Golden eagles soar in Scotland's National Lottery Awards



The South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project has won a National Lottery award. Credit: Phil Wilkinson/The National Lottery

A pioneering conservation scheme revitalising the golden eagle population in Dumfries and Galloway and Scottish Borders has been named Scotland's National Lottery Project of the Year.

Through a series of ground-breaking golden eagle translocations (species relocations), the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project has seen numbers grow from just three breeding pairs in 2018 to a current population of 39 – the highest number recorded in 300 years.

The project received a £1,679,600 National Lottery Heritage Fund grant. Caroline Clark, Director for Scotland at the Heritage Fund, said: "Congratulations to everyone involved in delivering this project. It has been fantastic for us all at the Heritage Fund to follow your progress and feel a part of it.

"The success of the project is not only measured in how much the eagle population has grown. It is also a tribute to the partnership that the community has been involved all along the way and has huge support for it".

Eagle next to award

A golden eagle next to the National Lottery award. Credit: Phil Wilkinson/The National Lottery.

Building relationships and public support

The project came out top in a field of more than 1,300 organisations to reach the public voting stage in this year's National Lottery Awards. The awards celebrate the inspirational people and projects who do extraordinary things with the help of National Lottery funding.

The project was chosen as the Scotland winner following a public vote. Michael Clarke, Chair of the South of Scotland Golden Eagle Project Board, said: "Public support is vital in our work to protect golden eagles in the south of Scotland, so we are absolutely thrilled that they have voted for our project to win The National Lottery Scotland Project of the Year.

"The project's success to date is testament to the hard work of our pioneering team and the mutual trust and positive support they have built among a wide range of partners – including the Heritage Fund, ecologists, raptor experts, vets, gamekeepers, landowners, land managers and 14,000-plus community participants"

Earlier this year, the project reached a new milestone as six more chicks were relocated to southern Scotland. The chicks were transported from the Scottish Highlands in September to a secret location near Moffat.

Our funding for nature projects

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Got a project idea?



Ardal O'Hanlon presents the An Tobar team with their National Lottery Award. Credit: Bill Smyth Photography.

An Tobar is Northern Ireland's National Lottery Project of the Year



Clive Gray is the National Lottery Awards Heritage Winner for 2022