

# NatureScot Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about what we do and don't do.**

Please refer to these 'FAQs' before emailing or phoning, or using our online enquiries service. You can also:

- use our ['search'](#) facility for topics
- refer to our ['Other organisations responsibilities'](#) list
- return to our ['Contact us'](#) page

## What does NatureScot do?

We are Scotland's nature agency. We work to improve our natural environment in Scotland and inspire everyone to care more about it.

So that all nature in Scotland – our key habitats and landscapes, all our green space and our native species – is maintained, enhanced and brings us benefits.

It is the job of all of us to achieve a balance in the sensitive management of our natural world in order to maintain and enhance biodiversity.

## Find out more

[About NatureScot](#)

## What is NatureScot not responsible for?

Read about ['our responsibilities and other organisations responsibilities'](#).

## How do I contact you in relation to management or proposals in a SSSI?

Please use the **area offices map** to work out which NatureScot Area the SSSI is in, and email the relevant Area mailbox. If you are not the land owner or an occupier, contact the land owner first.

## How do I report damage to a protected area or a wildlife crime?

- If you witness a suspected wildlife crime in action call 999 immediately and ask for the police. For all other enquires call your local Police on 101 and report to [Wildlife Crime Officer](#) if available.
- Police Scotland [wildlife crime information](#)
- Police Scotland non-emergency [online reporting form](#)
- Damage to a protected area has already happened: please use this [map](#) to work out which NatureScot Area the protected site (SSSI, SAC, SPA) is in, and email the relevant Area mailbox.

## How do I contact NatureScot

You can use our ['Contact us'](#) web page, or if your query is generic in nature, or is not related to a particular area, then please use our general contact at our [NatureScot Headquarters](#).

If your query is related to a specific area then please use the relevant [Area](#) contact.

## Where do I report species / wildlife sightings?

You can contact the following websites:

- Sharing wildlife data - [National Biodiveristy Network \(NBN\)](#)
- Mobile apps for different species types - [Scotland's environment](#)
- [Beavers](#)
- Report badger sightings - [Scottish Badgers](#)
- Information on a particular [protected species](#)

## Where do I report invasive non-native species?

Report to [Scotland's Environment Web](#).

## How do I find out if a place I am interested in lies within a protected area?

Access [SiteLink](#) which provides access to data and information on key protected areas across Scotland.

## Would NatureScot fund my project?

You can read all about [Funding and Projects](#) on our NatureScot website.

## I am concerned about trees being felled, can you help?

- [Scottish Forestry](#) issue licences for tree felling.

- For individual trees contact the Local Authority to see if subject to Tree Preservation Order.
- If you suspect felling is resulting in a wildlife crime call Police Scotland on 101 and report to Wildlife Crime Officer if available.

## **What do I do if there is a bat in my house?**

Email [batsinhouses@nature.scot](mailto:batsinhouses@nature.scot), or call [01463 725364](tel:01463725364).

## **What do I do if I see a dead, injured or stranded animal or bird?**

- Dead animal - [Scottish Government](#)
- Dead wild bird - [NatureScot Avian influenza](#)
- Injured animal/bird - [SSPCA Animal Rescue Officers](#)
- Dead or stranded whales, dolphin or seals on the beach or close to the shore - [Scottish Marine Animal Stranding Scheme](#)

## **Where can I go to see dolphins, eagles, otters etc?**

A list of helpful websites where you can find some of these species:

- [Scotland's National Nature Reserves](#)
- [Visitscotland](#)
- [Forestry and Land Scotland](#)
- [RSPB](#)
- [National Trust for Scotland](#)
- [Hebridean Whale & Dolphin Trust](#)

## **Can you help identify a species I have found?**

Please refer to the numerous books, websites, online guides and mobile apps available to help you identify species. Countryside rangers or wardens may also be able to help.

## **I am concerned about a development / planning application, can you help?**

NatureScot only advises planning authorities on proposed developments that could affect nationally-important nature and landscape interests, if they meet the criteria described on [our planning role and consulting us](#) web page. We are not able to advise on proposals that do not meet our consultation thresholds.

Planning authorities consider all other nature and landscape interests in line with their Local Development Plan, and are responsible for monitoring and enforcement. Contact your local authority planning service about developments and planning applications.

[RSPB's planning pack](#) provides information on how communities can influence the planning process

## **How do I report countryside access issues?**

Contact your local access authority (Local Authority or National Park Authority)

## **Can you help with my student project?**

Please use our [website](#) to find information and publications relevant to your project. Due to the large number of student enquiries we receive, we are unable to help with, or participate in, student projects

## **Can someone come to talk to my group about a nature subject?**

We are not normally able to provide speakers. We focus our limited capacity on events and topics which will deliver our Corporate priorities.

- National groups on topics closely related to our [Corporate Plan](#), or you can email [enquiries@nature.scot](mailto:enquiries@nature.scot)
- Locally-based groups: please consider first whether another local speaker could meet your needs.
- In Highland, try this [Experts on Offer](#) page

## **How can I get involved in volunteering or conservation work?**

Refer to our web pages:

- [Volunteer in the outdoors](#)
- [Volunteering with NatureScot](#)

## **I would like some historical reports or data?**

Refer to our [Information Library](#).

## **What do I do if deer are damaging my garden, roaming around my village/town?**

Contact the local [Deer Management Group](#).

## **What do I do if there is a pine marten, bat or badger in my home, garden or business premises?**

Refer to our web pages:

- [Bats](#)
- [Pine martens](#)
- [Badgers](#)

## **Is it legal to pick flowers/mushrooms?**

Refer to our [Protected species: plants and fungi](#) web page.

## **Can I cut my garden hedge or work on my house when birds are nesting?**

- No, it's an offence to prevent birds from using an active nest or to damage an active nest.
- Wait until the chicks have fledged and the nest is no longer being used, which *may* be only a month or so.

## **I've found an abandoned young animal or bird, what should I do?**

- Leave it alone – the parents are likely to be nearby.
- Injured animal/bird - [SSPCA Animal Rescue Officers](#)

## **I've come across traps in the countryside, are these legal?**

- There are lots of regulations governing the use of traps. If unsure contact email [Licensing@Nature.Scot](mailto:Licensing@Nature.Scot)
- If you think a crime has occurred contact the Police on 101 and ask to speak with a Wildlife Crime Officer.

## **Can sound deterrents (bangers or gas guns)/visual deterrents (ribbons or kites) be used to stop birds from nesting?**

- It is an offence to prevent birds from using an active nest.
- It is not an offence if the birds have not yet started to nest (exception Golden eagle and White-tailed eagle).
- Sound deterrents are not ideal - can cause wider species disturbance.

## **Are farmers allowed to shoot magpies, rooks and crows?**

- Yes, but only for certain species and for defined purposes under [licence](#)

## **Can I get a licence to remove a bird's nest?**

- If the nest is no longer in use you do not need a licence.
- If the nest is in use, no, unless it meets certain criteria
- Refer to our Licensing [web page](#)



# **Can I kill crows/magpies that are eating all the eggs and chicks of birds in my garden?**

- No.
- Refer to our Bird Licensing [web page](#)