Complex, social-environmental issues can be classified as 'wicked problems' because they are incorrigible and hugely challenging for policy makers. Here we re-evaluate what makes problems wicked and assess various theoretical and pragmatic approaches that have been advanced to tackle them. We do so with the aim of contributing new insights to theory through answering the following research questions: What strategies to tackle wicked environmental problems are prominent in the literature?; To what extent do they provide pathways for tackling the defining characteristics of wicked environmental problems?; and, How are these strategies reflected in examples of practice? Our examples look at how emergent strategies have percolated, explicitly or implicitly, in the management of four problems in Scotland: (1) Securing sustainability and resilience of landscape and land-use systems through spatial planning; (2) Addressing population health through livestock diseases control; (3) Mitigating climate change through woodland planting; and, (4) Mitigating rural diffuse pollution in freshwater systems. We present a consolidated set of characteristics of wicked problems against which we map strategies to tackle wicked problems proposed by a body of literature identified through a literature review and analysed using a thematic, qualitative approach. We identify fifteen strategies and show that most of these are, within the Scottish context, evident in practice. The extent to which the actual discourse has influenced praxis and how effective it has been is more difficult to determine but we conclude that, within a context of 'incorrigible' problems, small steps have been made towards taming an untameable beast.