



Pròiseict Mionc Nan Eilean Siar

Fiosrachadh - An Lùnasdal 2004



Tha e mar amas aig 'Pròiseict Mionc Nan Eilean Siar' am beathach gallda, am mionc Aimearaigeach a sgrìobh na h-Uibhistean agus àireamhan den bheathach a lughdachadh anns na Hearadh. A' beachdachadh air glèidhteachdais nàdair, tha am pròiseict a gabhail àite airson àireamhan eòin de bhrìgh eadar-nàiseanta a dhion.

NAIDHEACHDAN

◆ Fiosrachadh Ur Air a' Ghlacadh

Tha 453 mionc air a bhith air an glacadh gus an latha an diugh anns na h-eileannan an Iar ann an raoin a' ghlacaidh. Tha seo a' toirt a-steach 7 mionc anns na h-Uibhistean agus aon anns na Hearadh bho thàinig am bileag fiosrachaidh mu dheireadh a-mach. Cha robh garaidhean sam bith air an lòrg air mòr-thìr Uibhist a Tuath neo ann am Beinn a' Bhaoghla. Fhuair iad garaidh ann an eileanan Chairimìn air taobh a Deas na Hearadh far an robh mionc òg air a ghlacadh. Bha dà mhionc bhoireann agus aon mhionc fìorann air an glacadh air Eilean Bhoighreigh, ann an Caolas na Hearadh. Uile gu lèir tha sluagh nam mionc air a dhol sìos anns an raoin-smachd.

Tha 350 innealan glacaidh air an cuir air dòigh airson a chur ann an àitean ann an Uibhist a Tuath agus Beinn a' Bhaoghla. Tha 30 innealan glacaidh a bhios a' pasgadh 's mar sin gan dèanamh nas fhas' an togail, air an cleachdadh aig garaidhean. Bheir seo taic a thaobh comas agus sùbailteachd a ghlacaidh.

◆ Rannsachadh PhD

Tha Alice Helyar a' cur crìoch air an rannsachadh mionaideach aice air sluaigh agus modh mar phàirt de Phròiseict Mionc nan Eilean Siar. Tha i air a bhith ag obair air a' phròiseict eadar an Tairbeart agus Losgaintir agus Eilean Tharasaigh.

Chan eil mionc sam bith a nis ri lòrg air Eilean Tharasaigh. Bha glacadh ann bho chionn ghoirid ach cha do lòrgar mionc sam bith.

Bha beathach boireann agus beathach fìorann air an glacadh air taobh a Deas na Hearadh far an robh rèidio air an cuir orra gus am biodh e na b'fhasa sùil a chumail orra. Bidh rèidio an cois barrachd bheathaichean nuair a tha iad air an glacadh agus theid luchd-glacaidh as na Hearadh agus as na h-Uibhistean, a dh'fhaicinn ciar a tha seo air a dhèanamh, gu h-àraid seach gur e seo bliadhna mu dheireadh an rannsachaidh PhD.

◆ Rannsachadh an Iasgaich

Tha Urras Iasgairean nan Eilean Siar air a bhith a' cruinneachadh fiosrachaidh eisg ann an rannsachadh a tha iad a' dèanamh còmhla ris an HMP. A nis tha iad a' planadh an dàrna bliadhna bho àiteannan air taobh a-muigh agus taobh a-staigh àrainn phròiseict nam mionc. Tha gnìomhachasan mar thuathanais-èisg agus iasgaireachd ann am fìor-uisge a' toirt buaidh air sluaigh nam mionc. Nuair a tha na beathaichean air an toirt às anns an àm ri teachd, bidh atharraidhean ann an àireamh stoc nan eisg tòrr nas fhearr.

◆ Buaidh a' Phròiseict

Tha am pròiseict anns an treasamh bliadhna a nis agus tha e air mòran leasachaidh fhaicinn air an talamh. Air Eilean Tharansaigh, tha barrachd iseanan ann an diugh agus chan eil mionc sam bith ann. Tha meudachadh cuideachd ann an àireamhan nan stearnag agus nam faoileag air na h-eileannan ann an Caolas na Hearadh far nach robh gin ann an 2002 agus bho 'n Mhàirt 2004 chan eil duine air mionc fhaicinn ann an seo. Tha iad a' dèanamh sgrùdadh air dòighean rannsachaidh airson co-shamhlach a dhèanamh eadar fiosrachadh bho bhliadhna gu bhliadhna fhads a bhios adhartas a' tighinn air a' phròiseict.

◆ Bhon Roinn Eorpa gu Uibhist

Thadhail John Houston, riochdaire o choimisean na h-Eorpa air a' phròiseict sa Chèitean. Chaidh e a dh'fhaicinn an roinn rannsachaidh PhD, àrainn glacaidh ann an taobh a Deas na Hearadh agus chaidh e a-mach còmhla ri sgioba lòrgaidh le coin ann an Uibhist a Tuath.

◆ A' Cleachdadh Coin Airson Lòrg nam Mionc

Tha iad air a bhith a' cleachdadh coin airson mionc a' lòrg bho 'n Chèitean. Tha 9 coin air an cleachdadh an dràsta, dhà anns na Hearadh agus 7 anns na h-Uibhistean. Tha an lòrgaidh seo air a bhith gu mòr ann an taobh a Deas na Hearadh, Uibhist a Tuath, Beinn a' Bhaoghla agus Caolas na Hearadh. Tha na mionc a tha air am màrbhadh anns an dòigh seo air am marbhadh anns an dòigh àbhaisteach, iochmhòr.

CÙL-FIOSRACHAIDH

Chan eil mionc dùthchasach dha na h-Eileannan an Iar no fiù do Bhreatainn. Tha iad gu h-àraid cunnartach do dh'eòin fhiadhaidh oir ithidh iad uighean, iseanan agus eòin mhòra bho làraich chudthromach eòin easar-nàiseanta. Tha na h-Uibhistean nan dachaigh do chuid de na h-eòin is cudthromaiche san Roinn Eòrpa agus tha iad seo air an dìon fo Òrdugh Eòin Fhiadhaich na Roinn Eòrpa le Àitean Sònraichte Dìona (SPA). Tha e mar uallach air Breatainn na làraich seo a dhion a thaobh riaghailtean na Roinn Eòrpa. A bharrachd air glèidhteachais nàdair, tha droch bhuaidh aig a' mhionc air croitearachd, iasgach, tuathanachas èisg agus turasachd. Tha suidheachadh a' mhionc na dhuilgheadas do mhòran agus tha e mar ghnòthach dhuinn uile freagart fhaighinn dhan cheist. Gu mì-fhortanach an aon fhreagart buan a th'ann 's e am beathach a sgrìos.

Tha 'Pròiseict Mionc nan Eilean Siar' a' toirt còrr millean trì fichead 'sa còig mìle not dè dh' airgead Eòrpach, poblach agus eile do na h-Eileannan an Iar. A sas anns a' phròiseict tha na buidhnean a leanas: Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba, Comann Riaghail Dion nan Eun, Riaghaltas na h-Alba, Seòmar-obrach Saidheans Meadhanach, Iomairt na Eilean Siar, agus Comhairle nan Eilean Siar. Tha airgead bho stòras airgead nàdarra Eòrpach LIFE a' toirt taic dhan phròiseict.

Airson barrachd fiosrachaidh mu Phròiseict Mionc nan Eilean Siar no ma chì sibh mionc an àite sam bith, cuir fios gu neach-stiùiridh na pròiseict Sugoto Roy air 01859 550327 (s.roy@csl.gov.uk) no gu Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba ann an Steòrnabhagh air 01851 705258.

Bu chòrr dha ceasnachaidh na meadhanan a dhol gu Calum Macfarlane, SNH, air 01463 723106 (calum.macfarlane@snh.gov.uk)

Bu chòrr dha ceasnachaidh na meadhanan airson Gàidhlig a dhol gu Mairi Gillies, SNH, air 01463 723134 (mairi.gillies@snh.gov.uk)



Hebridean Mink Project

Bulletin August 2004



The 'Hebridean Mink Project' aims to eradicate the alien predator, American mink, from the Uists and to dramatically reduce their numbers in South Harris. The Project is being carried out in the interests of nature conservation, namely to protect threatened bird populations of international significance.

NEWS

◆ **Trapping Update**

There have been 453 mink caught to date throughout the trapping area. This includes a further seven mink caught in the Uists and one in Harris since May. No dens have been found in mainland areas of North Uist or Benbecula and one den has been found in the Carminish islands of South Harris, where a kit was captured. Also, two females and a male have been caught on the island of Boreray in the Sound of Harris. On the whole, populations appear to have decreased across the control area.

A total of 350 traps are in the process of being deployed to fill up gaps in North Uist and Benbecula. Thirty collapsible traps have also been purchased for use at den sites, to create temporarily high trapping densities in likely mink areas. This will greatly increase both efficiency and flexibility.

◆ **PhD Study**

The detailed population and behavioural research being carried out by Alice Helyar as part of the Hebridean Mink Project is now in its final stages. Alice has been conducting her project in the North of the control area between Tarbert and Luskentyre and on the Isle of Taransay.

The Isle of Taransay, off Harris, is now believed to be clear of mink. A final trapping and den searching took place and no sign of mink presence was found.

Two animals, a male and a female have been caught on South Harris and collared and are being radio-tracked and monitored. More animals will be collared as they are caught and trappers from both Harris and the Uists will spend some time radio-tracking to stimulate ideas and engage in the scientific side of the project especially as it is the last field year of the PhD study.

◆ **Fisheries Research**

The Western Isles Fisheries Trust is now planning a second year of fish monitoring within and outwith the project control area. Activities such as fish farming and fresh water fisheries are affected by mink populations, therefore, as animals are removed in the near future, changes to fish stocks should be directly measurable. This in conjunction with any dietary evidence will give an estimate of potential economic damage done by individual mink to fish stocks.

◆ **Effects of the Project**

In its third year now, the Hebridean Mink Project has already seen considerable improvements on the ground. The Isle of Taransay is now believed to be completely cleared of mink and indications are that bird numbers are on the increase. There is a suspected increase in terns and gulls on the islands in the Sound of Harris where there were none in 2002 and since March 2004 there have been no sign or sightings of mink on these islands. Survey techniques are being examined to allow comparability of data from year to year as the project progresses.

◆ **European Visit**

A representative from the European Commission visited the project in May. John Houston of Ecosystems Ltd which is an advisor to the EU LIFE programme, was given a briefing on the work, including a visit to the PhD study area, a trap line in South Harris and accompanied a dog search team in North Uist.

Meanwhile the Interim Report to the EU Commission was compiled and is now being finalised by SNH which will be forwarded to the European Commission.

◆ **Use of Locator Dogs**

Line trapping has been mostly discontinued since May and replaced with den site searches with dogs. The project currently uses nine dogs, two on Harris and seven in the Uists. Den searches have concentrated on South Harris, North Uist, Bebecula and the Sound of Harris. Mink located this way are killed humanely by the usual method.

BACKGROUND

Mink are not native to the Western Isles or even to the UK. They pose particular threats to wild birds as they will eat eggs, chicks and adult birds from nationally important sites. The Uists include some of Europe's most important bird sites and these are afforded protection under the EC Wild Birds Directive in designated Special Protected Areas (SPA's). The UK is required by the Directive to protect the interests of SPA's. As well as posing a threat to wildlife, they also having a damaging effect, directly or indirectly, on crofting, fish farming, tourism and fisheries. The mink situation is very much a shared problem and it is in all our interests to find a solution. Unfortunately the only permanent solution is eradication through a programme of humane lethal control.

The Hebridean Mink Project is bringing more than £1.65m of European, public and other funding to the Western Isles. Partners include Scottish Natural Heritage, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, The Scottish Executive, Central Science Laboratory, Western Isles Enterprise and Comhairle nan Eilean Siar (the local authority), and the Project is part funded by the EU LIFE Nature Fund.

For further information about the Hebridean Mink Project or to report mink sightings, please contact the project manager, Sugoto Roy, on 01859 550327 (s.roy@csl.gov.uk) or Scottish Natural Heritage in Stornoway on 01851 705258. Information is also posted on the Western Isles section of the SNH website at www.snh.org.uk.

Media enquiries should be directed to Calum Macfarlane, SNH, on 01463 723106 (calum.macfarlane@snh.gov.uk)

Gaelic media enquiries should be directed to Mairi Gillies, SNH, on 01463 723134 (mairi.gillies@snh.gov.uk)