



RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

AGENDA

5th Meeting, 2011 (Session 3)

Wednesday 23 February 2011

The Committee will meet at 9.30 am in Committee Room 5.

1. **Subordinate legislation:** The Committee will take evidence on the Muntjac Keeping (Scotland) Order 2011 (SSI 2011/made) from—

Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, Angela Robinson, Policy Advisor Non-Native Species, and Andrew Crawley, Scottish Government Legal Directorate, Scottish Government.

2. **Subordinate legislation:** Richard Lochhead to move S3M-7879— That the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee recommends that the Muntjac Keeping (Scotland) Order 2011 be approved.
3. **Reservoirs (Scotland) Bill:** The Committee will consider the Bill at Stage 2.
4. **The future of agricultural support in Scotland:** The Committee will take evidence from—

Richard Lochhead MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs and the Environment, and David Barnes, Deputy Director, Agriculture and Rural Development, Scottish Government.

5. **The future of agricultural support in Scotland (in private):** The Committee will discuss the evidence heard earlier in the meeting.

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The papers for this meeting are as follows—

Agenda Items 1 and 2

[the Muntjac Keeping \(Scotland\) Order 2011 \(SSI 2011/made\)](#) RAE/S3/11/5/1

Agenda Item 4

Submissions Pack RAE/S3/11/5/2

Briefing Paper (Private Paper) RAE/S3/11/5/3

For Information

Recent Developments RAE/S3/11/5/4

Order made by the Scottish Ministers and laid before the Scottish Parliament under section 10(1) of the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932 for approval by resolution of the Scottish Parliament.

SCOTTISH STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS

2011 No.

ANIMALS

DESTRUCTIVE ANIMALS

The Muntjac Keeping (Scotland) Order 2011

<i>Made</i>	- - - -	<i>2nd February 2011</i>
<i>Laid before the Scottish Parliament</i>		<i>2nd February 2011</i>
<i>Coming into force</i>	- -	<i>1st July 2011</i>

The Scottish Ministers make the following Order in exercise of the powers conferred by sections 1 and 10 of the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932(a), and all other powers enabling them to do so.

In accordance with section 10 of that Act the Scottish Ministers are satisfied with respect to the non-indigenous mammalian species(b) which are the subject of this Order that by reason of their destructive habits it is desirable to control the keeping of them and to destroy any such which may be at large.

Title, commencement and extent

1.—(1) This Order may be cited as the Muntjac Keeping (Scotland) Order 2011, and comes into force on 1st July 2011.

(2) This Order extends to Scotland only.

Interpretation

2. In this Order—

“1932 Act” means the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932; and

“Muntjac” means an animal of the genus *Muntiacus*.

(a) 1932 c.12. The power in section 1 is extended in respect of species other than the muskrat by section 10 of the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932 (“the 1932 Act”). Section 11 (interpretation) was amended by S.I. 1992/3302. The style and title of the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries was changed to that of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food by S.I. 1955/554. The functions of the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and the Secretary of State were transferred to the Scottish Ministers by virtue of section 53 of the Scotland Act 1998 (c.46).

(b) See section 10(2) of the 1932 Act for the definition of “non-indigenous mammalian species”.

Keeping of Muntjac

3. The keeping of Muntjac is prohibited except under a licence granted under the 1932 Act.

Modification of the 1932 Act

4. The provisions of the 1932 Act shall apply to the keeping of Muntjac subject to the modifications that in section 6(a), subsection (1)—

- (a) paragraph (d) is omitted; and
- (b) the reference to a penalty in the case of an offence under that paragraph is omitted.

St Andrew's House,
Edinburgh
2nd February 2011

R CUNNINGHAM
Authorised to sign by the Scottish Ministers

(a) Section 6 was relevantly amended in respect of Scotland by sections 289C, 289G, and 289F of the Criminal Procedure (Scotland) Act 1975 (c.21).

EXPLANATORY NOTE

(This note is not part of the Order)

This Order regulates the keeping of animals of the genus *Muntiacus* (Muntjac deer), which are as shown in the table:

Common name	Scientific name
Indian (or common) muntjac	<i>Muntiacus muntjak</i>
Reeve's (or Chinese) muntjac	<i>Muntiacus reevesi</i>
Hairy-fronted (or Black) muntjac	<i>Muntiacus crinifrons</i>
Fea's muntjac	<i>Muntiacus feae</i>
Bornean yellow muntjac	<i>Muntiacus atherodes</i>
Roosevelt's muntjac	<i>Muntiacus rooseveltorum</i>
Gongshan muntjac	<i>Muntiacus gongshanensis</i>
Giant muntjac	<i>Muntiacus vuquangensis</i>
Truong Son muntjac	<i>Muntiacus truongsongensis</i>
Leaf muntjac	<i>Muntiacus putaoensis</i>
Sumatran muntjac	<i>Muntiacus montanus</i>
Pu Hoat muntjac	<i>Muntiacus puhoatensis</i>

Article 3 prohibits the keeping of Muntjac except under a licence granted by the Scottish Ministers under the Destructive Imported Animals Act 1932 ("1932 Act").

Article 4 of the Order modifies the effect of the 1932 Act so that it is not an offence to turn loose any Muntjac, or wilfully allow any Muntjac to escape.

It is an offence under section 6 of the 1932 Act to keep a Muntjac without a licence, or to act in contravention of any term of the licence, or to obstruct any officer or persons authorised by the Scottish Ministers in execution of a duty under that Act.

A business and regulatory impact assessment has been prepared for this Order. A copy of the assessment has been placed in the Scottish Parliament Information Centre. Further copies may be obtained from the Scottish Government Rural and Environment Directorate, Natural Resources Division, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ.

RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

FUTURE OF AGRICULTURAL SUPPORT IN SCOTLAND

The Crofters Commission and Highland Council have each provided the Committee with a written submission.

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM THE CROFTERS COMMISSION

The Crofters Commission wishes to submit comments to the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee on the recommendations of the Pack Inquiry into the Future For Agricultural Support In Scotland. We regard the Pack report as extremely important, and a very solid piece of work which must now gain serious consideration, as we move towards a CAP review, whenever it takes place, which is likely to require serious change in how support operates in Scotland. The Crofters Commission would wish to be involved in the work which is required to test its hypotheses.

The Crofters Commission broadly supports the recommendations made by the Committee Of Inquiry and would seek to have an input prior to implementation and to the crucial ongoing discussions of aspects of the report, as crofting has many facets which can contribute in addressing the global challenges highlighted in the report, and in discussion of which the Commission has a great deal to offer

In relation to specific recommendations the Crofters Commission, assuming future engagement which will permit greater detail, has the following comments to make:

Delivery mechanism of support through area payment related to activity

The Crofters Commission agrees with this recommendation and its link to activity, but wish to ensure where there is extensive grazing by livestock due to the land capability this is duly recognised and therefore suggest a minimum stocking density of between 0.03LUs - 0.06 LUs as a measure of activity.

Delivery mechanism of support through a cattle headage scheme, revised calf scheme and a new lamb scheme

A revised calf scheme with higher payment rates for the smaller producer will aid the retention and introduction of cattle in the more remote disadvantaged crofting areas which has the dual function of supplying lowland finishers and clean breeding stock. Additionally cattle grazing have been identified by RSPB and other organisations as of significant benefit to wading birds and in meeting environmental aims.

The introduction of lamb headage scheme would also aid the retention of livestock in the vulnerable areas offsetting costs of transportation and feed.

Furthermore both these schemes could possibly start addressing the issue of land abandonment if the detail in the schemes were right.

Top Up Fund

This concept is supported as a mechanism for the delivery of support linked with public benefit. However the suggested access to the fund of using Standard Labour Requirements per business has to be carefully evaluated to ensure smaller extensive units are not disadvantaged. We would stress the need urgently to examine the way Standard Labour Units are calculated, and to allow for working practices in crofting and general hill farming areas

New Vulnerable Area for LFASS

The creation of the Vulnerable Area will direct support to the most disadvantaged areas supporting agricultural land activity and therefore enhancing the environment through the active land management. We believe this would be of enormous benefit, and is the single most important proposal in the Pack Report, given that it would begin to permit a level playing field for the very fragile areas of Scotland, including the Scottish islands and large parts of the Highlands. Such a possibility has never existed in the past, as evidenced by the extreme inequity in distribution of support payments

Implementation of recommendations in one step allowing new entrants to access support

New entrants have been disadvantaged in their inability to access pillar 1 direct support under the current SFP scheme as it is based on historic data and the only way to get this support was to purchase SFP entitlements. The Crofters Commission fully supports the one step approach to allow new entrants access to future scheme, based on activity, and assumes that, under any future support scheme, tradable entitlement will vanish

Additionally it is vital that resources are made available to ensure any future support schemes are designed and constructed ahead of implementation.

Furthermore to allow business to make informed decisions a clear message of direction is required.

Crofters Commission
February 2011

WRITTEN SUBMISSION FROM HIGHLAND COUNCIL

The Highland Council welcomes the Pack Report and supports the main principles set out in the Negotiating Points and Recommendations as a way forward for agricultural support in the period 2014 – 2020.

The following issues are of particular relevance to the Highlands and Islands and Highland Council would be strongly supportive of these principles being carried forward by Scottish Government as the debate moves forward.

1. **Current levels of direct support must be maintained** and funds should not be diverted from Pillar 1 to Pillar 2. The present level of direct support has proved insufficient to maintain livestock production in the area and we have seen a significant fall in breeding sheep and cattle numbers. Any further reduction would seriously threaten the continuation of agricultural activity in many areas of the Highlands and Islands (Negotiating Point E).
2. The Highland Council strongly backs the principle of **establishing a new Vulnerable Area** and views this as crucial to the future of remote crofting and farming communities as statements emerge from the EU that threaten the future of LFASS. Many areas in Highland suffer from exactly the bio-physical constraints set out in the report and we would urge Scottish Government to take this forward (Recommendation 16).
3. Council supports the principle of payments only going to **active producers** and welcomes the principle of a significant Top Up Fund (TUF) and Headage payments within the LFA. The **Scottish Beef Calf Scheme (SBCS)** has proved valuable in slowing the decline in cattle numbers in the Highlands, and a more targeted scheme as proposed in the Pack report with greater assistance to smaller herds would give a much needed boost to beef producers in the area (Recommendations 4 and 8). The retention of cattle is recognised as a locally valuable economic multiplier, supporting hauliers, feed merchants, vets etc, and also delivers significant environmental benefits. Support for this sector is therefore vital both in terms of maintaining rural communities and delivering public goods.
4. The proposed lamb headage scheme clearly requires some further development, but **Council supports the principle of targeting support to a sector that has seen the largest decline in numbers since decoupling** (Recommendation 9). In this context the Council would also welcome further work on the **most effective management of peatland and moorland as carbon sinks** as there are significant opportunities to contribute to the global challenges by appropriate management of these

valuable areas. This may be particularly relevant as regards future use of some of the 600,000 hectares of common grazings.

5. Highland Council also supports the principle of incorporating a payment based on **Standard Labour Requirements (SLR)** as a core element of the TUF. We do however have concerns about the data set that will be used to calculate SLRs, particularly in relation to beef cows. The figure for example taken from the SAC Management Handbook 2009/10 suggests that 158 beef cows would generate 1 SLR. Our view is that this figure is seriously flawed and that the reality for beef grassland farms in this area is that a figure closer to 100 beef cows requires at least 1 SLR. This is a crucial point as grassland beef producers in the area possibly stand to lose the greatest amount of support and **a regional refresh of data used to calculate the SLR is considered essential** (Recommendation 6).
6. In terms of the timing of change, Highland Council supports the recommendation in the Pack Report that this **should take place as early as possible and in a single step**. If, as is now being muted, that the European negotiations will not be completed in time for a 2014 implementation, that will leave only a 5 year period and the potential difficulties and complications in attempting to phase in a new system using a hybrid of some form does not seem sensible. Any delay till 2015 will also allow greater time for businesses to adjust to the restructuring of payments. The one step change will also allow immediate access to payments for New Entrants which the Council views as a crucial part of any reform (Recommendation 12).

Highland Council
February 2011

RURAL AFFAIRS AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE COMMITTEE'S REMIT

Note by the Clerk: Each time an agenda and papers for a meeting are circulated to members, a short paper like this one will also be included as a means of alerting members to relevant documents of general interest which they can follow up through the links included.

5084/11 Proposal for a European Parliament and Council Regulation establishing a common organisation of agricultural markets and on specific provisions for certain agricultural products (Single CMO Regulation)

The Rt Hon the Lord Roper, Chairman of the House of Lords select Committee on the European Union has written to the Committee in response to the letter sent on 10 February. The text of the letter is below:

"Thanks you for your letter of 10 February 2011.

Our Agriculture, Fisheries and Environment Sub-Committee considered the above proposal at its meeting of 16 February 2011, and agreed to hold it under scrutiny.

As you know, included in the proposal was a proposal to amend the scheme for the provision of food to deprived persons, in relation to which the House of Lords adopted a Reasoned Opinion on 3 November 2010. We note that your Committee has concluded that it agrees with the view which the House expressed in the Reasoned Opinion.

We do not intend to adopt another Reasoned Opinion in relation to the latest proposal, but we will re-affirm our concerns in correspondence with the Presidents of the European Parliament, European Commission and Council. In so doing we will draw their attention to the concerns expressed to us by your Committee.

We welcome your approach to us in this matter."

A conservation framework for hen harriers

SNH have written to the Clerk. Copies of the report are available in hard copy at your request. The text of the letter is included in Annexe B.

A draft land use strategy for Scotland

The RSE recently wrote to the Convener and Deputy Convener. The text of the correspondence is included in Annexe A for your information.

SNH reports

SNH have recently published three reports. A link to each report is provided below:

1) SNH Commissioned Report 384: Assessment of public attitudes to grey squirrel control in Aberdeen.

<http://www.snh.org.uk/pubs/detail.asp?id=1659>

2) SNH Commissioned Report 393: The Scottish Beaver Trial: Woodland monitoring 2009.

<http://www.snh.org.uk/pubs/detail.asp?id=1656>

3) SNH Commissioned Report 413: Initial response to the invasive carpet sea squirt, *Didemnum vexillum*, in Scotland.

<http://www.snh.org.uk/pubs/detail.asp?id=1677>

SNH has also published its new 'Service statement for Planning & Development', which is available here:

<http://www.snh.gov.uk/docs/A498949.pdf>

House of Commons Environment Food and Rural Affairs Committee

The Committee has published its Third Report of Session 2010-11: Farming in the Uplands (HC 556). A link to the report is provided here:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201011/cmselect/cmenvfru/556/556.pdf>

Annexe A

"Dear Convener and Deputy Convener,

I was interested to see that the Committee held an evidence session in December on the Scottish Government's Draft Land Use Strategy and followed this up with a letter response to the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs. As you may be aware, a Royal Society of Edinburgh (RSE) working group, chaired by Professor Roger Crofts, submitted a response to the consultation on the Land Use Strategy and I attach it for your information. As you will see, many of the points raised by the RSE are also set out in your comprehensive letter response.

We agree that the draft Strategy fails to convert the laudable high level aspirations into useable reality for land owners, users, and decision makers and that a more comprehensive, integrated approach is required. Amongst other issues we were also concerned that the draft Strategy did not give adequate recognition to the competing uses for land and the need for an explicit process to resolve conflicts.

I would be pleased to facilitate dialogue with your Committee and please do not hesitate to contact me should you or members of the Committee wish to discuss the Land Use Strategy further. The RSE plans to maintain its involvement in this

important area of public policy and I am sure members of the RSE Working Group would be pleased to speak with you.”

“Dear Mr Hardie

A Draft Land Use Strategy for Scotland

Thank you for your email of 26 January 2010. I am grateful to you for providing me with the consultation response which the Royal Society has submitted to the Scottish Government on its Land Use Strategy. I will ensure that this is circulated to all members of the Rural Affairs and Environment Committee. It was interesting to note that we agreed on many of the fundamental ways in which the strategy could be improved.

From discussions we have had with the Scottish Government, we have been informed that the intention is that the strategy will be published in March. Unfortunately, this is likely to mean that the current Rural Affairs and Environment Committee will not have an opportunity to undertake any further work on the strategy as the Scottish Parliament will be dissolved on 22 March, before the next election in May. In the time between now and then the Committee only has four meetings left - all of which are scheduled to be extremely busy as we look to complete outstanding legislation and inquiries.

The Committee will be publishing a legacy report summarising the work of the Committee in this session and looking ahead to the next session of Parliament, with a view to informing the work of any successor committee(s). I would expect that report to draw attention to the Committee’s work on land use and note the publication of the strategy, and I would imagine it is likely that any successor committee will continue the work this Committee has done.”

Annexe B

“A Conservation Framework for Hen Harriers

I enclose a copy of a report *A Conservation Framework for Hen Harriers*, to be published by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee on Friday 18th February 2011. We want your Committee to have advance sight of the report prior to formal publication.

You will be aware that there has been considerable interest in this report and that SNH took the decision to delay publication in order to have a fuller dialogue with key land managing interest groups. This dialogue led to a further refinement of the overall approach, including setting the context for this work around the well established conflict resolution mechanisms that now exist. The data limitations with the modelling approach have also been more clearly documented; especially in relation to data on predator impacts.

SNH has also made a commitment to undertake further work to refine the model in 2012, once the new (2010) national Hen Harrier survey data has been collated. At the same time we will be looking to further address some of the data limitations, such as the local impact of foxes and other predators, and to refine the information held on habitat suitability. The current report is based on data from the RSPB wildlife crime investigations database which are recorded as either ‘confirmed’ or

as 'probable' persecution. In a future refresh of the model we will also seek to use the SASA (Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture) data on 'confirmed' cases of persecution. This was not available for the same time period covered by the Hen Harrier national datasets used for this current exercise. We will also look to see whether persecution levels have changed over time.

Background to the report

SNH chairs the Scottish Raptor Monitoring Scheme, which is developing the evidence base on numbers, distribution and conservation of raptors (birds of prey) in Scotland. The other members of the Scheme are the UK Joint Nature Conservation Committee, British Trust for Ornithology, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Scottish Ornithologists' Club, Rare Breeding Birds Panel, and the Scottish Raptor Study Groups. The Scheme publishes annual reports, and later this year will publish a five year overview of trends in raptor numbers. The Scheme has a high and effective profile, contributing to the identification of potential Special Protection Areas (SPAs, such as the recently announced suite of six SPAs for golden eagles), monitoring of sites, and advice on casework relating to a range of development proposals including wind farms and forestry. In 2009, the Scheme was awarded the Best Practice Award (UK-wide) by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

The Scheme has developed a relatively new, evidence-based approach to quantifying constraints acting on birds of prey. In 2008, the golden eagle conservation framework was published (<http://www.snh.org.uk/pubs/detail.asp?id=1002>) revealing persecution and heavy grazing pressures on habitat (and therefore the eagles' prey base) to be key constraints on distribution and breeding success.

This hen harrier conservation framework report is the second in the series, and a framework on peregrines is in preparation.

The hen harrier conservation framework

The hen harrier is listed on Annex 1 of the EC Birds Directive, is included on the red-list of birds of conservation concern in the UK, and the Species Action Framework for Scotland. It is also a high priority species in terms of combating wildlife crime.

The framework report sets targets for 'favourable status' for hen harriers at regional levels. Using the most reliable land cover dataset available, just over 21% of the UK land surface was predicted to be suitable for hen harriers. However, additional factors such as the distribution and abundance of key prey and predators need to be taken into account in order to predict hen harrier abundance accurately. Such data are currently unavailable nationally and this represents a limitation with the current model. The report gives three criteria for assessing the status of regions (Natural Heritage Zones (NHZs) for hen harriers: (a) a minimum of 1.2 young fledged per breeding attempt; (b) at least 44% of the apparently suitable habitat occupied; and (c) a density (pairs per 100 km²) threshold of 2.12. The first target is based on the minimum criteria for population growth identified by population modelling, while the other two targets are informed scientific judgements derived

from field data. The constraints acting on populations are identified and discussed in detail, as are limitations in the available information on potential habitat extent for harriers, and aspects of the modelling deployed.

The **main findings** of the report are:

- 1) The Scottish hen harrier population has increased in size from an estimate of 436 (1988) to 633 pairs (2004) surveys, and Scotland remains a stronghold for this species in the UK. The 'potential' national hen harrier population of Scotland, however, is estimated to be within the range 1467–1790 pairs. The 'potential' levels for a population are not necessarily the same as defining 'favourable status' which requires additional judgements to be made.
- 2) The UK 'potential' population is estimated to be 2514–2653 pairs, whilst recent UK population estimates were 521 pairs in 1998, and 749 pairs in 2004.
- 3) Two main constraints were identified: persecution and, in one Scottish region - prey shortages. Other constraints associated with the availability of nesting/ foraging habitat, and predation pressure may also be important factors, but further work is required to gather evidence on these. This does represent a data limitation with the current modelling approach.
- 4) In Scotland, only five out of 20 regions passed all three tests: Argyll West and Islands, the West Central Belt, the Western Isles, the Western Seaboard, and Breadalbane and East Argyll.
- 5) Three of the regions deemed to be at favourable status for hen harriers were also identified at favourable status for golden eagles: Argyll West and Islands, Western Isles, and the Western Seaboard (Whitfield *et al.* 2008a).
- 6) In five regions of Scotland, there is strong evidence that illegal persecution is causing the failure of a majority of breeding attempts, leading to reduced occupancy and/or fewer successful nests. These are: Central Highlands, Cairngorm Massif, Northeast Glens, Western Southern Uplands and Inner Solway, and Border Hills. If this persecution was halted or significantly reduced, the population levels should improve.
- 7) The failure of the North Caithness and Orkney NHZ regions to achieve a favourable status appears to be related to food limitation during the early breeding season. Management measures were instigated in 2002 to encourage farmers to reduce sheep numbers in areas where harriers can forage, and even a small uptake of these should benefit the harrier population and bring it into a favourable status; there are signs that this is occurring already.
- 8) There was circumstantial evidence that a shortage of foraging and/or nesting habitat may be a constraint in two other regions - the Peatlands of Caithness and Sutherland, and the Northern Highlands. However, there is currently insufficient information to confirm the importance of this constraint or to recommend remedial actions.

Conflict resolution

Against the backdrop of the assessment on persecution we need to undertake further work in particular areas to determine the suite of conservation actions required to help conserve hen harriers. There are particular problems in relation to driven grouse moors, and for these important steps are being taken to find ways of resolving the conflict which exists between land management objectives and conservation priorities. The **Langholm Moor Demonstration Project** (a partnership between SNH, GWCT, Buccleuch Estates, RSPB and Natural England), which the Committee visited last year, is trialing the use of diversionary feeding of hen harriers to see if harriers can be diverted from grouse during spring and summer, as well as taking steps to improve the condition of the habitat on the moor, and undertaking effective predator control with a view to restoring a viable grouse moor. The **Natural England-led Environment Council dispute resolution process** is also developing a range of options for addressing the conflict and the very low numbers of hen harriers, especially in the north of England. Discussions are underway involving practical and legal considerations of a range of measures involving hen harrier release schemes, diversionary feeding of harriers, temporary removal of harriers from moors at key periods, setting of regional quotas, and other steps to reduce impacts on grouse.

Several **independent studies** have also been carried out, and we note in particular the review by Professor Steve Redpath *et al.* (2010) as a clear and objective publication on the nature of the hen harrier-red grouse conflict, which points to four potential ways of tackling the issue. In Scotland, the **Moorland Forum**, comprising more than 30 member organisations, has considered this conflict in detail, and published a review of raptor numbers and impacts on gamebirds and other birds. The Forum has recently studied two areas in detail in order to tease out conservation and land-use issues, as part of its 'Upland Solutions' programme. The **Wildlife Estates Scotland** initiative, launched on 23 November 2010, is piloting habitat and wildlife conservation 'good practice' in selected parts of Scotland.

Next steps

We would be happy to provide the Committee with further advice regarding hen harriers and other birds of prey we are working on. It should be evident that much needs to be done, but SNH believes that there is a strong commitment from the key sectors to tackle the issues, both through the conflict resolution mechanisms which now exist and through the activities of the Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAWC).

Finally, we wish to record our appreciation of the considerable efforts by several hundred volunteer field workers – predominantly members of Raptor Study Groups throughout the UK. They provide us with a robust evidence base on hen harriers and other raptors, and many of them have seen a decade or more of populations' decline. We want to arrest this decline, and see a turnaround in the fortunes of this special moorland bird."