



# Pròiseict Mionc Nan Eilean Siar

## Fiosrachadh - An Gearran 2004



*Tha e mar amas aig 'Pròiseict Mionc nan Eilean Siar' am beathach gallda, am mionc Aimearaigeach a sgrios bho na h-Uibhistean agus àireamhan den bheathach a lughdachadh anns na Hearradh. A' beachdachadh air glèidhteachais nàdair, tha am pròiseict a gabhail àite airson àireamhan eòin de bhrìgh eadar-nàiseanta a dhìon.*

### NAIDHEACHDAN

#### ◆ Fiosrachadh Ùr Air A' Ghlacadh

Tha 59 mionc air a bhith air a ghlacadh bho An t-Samhainn; 48 anns na Hearadh agus 11 anns na h-Uibhistean. Tha seo a' toirt an suim uile gu 421; 239 anns na Hearadh agus 182 anns na h-Uibhistean. Cha robh aon mhionc air a ghlacadh ann an Uibhist a Deas bho toiseach An Damhair, ged a bha oidhirp a' ghlacadh gu math teann agus trapan air a chur feadh an t-eilean. Aig an aon àm tha biadhach air fhaighinn à Canada le fàireag fàileach na mionc. Tha seo air a bhith gu math èifeachdach airson na mionc a tharraing dhan na trapan. Ron a seo, bha fàireag fàileach bho mhionc a bha air am marbhadh anns a' phròiseict air a chleachdadh. Airson gu robh iarratas mòr ann airson a' biadhach seo, ge tà, cha robh gu leor ann dhe -agus chuidichidh seo oidhirp a ghlacadh. 'Se a' cleachdadh rodain, dòigh èifeachdach eile airson biadhach. Nuair a tha iad air an glacadh anns a' phròiseict, uaireannan bith iad air am marbhadh agus air an cleachdadh airson biadhach nam mionc.

#### ◆ 31 Mionc air am marbhadh ann an cola deug mar dheuchainn

Tha àireamh nam mionc a bha air an glacadh anns na Hearadh uamhasach àrd. Tha seo a' tachairt seach gu robh mionc air am marbhadh ann an arainn rannsachaidh anns an Tairbeart far nach robh mionc air am marbhadh a riabh. 'Se seo pàirt den rannsachadh PhD agus bha 31 mionc air am marbhadh ann an cola deug. Tha an rannsachadh air a chur an chois airson fàire a chur air gluasadan nam mionc, meas a thoirt air an t-sluagh agus làraichean agus àite bidhe aithneachadh. Cuideachd thathar a' dol a dh'fhaicinn ciamar a tha na h-atharraichean seo, mar sluagh air an lughdaichte. 'Se na 31 mionc a bha air an glacadh anns a' chola deug seo, trian den sluagh uile anns an àrainn rannsachaidh. Tha am fiosrachadh seo a' sealltainn ciamar a tha an sluagh a' bualadh air oidhirp an sgrios. A thuilleadh air an seo, bidh e uamhasach cudthromach airson a' phròiseict anns an àm ri teachd, airson plana roi-innealachd a dhèanamh agus airson casg a chur air sgaoil nam beathaichean.

#### ◆ Plana airson an darna spàinn ann an Uibhist

Tha plana ann airson dòigh-obrach glacadh throm anns na h-Uibhistean as t-earrach mar a bha ann anns an t-Samhainn. Anns an t-Samhainn, bha 15 luchd-obrach agus timcheall air 600 trapan timcheall air àrainn farsaing tìr-mòr nan Uibhistean. 'Se eagarsaidh uamhasach feumail a bha seo ged a chur an t-side maille air. Bha dìreach aon mhionc air a ghlacadh ann an Uibhist a Deas, a' ciallachadh gu robh sinn mì-fhortanach nach robh tòrr mionc a' gluasad aig an àm, neo gun robh glacadh roimh làimh anns an àrainn èifeachdach. 'Se na h-Uibhistean fhathast a' phrìomh àite airson a' phròiseict, agus 'sann airson seo a bha co-dhùnadh air a dhèanamh airson a' chùrsa seo a ruith a rithist, gu h-àraid rè na dàirean anns an t-earrach nuair a tha na beathaichean a' gluasad nas trice.

Aig a' cheart àm, ma bhios an aimsir ceart gu leor, tha planaichean aig dà sgioba glacadh a thoirt a-mach oidhirp glacadh teann ann an eileannan Caolas na Hearadh agus na cladaichean a tha faisg oirre. Thathar ag amas gum bi tòrr thrapan ann timcheall air Caolas na Hearadh ma tha e comasach seo a dhèanamh. A thuilleadh air an seo bidh beathaichean air an toirt a-mach a tha a' sgaoilleadh mas dean iad oidhirp trapaich air tìr-mòr.

#### ◆ Conaltradh

Bha coinneamh anns an Dùbhlachd còmhla ri buidheann ceangalaichean ionadail, far an robh frithealadh math. Bha iad a' còmhradh mu dheidhinn dòighean nas fhèarr airson cumail mothachadh an luchd-poblach mun a' phròiseict. Tha na planaichean airson an àm ri teachd a' toirt a-steach foillseachadh gu tuathanaich-èisg, le cuideachadh bho Urras Iasgairean nan Eilean Siar. Bidh postairean air ullachadh airson portan agus calaichean agus bidh co-òrdanaiche a' phròiseict aig taisbeanaidhean àiteachais airson fiosrachaidh a thoirt gu daoine mun phròiseict agus airson ceistean a fhreagairt.

Aig a' cheart àm thèid pàipear mu Phròiseict Mionc nan Eilean Siar fhoillseachadh ann an Iris Ainmh-eòlais Shealain Nuaidh. Tha an IUCN (Invasive Species Group Newsletter) cuideachd a' deilbh aiste mu dheidhinn a' phròiseict as t-earrach. Tha pàipear mu dheidhinn a' bhith a' cleachdadh fàireag fàileach nam mionc mar bhìadhach air ullachadh airson rannsachadh, agus paipear eile a tha a' coimhead ri eadar-oibre eadar mionc agus radain air a dheilbh airson a' Ghearran ma bhios an co-lorg cudthromach.

#### ◆ A' Cleachdadh Coin airson Lorg nam Mionc

Tha a' phròiseict fada an comain Oighreachd Scaliscro ann an Leodhas, a thug cù don phròiseict airson cuideachadh le oidhirp a' ghlacadh. Tha an cù seo an dràsda air a thrèanadh anns na h-Uibhistean. 'Se buaidh mhath a th' ann an coin a thaobh làraich a lorg. Tha na mionc a tha air an lorg 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 Ordugh Eòin Fhiadhaidh na Roinn Eòrpa le Àitean Sònraichte Diona (SPA). Tha e mar uallach air Breatainn na làraich seo a dhìon a thaobh riaghailtean na Roinn Eòrpa. A bharrachd air glèidhteachais nàdair, tha droch bhuaidh aig a' mhionc air croitearachd, iasgach, tuathanachas èisg agus turasach. Tha suidheachadh a' mhionc na dhùilgheadas do mhòran agus tha e mar ghnòthach dhuinn uile freagart fhaighinn dhan cheist. Gu mì-fhortanach an aon fhreagart buan a th'ann se am beathach a sgrios.

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 Riaghailt Dìon 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](mailto:s.roy@csl.gov.uk)) no gu Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba ann an Steòrnabhagh air 01851 70258.**

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

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



# Hebridean Mink Project

## Bulletin February 2004



Safeguarding our Wildlife

*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

Since November, a further 59 mink have been caught; 48 in Harris and 11 in the Uists. This brings the total number of mink caught to 421; 239 in Harris and 182 in the Uists. No mink have been caught in South Uist since the beginning of October, despite heavy trapping effort and good trap coverage in the area. Meanwhile a significant quantity of bait, containing mink scent glands, has been purchased from Canada. This has found to be particularly effective bait for luring mink into traps. Previously it has come from mink culled by the Project. However production has been unable to keep up with demand and the imported bait will help maintain maximum effectiveness of the trapping effort. Rats can also be a very effective form of bait for mink and where they are caught by the project they are sometimes killed and used as bait.

#### ◆ Trial Traps 31 Mink in Two Weeks

The unusually large number of mink caught in Harris was partly down to a partial cull of a previously untrapped population in a study area south of Tarbert. This is part of the PhD study and the partial cull resulted in 31 mink being caught in just two weeks. The study has been set up to monitor the movements of mink, assess population densities and identify den sites and feeding areas, and to see how these change as populations are reduced. The 31 mink trapped in the two week period represents a third of the population in the study area. This information will show how a population reacts to eradication effort and will be of major importance to the project in future, helping to target trapping more efficiently, plan strategies and head off the spread of remaining animals.

#### ◆ Second 'Big Push' Planned in the Uists

A repeat of a major concentrated trapping operation, carried out in the Uists in November, is being planned for the spring. The operation involved 15 trappers and around 600 traps simultaneously covering a large proportion of the mainland areas of the Uists. This was an extremely useful exercise in logistics, although weather did cause some disruption. Only one mink was caught, in North Uist, meaning either that we were simply unlucky, that there weren't many mink moving at the time, or that previous trapping in the area has been effective. The Uists remain a trapping priority for the project, hence the decision to repeat the process, particularly during the rutting period in spring when animals are more mobile.

Meanwhile, weather permitting, two trapping teams are planning to carry out an intensive trapping effort in the Sound of Harris islands and adjoining coastlines. The aim of this is to operate as many traps simultaneously in the Sound of Harris as possible and remove dispersing individuals prior to intensive mainland trapping efforts.

#### ◆ Communications

A well-attended meeting of the local liaison group took place in December to discuss how best to maintain public awareness of the Project. Future plans include presentations to fish farmers, with the help of the Western Isles Fisheries Trust. Posters will be prepared for ports and harbours and the Project Co-ordinator will attend agricultural shows to provide information and answer questions on the Project.

Meanwhile a paper about the Hebridean Mink Project has been published in the New Zealand Journal of Zoology. The IUCN's Invasive Species Group Newsletter is also planning to include an article about the Project in the spring. A paper on the use of mink scent glands as bait is being prepared for peer review, and another paper, looking at interactions between mink and rats, is planned for February if results are found to be significant.

#### ◆ Use of Locator Dogs

The Project is grateful to Scaliscro Estates in Lewis, who have recently provided a gun-shy pointer to maximise trapping efforts. This dog is now being trained in the Uists. The use of dogs to locate den sites has continued as a highly effective boost to the trapping efforts. Mink located in 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 internationally important bird 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 Protection Areas (SPAs). The UK is required by the Directive to protect the interests of SPAs. As well as posing a serious threat to wildlife, they also have 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](mailto: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](http://www.snh.org.uk).**

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

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