

From: [REDACTED]
To: [LICENSING](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Guga hunting license proposal
Date: 11 June 2025 22:17:46
Attachments: [Guga Hunt proposal for licence 2025.docx](#)

Caution! This message was sent from outside NatureScot.

Hi there

Hope you are well.

Please find attached the proposal for licensing the 2025 Guga hunting trip to Sulasgeir.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

Licence Request for Guga Hunt on Sulasgeir – 2025 Season

Dear NatureScot Licensing Team,

I am writing to formally request a licence under the relevant provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to undertake the traditional harvest of young gannets (*Morus bassanus*) from the island of Sulasgeir, as has been practiced for centuries in our community in Ness, Isle of Lewis.

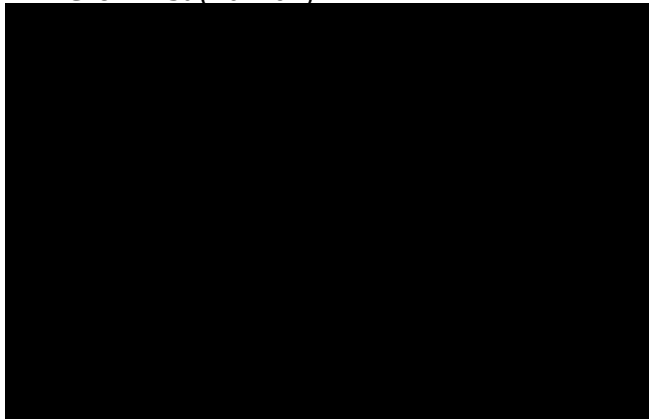
Proposal Details:

- **Dates of Expedition:** We propose to travel to Sulasgeir, [REDACTED] weather depending, aiming to return on the same day. It would be our intention to inform NatureScot, and any other relevant authorities, prior to both the outward and return journeys respectively and at the earliest opportunity.

- **Vessel:** The crew will travel aboard [REDACTED], a suitably equipped and seaworthy boat for this journey.

- **Number of Birds Sought:** We are seeking a licence to harvest up to 500 young gannets (guga), in line with current annual allowances and sustainable take limits.

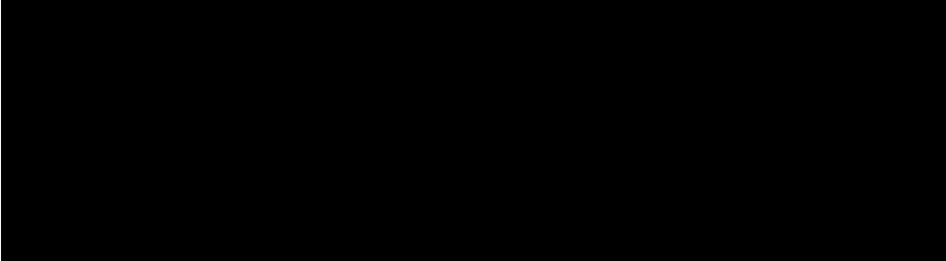
- **Crew List (10 men):**



As you are aware, the annual expedition to Sulasgeir is of immense cultural and historical importance to the community of Ness, with strict traditions and practices that have been passed down through generations. The hunt is carried out with due care for sustainability, and with a deep respect for the natural environment and the species involved.

We would be grateful if you could process this application at your earliest convenience. Please let us know if you require any additional documentation or information to support the application.

Kind regards,



On behalf of the Sulasgeir Hunting Crew

From: LICENSING
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Sula Sgeir – Gannets – Human Consumption – Licence 295851 – Licence Issued – 15 July 2025
Date: 15 July 2025 09:56:00
Attachments: [Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 295851 - Statement of Reasons.pdf](#)
[Licence 295851.pdf](#)



Licence Number

295851

Dear [REDACTED],

Please find attached your licence to save or print out as required. Please read the licence carefully and ensure that you fully understand its conditions.

It is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure that works are not being conducted out-with the dates as stated on this licence.

The licence term starts on [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED], in recognition of your proposed dates. However, the NatureScot Marine Ornithology Team have expressed a preference for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED], weather window permitting, and at your discretion, to minimise disturbance to other breeding bird species on the island.

In Scotland, if you find:

- 1) a single dead bird of prey, swan, goose, duck or gull
- 2) or five or more dead wild birds of any other species at the same time,

you should report at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/report-dead-wild-birds>

Alternatively, you can phone the GB phone helpline: 03459 33 55 77.

How does my licence work?

Your licence allows you to carry out an action in relation to a protected species that would otherwise be against the law. To ensure that you are operating legally you must comply with all conditions on the licence. It is important you read through your licence entirely and are content you can follow all conditions contained within.

What else am I required to do?


You must contact the NatureScot Stornoway Office with the date when the group are to depart for Sula Sgeir for the guga hunt, and the date when the boat will arrive back from Sula Sgeir, to allow a count of the numbers of gannets collected. Birds must not be removed from the boat until the count has been made.

It is a legal requirement that you provide a return detailing what work was carried out under your licence. Full details of what this return should include can be found on the relevant condition of your licence. Even if no action was taken under the licence you must report this back to let us know.

Without the correct return information being submitted we are unable to issue further licences. Submitting return information in a timely manner ensures that future requests for licences can be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

Best wishes,



NatureScot Licensing Team
E-mail: licensing@nature.scot
Tel: 01463 



NatureScot
NàdarAlba

Scotland's Nature Agency
Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

Licence 295851

Statement of Reasons for Granting a Licence – Guga Harvest, Sula Sgeir

A licence to take or kill any wild bird; for the purpose of providing food for human consumption in relation to a gannet on the island of Sula Sgeir; can only be issued if three licensing tests are met.

Test 1 - Licensable Purpose

This licence application was received under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 16 (2) (a) for the purpose of providing food for human consumption in relation to a gannet on the island of Sula Sgeir.

The proposal is to take up to 500 gannet chicks (guga) to eat, therefore this is the appropriate purpose in this case and test 1 is passed.

Test 1 is passed

Test 2 – No Other Satisfactory Solution

In assessing whether Test 2 is met, we have considered if there is a way of achieving the licensing purpose through measures which do not require a licence.

Do nothing – this is not acceptable to the applicant as the collection of the chicks provides them with a valuable food source and a traditional way of life which is culturally important to the community. Test 2 is passed; there is no satisfactory alternative.

Test 2 is passed.

Test 3 – Actions will not be detrimental to Favourable Conservation Status

The proposal will result in up to 500 gannet chicks being taken and killed.

The taking of 500 gannet chicks is unlikely to have a detrimental impact on the conservation of this species. A population viability analysis report has been run by NatureScot, which suggests that a harvest level of 500 guga annually would allow the breeding population to remain stable over a 25-year period.

Test 3 is passed.

It is considered that this application meets all three species licensing tests, and a licence has therefore been approved for the taking and killing of up to 500 gannet chicks for the purpose of providing food for human consumption in relation to a gannet on the island of Sula Sgeir.

Conditions - continued	
2	colony on the island of Sula Sgeir.
3	This licence permits the taking and killing of young gannets only. Birds taken must be killed immediately and in a humane manner. Advice may be obtained from the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
4	Due care and attention must be taken to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or damage to the gannet colony.
5	Pre-departure biosecurity checks should be made to minimise the risk of invasive predators being introduced within cargo.
6	The footprint of the proposed activities should be kept to a minimum, avoiding fulmar and storm petrel breeding sites where possible.
7	The use of external lighting should be minimised and red light used for torches at night.
8	All equipment and waste should be removed from Sula Sgeir at the end of the licensed activities.
9	Equipment required during the visit should be stored in areas of bare rock where possible, avoiding vegetated areas.
10	If sick or dead birds of any species are observed during the harvest (where entanglement is not the cause of death) this should be reported to NatureScot immediately.
11	The licence holder, agents or assistants must not sell, or offer for sale, or expose for sale, any dead gannet outwith Lewis.
12	The licence holder must inform the Stornoway NatureScot office on tel: [REDACTED] [REDACTED] of the date when the group are to depart for Sula Sgeir for the guga hunt, and the date when the boat will arrive back from Sula Sgeir, to allow a count of the numbers of gannets collected.
13	The gannets must not be taken from the boat until a count of them has been made by a member of staff of NatureScot, the Scottish Government, or any other person authorised by NatureScot.
14	The licence holder may appoint agents or assistants to operate under the terms of this licence.
15	No later than one month after the date on which this licence expires or otherwise comes to an end, the licence holder must provide NatureScot Licensing Team with a licence return. The return must include details of: The number of birds killed and the method of taking and killing. Please send this information by email (including your licence number in the subject line of the email) to: licensing@nature.scot .

This licence is granted subject to compliance with the terms and conditions specified.

Authorised on behalf of NatureScot by: on 13 Jun 2025

Notes

Licence holders or any other persons covered by this licence should note the following;

1	This licence is granted subject to compliance with the conditions as specified. Anything done otherwise than in accordance with the terms of the licence may constitute an offence. It is the responsibility of the licence holder, agents and assistants working under this licence to report to NatureScot any breaches of the licence conditions that they become aware of as soon as is reasonably possible.
2	Agents may work independently of the licence holder. It is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure that agents have the appropriate training and experience and that they understand the terms and conditions of this licence.
3	Assistants must work under the personal supervision of the licence holder or agents. The number of assistants that can be appropriately supervised is at the discretion of the licence holder or agent.
4	Nothing in this licence shall confer any right of entry on to land or property.
5	This licence may be modified or revoked at any time by NatureScot.
6	This licence only permits the activities specified in the project details of this licence. Licensed offences that cover these activities are listed in Annex I: Permitted activities. It does not permit any other actions that would otherwise be illegal.
7	It is the responsibility of the licence holder to ensure that all contact details are up to date. Not advising NatureScot of changes to licence holder contact details could result in the licence being revoked.

This licence is granted subject to compliance with the terms and conditions specified.

Authorised on behalf of NatureScot by: on 13 Jun 2025

Annex 1: Permitted activities

Action	Purpose	Species	Location	Grid Reference	Method
Kill	Food for human consumption	Gannet	Sula Sgeir, Grid Reference: HW620305	HW620305	N/A



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