

FINDHORN HINTERLAND TRUST

LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2026-2031

A Special Place

The Findhorn Hinterland Trust FHT owns forty-nine hectares (around one third) of the Findhorn dunes, mostly adjoining the Park Ecovillage. The Hinterland area includes planted woodland, natural grassland, and mostly gorse covered stabilised sand dunes.

Ownership boundary



Findhorn dunes are of national importance for lichens, and probably for insects and fungi too. Around seventy wildlife species found here are of high priority for conservation action. Many are included in the Scottish Biodiversity List, and some are found at only a handful of places in Scotland. Findhorn Hinterland's 'Star Species' include species such as:

- Red-banded Sand Wasp. Found at only one other place in Scotland
- Northern Barred Groundling Moth. Restricted to dune systems in the western Moray Firth
- Ling Owlett Moth. Found at only one other place in Scotland, Findhorn dunes being the most important
- Bend-bearing Blunt-brow Spider. Otherwise only known in Scotland from nearby from Culbin Forest

- Felt lichen. A Red Data Book and Endangered species with significant populations at Findhorn
- A brittlestern fungus known from only three sites in Scotland.

Most of the rarest species need sand as part of their life cycle, as a substrate to grown on, or to burrow into.

Red-banded sand wasp



Felt lichen



Brittlestem fungi



Under Threat

Sand dunes are one of Europe's rarest and most threatened natural wildlife habitats. Until around one hundred years ago, Findhorn dunes were part of one of the largest areas of sand dunes in Europe, existing for thousands of years as a self-sustaining ecosystem. Over ninety-five percent of this area has been lost over the last century, due mainly to forestry and building development. What remains of the dunes is a small and vulnerable fragment, which needs our care if it is to survive.

The main threat to the remaining ecosystem is gorse and tree encroachment. While gorse is a natural part of a healthy dune ecosystem, on the Hinterland the wind sheltering effect of forestry and buildings has caused gorse to take over large areas. Tree seeds from planted woodland have been blown onto the dunes, further reducing windspeed and spreading more seeds. Woodland, which would not naturally occur here, is rapidly replacing dune habitats. Without control of gorse and trees, the small areas of remaining sandy habitats - and the special wildlife which depend on them - would soon be lost.

Dune heath with encroaching gorse



Biodiversity Action

The FHT aims to maintain and enhance the full range of habitats present within its ownership boundary. Priority work includes:

1. Stopping further loss of remaining small areas of natural sandy habitats through control of gorse and tree encroachment
2. Gradually creating small areas of new bare sand, as a home to specialised dune species for many decades
3. Maintaining rare dune grassland through annual mowing, and where possible pony grazing
4. Continuing to 'naturalise' woodland areas through careful management
5. Adding to our knowledge and understanding of the land, through a programme of specialist surveys.

In 2025, the FHT's conservation action to date was recognised by the Scottish Government's nature agency, NatureScot, as one of the world's first Nature30 sites – recognised to be officially contributing to the global target of protecting 30% of land and freshwater for nature by 2030.

Our detailed Local Biodiversity Action Plan can be found [here](#)

How you can help:

- Join the [FHT](#) and receive updates and a quarterly newsletter
- Come along to one of our monthly work parties
- [Donate](#) to help cover our costs

Work party

