

Events

✦ Burns Night ✦

24.01.2026

Langenfeld, Germany

Organized by Clan Maclaren

✦ Burns Night ✦

07.02.2026

Brussels, Belgium

Organized by Clan MacKinnon

✦ Highland Games ✦

16.05.2026

Dormagen, Germany

European Branch News

report from Sweden

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THE RETURN OF THE SCOTTISH WILDCAT

report from
Sweden



Today, I am delighted to present the report from our clan brother in Sweden as a newsletter. Andreas Odhage (on the left) also takes a keen interest in and is very enthusiastic about our clan activities. Many thanks!

~ Bodo Schmitz



THE RETURN OF THE SCOTTISH WILDCAT

A SYMBOL OF RESILIENCE, RESTORED THROUGH INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The Scottish wildcat has long held a special place in Scottish history and identity. As the animal featured on the Clan Macpherson crest, it symbolises independence, strength and survival. For that reason, recent developments in the conservation of the Scottish wildcat are of particular significance to our clan community.

New research results from the international Saving Wildcats project show remarkable success during the project's first years. Published in a special issue of Cat News by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), the study confirms that carefully planned breeding and reintroduction programmes can effectively restore threatened species to the wild.

An impressive 95% of the released wildcats survived their first ten months in the wild, exceeding all expectations. Both survival and reproduction rates were higher than anticipated, and follow-up health checks revealed few signs of injury or disease. On average, the cats increased their body weight by around 20%, indicating a strong and healthy adaptation to life in the wild.

In 2019, the Scottish wildcat was declared functionally extinct, with the remaining population too small, fragmented and genetically compromised to be viable. Since then, 46 wildcats have been released through the Saving Wildcats programme. Encouragingly, several released females successfully gave birth in the wild during 2024 and 2025. A crucial milestone for long-term recovery.



The project is led by the Royal Zoological Society of Scotland (RZSS) and carried out in close collaboration with several international partners, including Nordens Ark in Sweden. Wildcats are bred and prepared for release at a specialised conservation facility before being reintroduced into the wild. In the summer of 2023, 19 wildcats were released into Cairngorms National Park, where they were monitored using GPS tracking.

These results demonstrate that long-term commitment, scientific expertise and international cooperation can make a real difference. The return of the Scottish wildcat is not only a conservation success, it is also a powerful reminder that restoration is possible, even for species once thought lost.

For Clan Macpherson, the revival of the wildcat carries deep symbolic meaning: resilience reclaimed, and a living emblem once again roaming the Highlands.

