

Hannah Blythyn AC/AM
Gweinidog yr Amgylchedd
Minister for Environment



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-05-852
Ein cyf/Our ref HB/01046/18

David John Rowlands AM
Chair - Petitions committee.
National Assembly for Wales
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA
Government.Committee.Business@gov.wales

23 November 2018

Dear David

Thank you for your letter dated 25 October regarding Petition P-05-852 - Introduce a Licence to Manage Land for Game Bird Shooting in an Attempt to End Raptor Persecution.

In Wales, the Welsh Government is responsible for the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS). The Scheme investigates and provides analysis services for wildlife, companion animals and honey bees suspected of being poisoned by pesticides. WIIS figures from the previous five years show an average of 2 confirmed cases per year of deliberate abuse of pesticides leading to the death of birds of prey. Wider results reported by the latest RSPB annual 'Birdcrime 2017' publication were 3 separate persecution incidents in Wales involving the shooting of a buzzard and a red kite and confirmed pesticide poisoning of a peregrine falcon.

Partnership working between the Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales (NRW), the Police, Fire Service, Government Agency Intelligence Network and the Crown Prosecution Service plays a fundamental role in detecting, preventing, investigating and enforcing wildlife and rural crime, both at a national strategic level and a regional operational level. Welsh Government officials work closely with the four Welsh Police Forces, NRW and other enforcement bodies through the Wales Wildlife and Rural Crime Group. The Group identifies regional wildlife and rural crime priorities as well as ensuring Welsh interests are represented at UK Priority Delivery Groups including the Raptor Persecution Delivery Group. Raptor persecution is a priority in Wales as well as the UK as a whole. One of the shared aims of both the Welsh and UK Groups is 'to protect raptors from persecution by developing and sharing best practice methodologies to safeguard birds, their eggs and their nests'.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
Caerdydd • Cardiff
CF99 1NA

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:
0300 0604400

Gohebiaeth.Hannah.Blythyn@llyw.cymru
Correspondence.Hannah.Blythyn@gov.wales

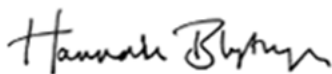
Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

In 2017 Welsh Government funded 'A Review of the Prevention and Investigation of Wildlife Crime in Wales'. The Review was undertaken by the National Wildlife Crime Unit and included 21 recommendations which are currently being considered by the Wales Wildlife and Rural Crime Group. The report highlighted the success of both the secondment of police officers to NRW and the setting up of dedicated rural crime teams within the Welsh forces. I will continue to support NRW in their commitment to work collaboratively with Welsh Police Forces to encourage compliance with, and enforce, wildlife and environmental legislation in Wales. This includes the continued funding of seconded police officers who are essential to the delivery of this work. I am pleased to say the 'rural crime team' model has been extended and now includes both North Wales and Dyfed Powys Police Forces. South Wales and Gwent Forces are also considering setting up similar teams.

The Review highlighted best practice and looked at knowledge gaps and problems in taking prosecutions forward. The licensing of gamebird shooting / gamekeepers was not identified as an issue and was therefore not listed in the recommendations. In carrying out investigations jointly with the police, my officials have not had issues identifying local landowners or those with game interests and as such do not see any benefit in introducing a licensing regime which would be time consuming and costly to implement with no obvious benefit over and above existing protocols of dealing with raptor persecution incidents.

Yours sincerely



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