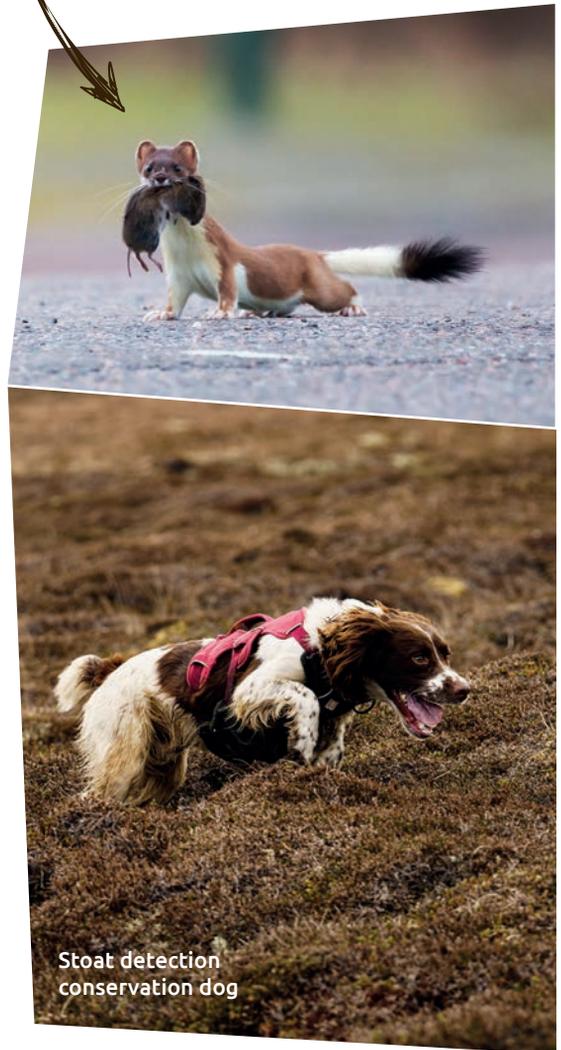


**We collaborate with each island community to create their own biosecurity plans.**

These set out actions to help prevent stoats spreading to their stoat-free isles.



**We are proud to be leading the way with Europe's first stoat detection conservation dogs.** Their job is to methodically check for signs of stoats, as well as checking ports and cargo for stoat stowaways. They do not hunt or catch stoats.



Stoat detection conservation dog

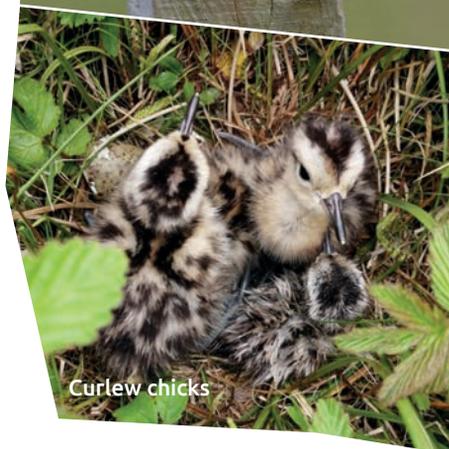


**Our education programme helps Orkney school children learn more about the natural world around them.** We also support young people committed to a career in conservation. Our informative, fun and free to use education resources are available to everyone on our website.



**Our skilled team of seasonal staff, together with our dedicated volunteers, monitor the state of Orkney's wildlife every year.** What we learn from our observations shows us how well our native wildlife is doing.

Sskylark



Curlew chicks

Lapwing



For more detail, please visit our website:  
[www.orkneynativewildlife.org.uk/project](http://www.orkneynativewildlife.org.uk/project)



# How to help

**There are lots of ways to get involved:**



**Tell us your stoat sightings as soon as you can.** It will help us remove stoats from Orkney and you help protect our native wildlife!

[orkneynativewildlife.org.uk/report](http://orkneynativewildlife.org.uk/report)



**Volunteer with us.** There is something for everyone: monitoring, biosecurity on the islands, trapping, helping behind the scenes, or join us as one of our residential volunteers.



**Give us permission to access your land.** Whatever the size, we can use it for trapping, dog checks, and observing wildlife.



**Spread the word.** Invite us to talk to your group, put up a poster, tell our tourists, or sign up for the newsletter.

We would not succeed without the fabulous **support** of the Orkney communities, our island visitors, and the **generosity** of landowners for which we are extremely **grateful**.

[info@onwp.org](mailto:info@onwp.org)



Short eared owl

Oyster catcher



Red-throated diver



Curlew





For much more detail and news  
visit our website:

[orkneynativewildlife.org.uk](http://orkneynativewildlife.org.uk)

Any questions? Then get in touch:

[info@onwp.org](mailto:info@onwp.org)

01856 881451

Find us on Facebook:

 [OrkneyNativeWildlifeProject](https://www.facebook.com/OrkneyNativeWildlifeProject)

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Protecting our native species together:



The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) is a registered charity: England and Wales no. 207076, Scotland no. SC037654.

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