

MINK TRACKS

*A project update from the **Scottish Invasive Species Initiative***

Coronavirus update

During the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, the health, safety and welfare of our volunteers, staff and wider public is our top priority and we must all follow the latest advice from the Government during this time.

At present all our outdoor conservation work, including the mink project has ceased and your local Project Officer or Fishery Trust contact should have been in touch directly about this. They will continue to update you as the position changes or you are welcome to contact them if you have any questions.

You can check our latest coronavirus update on our website at: www.invasivespecies.scot/news-events



A huge thank you to all volunteers who are monitoring mink rafts and running mink traps across our project area as part of our Mink Control Project. We wanted to update you on our progress and how your individual effort is contributing to something much bigger.



The bigger picture

Efforts to monitor for and control the invasive American mink on local river catchments are part of the work of the **Scottish Invasive Species Initiative**, which co-ordinates mink control across 29,500km² of Tayside, Grampian and Highland (that's over one third of Scotland!)

The mink raft network provides a comprehensive monitoring coverage across a vast area meaning, with your help, that we can identify and locate mink presence quickly and respond promptly to remove those we catch.



Thank you

None of this would be possible without you, our volunteers. The time you put into monitoring rafts and traps over 2018 and 2019 equates to a staggering 31,900 volunteer hours - that would equate to around 10 full time people per year working on the Mink Project. When we say we couldn't do it without you, we really mean it.

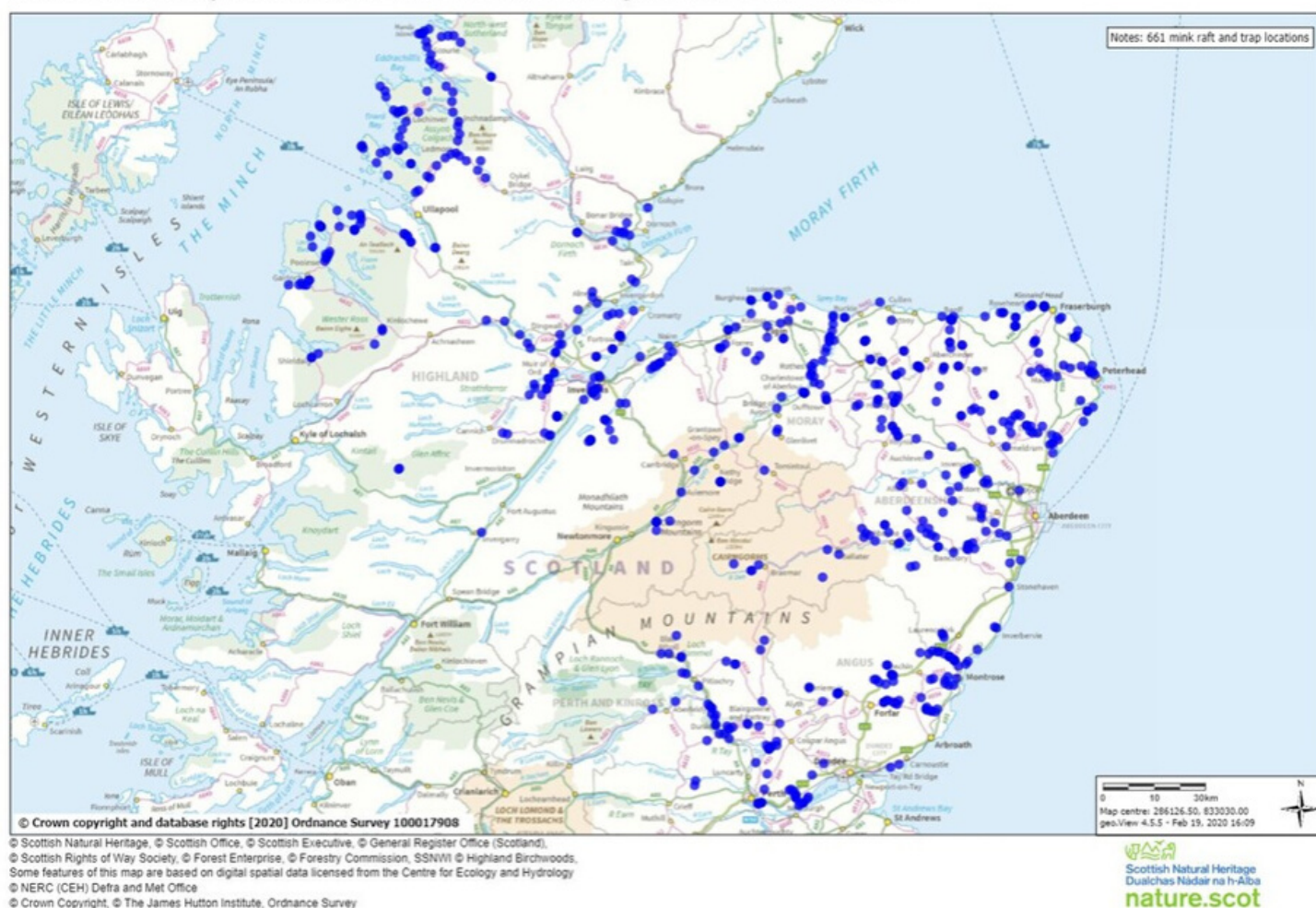
That's a lot of rafts!

We are making great progress in monitoring for mink right across the project area. The map below shows the rafts and traps operating in 2018 and 2019.

We have also produced a set of regional maps so you can see the distribution of rafts & traps in your region at a bigger scale - these can be viewed on our blog site [here](#).

We are always looking to improve and expand the raft and trap network so if you know someone who might like to get involved do ask them to get in touch with us. We'd love to hear from them. Email: sisi@nature.scot

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative - All Mink Raft and Trap Locations 2018 and 2019



Sourcing 300 rafts

Many of our mink rafts are made by the Men's Shed groups and we are talking with individual sheds to further improve our supplies.

Working with Men's Sheds enables us to get this equipment made and supplied locally, refine the design of this kit and allow us to support great local community initiatives.



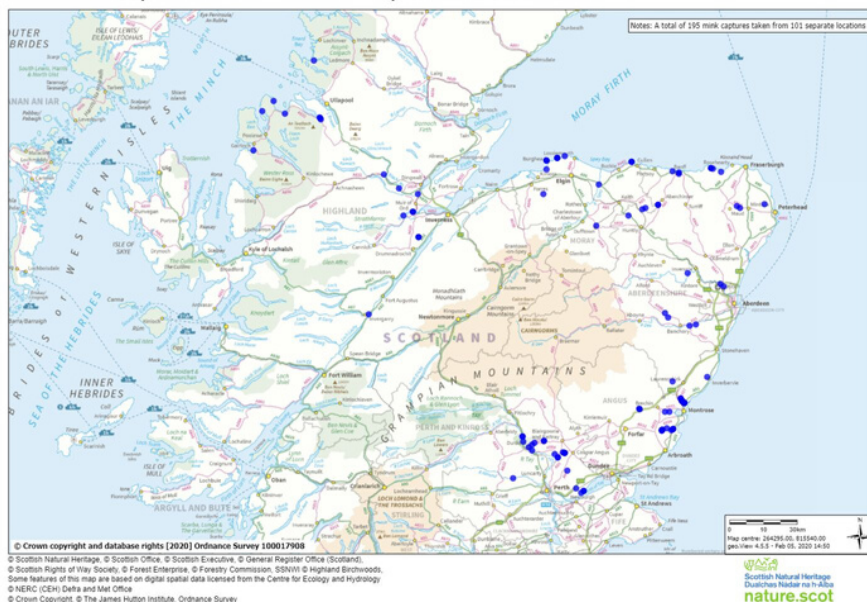
Making an impact

During 2018 and 2019 a total of 200 mink have been caught and dispatched. A high proportion of these have been coastal mink around the north east, along with a number along the River Tay. N.B. Some map locations have multiple captures.

Coastal areas are often key dispersal routes and breeding areas for mink and so are important for us to include in our control work - but they can be difficult to monitor effectively using rafts. Often we rely on mink sightings being reported to us and then target areas with traps afterwards.

Trap monitoring can also be challenging due to inaccessible locations and awkward terrain along the coast - but the availability of modern technology such as the Mink Police Units has helped improve this.

Scottish Invasive Species Initiative - American mink capture locations 2018 and 2019



The cluster of capture locations on the River Tay reflects our increased trapping effort there and that, as a result of the area being the southernmost boundary of the project, it is likely we are capturing migrating mink moving from the south as well as those reproducing in Tayside.

Mink police

The aptly named "mink police" is a trap monitoring unit which provides a high tech way to continually monitor active live-capture traps, using mobile phone technology. When the trap door closes this triggers an alarm signal which is sent immediately to the users phone.

We have found this to be a great bit of kit and really useful for assisting us with monitoring of traps, particularly those in remote locations. Most importantly we've found the Mink Police reliable, we've got 30 units in use and none of them has ever failed to alert us to a triggered trap.



Keep in touch



We are on social media, so tag us into your posts and keep us up to date with how your raft / trap is doing and share your photos. If you want to get in touch directly email us; sisi@nature.scot

You can also sign up to the SISI project quarterly E-newsletter via our website:

www.invasivespecies.scot