

# SEA EAGLES AND SHEEP FARMING IN SCOTLAND

## A JOINT STATEMENT OF INTENT FROM NFU SCOTLAND AND SCOTTISH NATURAL HERITAGE

NFU Scotland and SNH have worked collaboratively with a numbers of partner organisations in the design and implementation of the current Sea Eagle Management Scheme. We recognise the challenging nature of this work against the backdrop of limited availability of public funds and a growing sea eagle population.

The recently completed survey of NFU Scotland members regarding their views on sea eagles has sharpened our shared desire to address issues raised. We recognise that some farmers and crofters are concerned over the growing sea eagle population, but that many members of the public enjoy seeing the birds for the wild spectacle they afford. We want to work together to find ways of minimising any adverse impacts and making the most of the wider gains from sea eagles now established in Scotland.

To that end, we are committing to the following:

*SNH recognises that sea eagle predation on live lambs occurs. This was noted by a previous study on Mull. This and another study found no evidence of widespread significant predation on live lambs, and concluded that most lambs found in eagle nests were taken as carrion. However, examination of some nests has frequently revealed remains of dead lambs, and SNH accepts that some of these would have been taken when live. Given the growth of the sea eagle population, we need to work together to foster a sustainable co-existence with the birds.*

*NFU Scotland recognises the wide importance of sea eagles as part of Scotland's biodiversity, and is committed to working with SNH and other stakeholders in finding ways of reducing any impacts of sea eagles on farming and crofting interests.*

*Together, we are committed to developing the right conditions for the sustainable co-existence between sea eagles and sheep farming in ways which benefit the biodiversity, economic and social interests of Scotland. We will take this work forward through the Sea Eagle Scheme Steering Panel and proposed Local Stakeholder Groups.*

### **Actions**

In developing our collaborative approach to managing sea eagles we are committing to:

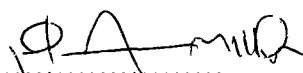
- a) Having a new Sea Eagle Management Scheme in place by Spring 2015 [subject to approvals from SG and SNH Management Team/Board];
- b) Mobilising experienced and trusted rapid response call-off contractors to immediately respond to farmers' and crofters' concerns about any sea eagle impacts on their flocks. They will collect information from farmers and crofters


about their first hand experiences of sea eagles and the interaction with their livestock. This information will inform the Sea Eagle Scheme Steering Panel about the nature and extent of sea eagle impacts and to respond quickly to issues before they become a serious problem;

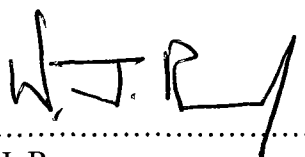
- c) Having the Sea Eagle Scheme Steering Panel actively collate, analyse and act on feedback during spring regarding sea eagle impacts and responses to management measures. This Panel will develop proposals on payments for sheep, sea eagle and habitat management measures;
- d) By November 2014 setting up Local Stakeholder Groups covering the main sea eagle areas. We initially envisage groups covering: Mull/North Argyll/Lochaber; Skye/Lochalsh, and Gairloch/Wester Ross. Other groups could be formed as and where clusters of sea eagle issues arise. These groups would be informed by, and steer, the call-off contractors work with individual farmers or crofters, working through the Sea Eagle Scheme Steering Panel. These groups will help find local solutions and encourage sharing of these with others. Representatives of these groups would be invited to sit on the Panel, currently comprising NFU Scotland, SNH, SCF, RSPB and Scottish Government.
- e) Engaging with stakeholders to monitor and understand how the sea eagle population becomes established in Scotland, and to plan the management of the birds, their habitat, any conflicts with other species (e.g. golden eagles), and food supplies into the future;
- f) Ensuring that our respective websites are updated to reflect this work and joint approach;
- g) By April 2016 publish a Sea Eagle Population Viability Analysis (PVA) for Scotland; and
- h) By September 2016 publish a Sea Eagle Action Plan for Scotland, implemented nationally and locally by March 2017.

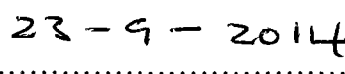
Signed:

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Nigel Miller  
President  
NFU Scotland

  
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W.J. Ross  
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Scottish Natural Heritage

  
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