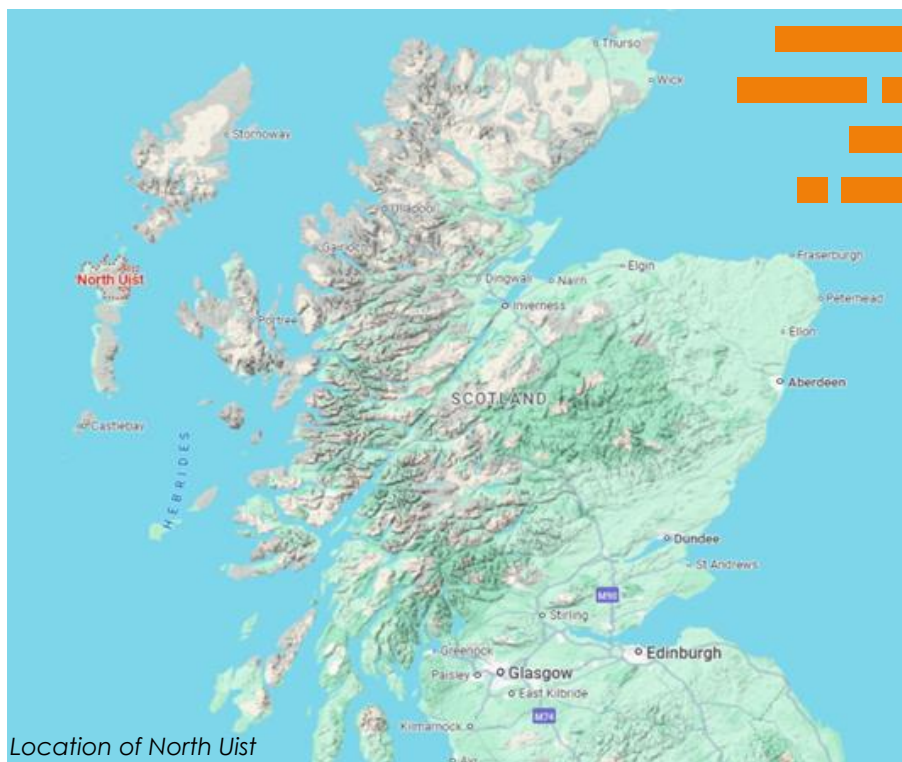


THE ALICE MCCOSH TRUST NEWSLETTER

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Location of North Uist

IOSF

The Alice McCosh Trust (AMT) was able to fund the third successive **International Otter Survival Fund** (IOSF) Student Research Grant. The aim of these awards is to encourage students into field research of otters and to gain survey data to better understand the life of an otter. This time the survey was carried out in the Outer Hebrides on North Uist by *Mia Gleave* from Bangor University and *Alife Davis* from Plymouth University.

The students were chosen via an application and interview process under the guidance of a professional zoological surveyor, *Andrew Rothwell*, who has been instrumental to all three surveys supported by the AMT.

The survey involved walking five to eight kilometres per day and recording all field signs of otter activity. They surveyed approximately 60 kms of linear habitat, collected over 1,200 spraints (otter droppings) in over 400 spraint sites.

AWARDS

IOSF – Student Research Grant on North Uist.

Gemma Scotts (MARECO) – underwater video systems to study sharks, skates and rays on the Isle of Man.

Zak Bowden – microbiome of red campion.

YOU MAY REMEMBER

Saskai McCracken's work on "Awful Creatures"? See her progress on page 2

FINALLY

The deadline for funding applications is coming up! Please help spread the word....

The students were able to compare the data they had collected with previous surveys IOSF had undertaken in 2007.

In comparison to the 2007 data some similarities were identified as well as some differences. For a detailed analysis of the results have a look at the report [here](#).



Otter runs on the northeast coast of Lingeigh



Otter foraging on the northeast coast of North Uist

You may remember Saskia McCracken's work on "**Awful Creatures: Encounters with Britain's Unlovable Species**"... Well, she has certainly been busy, and her book will be published in 2027. In the meantime, she has been publishing several shorter pieces:

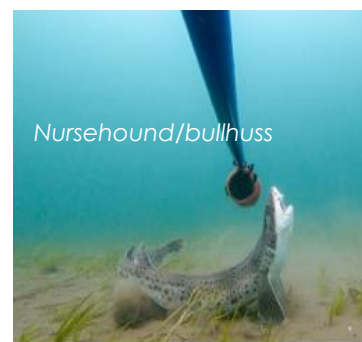
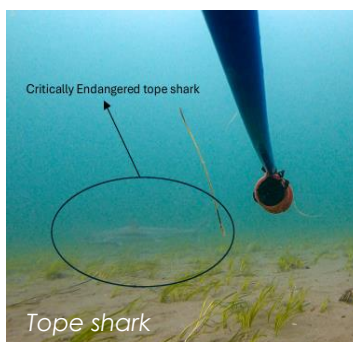
- 'Milngavie Toad Patrol' *Paper Boats Zine* (forthcoming 2025)
- 'Tender Omens' *Caught by the River* (2025)
- 'The Museum of Invisible Wasps' *Caught by the River* (2024)
- 'Sea Gooseberries' *Paper Boats Zine* (2024)

GEMMA SCOTTS - MARECO

Gemma at the **Marine Research and Conservation Foundation** has had a successful summer developing and testing two benthic, baited remote underwater video systems to study sharks, skates and rays, (known as elasmobranchs) around the Isle of Man.

She trialled the equipment across a range of depths, current strengths, tidal conditions and habitats to establish the optimal weighting and configuration of the kit.

The team gained valuable insights, and the work represents the first non-invasive field method for studying coastal elasmobranchs around the Isle of Man and lays the foundation for long-term conservation. A detailed report can be found [here](#).



ZAC BOWDEN – RED CAMPION

Zac was awarded a grant last year to support his work in the field to characterise the microbiome of the **Red Campion** (*Silene dioica*).

Silene dioica is a wildflower with a wide distribution across Europe and it is a dioecy meaning that the plants are either male or female.

Zac's project is attempting to study the many microbes in the soil to see whether male and female plants have different bacterial communities associated with their roots. He is currently awaiting the results from the RNA sequencing so watch this space. His interim report can be found [here](#).



Male red campion



Female red campion



Red campion infected with anther smut

REMINDER

The deadline for applications for funding is coming up so please do spread the word to anyone who may be interested. The Trustees are planning to increase the amount of the annual award and the deadline is the end of November.