

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.

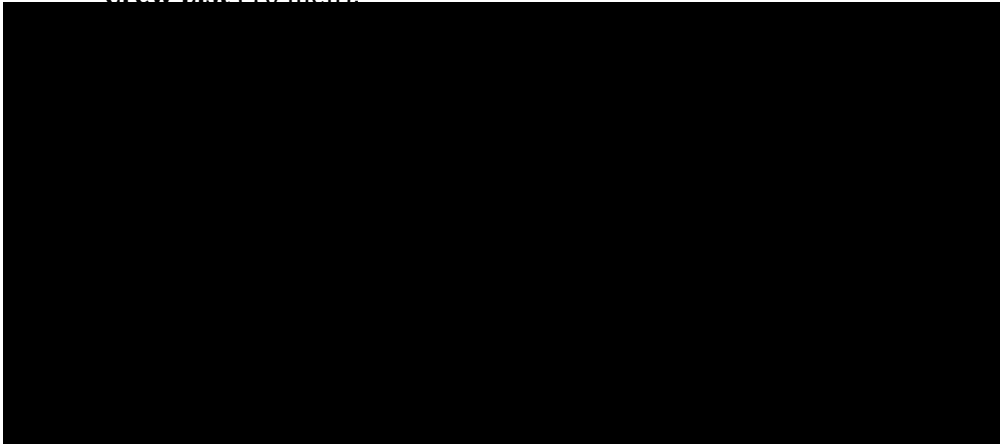
Proposal Details:

- **Dates of Expedition:** We propose to travel to Sulasgeir, on [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 the vessel [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.

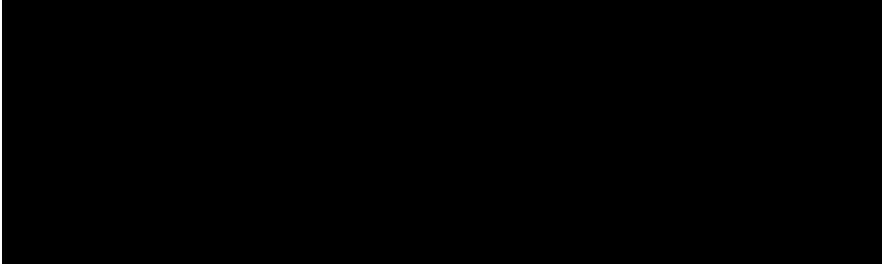
- **Crew List (10 men):**



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: [REDACTED]
To: [LICENSING](#); [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] [MEDIA](#)
Subject: RE: Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 to 295851 - Renewal Request - 11 June 2025 (A5211349)
Date: 13 June 2025 14:26:19

Dear Licensing/West Ops,

Thanks for passing this on – and we note that the Men of Ness have requested up to 500 chicks to be harvested this coming [REDACTED] [REDACTED] licensing lead for this case and has already provided pre-advice to Ops staff, so I will leave it with [REDACTED] and the West Ops lead for this case [REDACTED] to liaise as to whether any further MO advice is required on this case.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

NatureScot [REDACTED] | Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW |

[REDACTED]

nature.scot | [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot) | Scotland's Nature Agency | Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

From: LICENSING

Sent: 13 June 2025 12:32

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]; MEDIA

Subject: Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 to 295851 - Renewal Request - 11 June 2025 (A5211349)

Dear [REDACTED]

We have received the attached licence renewal request from [REDACTED] in relation to the Guga Hunt at Sula sgeir, please provide any comments you may have in due course to allow us to process this request prior to the requested date of [REDACTED]. You will find previous comments and background by search for the previous licence number: 192787. Previous licence numbers are listed below for reference:

192787 – 2021

168655 – 2020

146207 – 2019

124298 – 2018

103303 – 2017

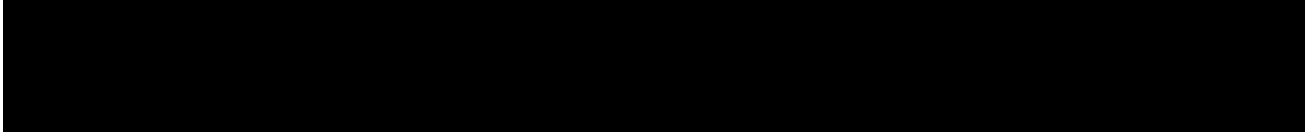
82114 – 2016

58896 – 2015

35285 – 2014

We have not receive an application since 2021.

Regards



Open in Objective ECM Navigator

Double click on the attachment

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:
Date: 19 June 2025 10:48:58

[REDACTED]

The pre app advice provided was purely focused on assessing the bag limit. Per the usual process, I will respond to the advice request I received on 13th June with advice looking at the overall application which may include additional advice.

Best wishes,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Sent: 19 June 2025 10:00
To: [REDACTED] nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED] – if your advice now is pretty much the same as your pre-app advice which was that the bag limit of 500 would not adversely impact the population, I suggest in the interests of everyone time that we have sufficient marine ornithology advice and can just issue the licence.

From: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 16:34
To: [REDACTED] nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Sounds great, thank you. I will make sure to wait on your comments before issuing and ensure they are saved down against the licence alongside this chain.

Best wishes,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)
Sent: 18 June 2025 16:26
To: [REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot); [REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)
Cc: [REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I think you're still waiting on my marine ornithology advice prior to issuing the licence. I'll aim to get something back to you by Friday – likely to reflect my pre-application comments but I will put something in writing to confirm that.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)
Sent: 18 June 2025 16:25
To: [REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)
Cc: [REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot); [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for info)

Thanks for this, that's great. I will therefore get it issued asap with a 500 bird bag limit.

I note that the 2021 licence was issued without a statement of reasons - is this standard procedure? Happy to take this up with assigned D grade tomorrow if you are unsure.

[Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - Licence Issued - 12 August 2021 \(A3526793\)](#)

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA
NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatriona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

From: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 16:10
To: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have had several conversations with [REDACTED] in the area who has been involved in all the discussions and is supportive of issuing a licence for a bag limit of 500 birds.

He is copied in as he has already provided advice which he can probably forward to you, or at least confirm that he is happy for us to issue.

From: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 15:52
To: [REDACTED] nature.scot>
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have just picked this chain up and I note that you suggest we have received all we need from Marine Ornithology.

The licence is assigned to me, but the most recent item that I could find saved down against the licence in erdms was the attached email, which suggests that we are still waiting on comments from [REDACTED].

For this reason, I was holding off issuing until we had received all relevant information. Is there something that I have missed or has not been saved down?

Please advise.

All best,

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA

NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatriona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 14:00

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Okay thanks for coming back on that [REDACTED] we'll hold off until we've got the green light from you.

We may need a media line to explain our decision to grant or deny a licence, but we can agree this once you've advised us of the outcome.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:46

To: MEDIA ; LICENSING

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Yes we have received it and assessed it. We will be going back to the applicant imminently.

Please can you stall the journalist for a little while longer as it would be inappropriate for him to know our decision before the applicant.

Licensing – as discussed at this mornings meeting, we have all the info we need from the ornithologists so this is a straightforward response, please can we look to get it issued as soon as, so we can then let the journalist know

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:13

To: LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>

Subject: FW: Guga Hunt:

Hi Licensing,

Local journalist checking in again on whether we've received a licence application for the Guga hunt. He's also asking if there would be a cut-off date for us to receive one, if they were planning on going ahead this year.

Please could you let us know and we'll get back to him.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>

Sent: 18 June 2025 12:34

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Caution! This message was sent from outside NatureScot.

Good afternoon, I'm back for a third time.

Has there been a license application? If not, what would the cut off date be? Any other information would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks again,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 21 April 2025 12:30

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 21 April 2025 12:15

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

[REDACTED]

I've just heard back from our licensing team and there's no change - we haven't received a licence application.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>

Sent: 21 April 2025 10:11

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

No bother at all, [REDACTED]

Thanks again,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 21 April 2025 10:10

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

[REDACTED]

We'll check for you but please be aware it might be tomorrow until we have an update due to the Easter holiday.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>

Sent: 21 April 2025 09:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Good morning, I am just checking if there has been any change on the below?

Thank you.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 12:26

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

[REDACTED]

We'd only be able to advise on this if/when an application is received.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:59

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

On another note, can you advice if bird flu would be an issue should they apply?

Greatly appreciated again.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Many thanks, [REDACTED]

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:38

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] here in the media team.

Our licensing team has advised that we have not yet received an application for this.

For all media enquiries you can email media@nature.scot.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>

Sent: 01 April 2025 09:18

To: ENQUIRIES <ENQUIRIES@Nature.scot>

Subject: Guga Hunt:

Good afternoon, [REDACTED] the BBC in Stornoway here.

We are led to believe that the community of Ness have applied for a license to restart the Guga hunt on Sulasgeir, which has not taken place for a number of years.

Is this correct and if so, are Nature Scotland willing to allow that? Thanks in advance.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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Tha am post-dealain seo agus fiosrachadh sam bith na chois dìomhair agus airson an neach no buidheann ainmichte a-mhàin. Mas e gun d' fhuair sibh am post-dealain seo le mearachd, cuiribh fios dhan manaidsear-siostaim no neach-sgrìobhaidh.

Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued
Date: 25 June 2025 14:07:00

[REDACTED]

Just to let you know that we will be issuing a licence to the Men of Ness for the Guga Hunt this year.

It is the first time they have applied since 2021 in light of HPAI.

We have assessed the licence and will agree a restricted bag limit of 500 birds (previous licences were for 1500 or 2000 birds) which following analysis of survey data and population viability analysis we have concluded will allow the gannet population to continue to recover and enable a sustainable future take.

We are looking to get the licence issued in the next day or so, so please let me know if there are any issues.

There is media interest, and we have lines ready to go.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
To: [MEDIA](#); [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt;
Date: 25 June 2025 15:00:09

Hi all,

Thanks [REDACTED] for the chat earlier. Here is a link to marine ornithology advice for the 2025 guga harvest application:

[Sula Sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 295851 - Marine Ornithology advice - 25 June 2025 \(A5231095\) - View](#). Happy to chat further if there are any queries from this.

I noticed that when the 2021 marine ornithology advice was provided, the question was asked about whether an HRA has been completed for the harvest – I haven't been able to find one on erdms – [REDACTED] do you know whether there is one in place?

[REDACTED] you'll note I've suggested a mitigation relating to invasive predator biosecurity. There is guidance available on the [Biosecurity for Scotland](#) (B4S) website but I'd also be very happy to make an intro between the Men of Ness and the B4S project team who could provide more concise advice about what's required. I know the B4S project have reached out to the Men of Ness via NatureScot previously and would be keen to discuss pre-departure checks and helping to set up some basic surveillance on board the boat. There are also a couple of biosecurity surveillance boxes on Sula Sgeir and it would be brilliant if the Men of Ness were keen to make a quick check of them / swap over the wax blocks.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

NatureScot | Meadowbank House | 6th Floor South | 153 London Road | Edinburgh | EH8 7AU | [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[nature.scot](#) – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](#)

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 12:06

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>;

West <West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Yes we have a media enquiry about it with a deadline of COP today so we need to respond to that today.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:57
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks [REDACTED] that sounds great.

To confirm, Media will be happy from a preparedness point if the licence is issued today?

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:31
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Thanks for this. We're in the process of finalising media lines with [REDACTED] and area/marine team colleagues. I will send these to SG comms once finalised for their info.

Liaison with SG policy teams is done separately so hopefully [REDACTED] can advise on that.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:03
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>;
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>;
West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Hope all well.

[REDACTED] has asked me to issue this by close of play today – is there any critical advice that you have before it is issued?

@MEDIA – to confirm, do you have the necessary lines for this, or do you need more time/info before it is issued?

[REDACTED] – I noted that you asked in the team meeting that Scottish Government were forewarned, but was unsure what the proper channels were to contact the appropriate team, would you please be able to advise?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA
NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatriona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

nature.scot – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 19 June 2025 10:49
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

The pre app advice provided was purely focused on assessing the bag limit. Per the usual process, I will respond to the advice request I received on 13th June with advice looking at the overall application which may include additional advice.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Sent: 19 June 2025 10:00

To: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>; [Redacted]
<[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Cc: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[Redacted] if your advice now is pretty much the same as your pre-app advice which was that the bag limit of 500 would not adversely impact the population, I suggest in the interests of everyone time that we have sufficient marine ornithology advice and can just issue the licence.

[Redacted]

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:34

To: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>; [Redacted]
<[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Cc: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[Redacted]

Sounds great, thank you. I will make sure to wait on your comments before issuing and ensure they are saved down against the licence alongside this chain.

Best wishes,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA

NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

nature.scot – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](https://twitter.com/nature_scot)

From: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:26

To: [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>; [Redacted] <[Redacted]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I think you're still waiting on my marine ornithology advice prior to issuing the licence. I'll aim to get something back to you by Friday – likely to reflect my pre-application comments but I will put something in writing to confirm that.

Best wishes,

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:25

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]

<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for info)

Thanks for this, that's great. I will therefore get it issued asap with a 500 bird bag limit.

I note that the 2021 licence was issued without a statement of reasons - is this standard procedure? Happy to take this up with assigned D grade tomorrow if you are unsure.

[Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - Licence Issued - 12 August 2021 \(A3526793\)](#)

Thanks,

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

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[nature.scot](#) – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](#)

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:10

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have had several conversations with [REDACTED] in the area who has been involved in all the discussions and is supportive of issuing a licence for a bag limit of 500 birds.

He is copied in as he has already provided advice which he can probably forward to you, or at least confirm that he is happy for us to issue.

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 15:52

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have just picked this chain up and I note that you suggest we have received all we need from Marine Ornithology.

The licence is assigned to me, but the most recent item that I could find saved down against the licence in erdms was the attached email, which suggests that we are still waiting on comments from [REDACTED] West Ops.

For this reason, I was holding off issuing until we had received all relevant information. Is there something that I have missed or has not been saved down?

Please advise.

All best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA

NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

[nature.scot](#) – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](#)

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 14:00

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; LICENSING

<LICENSING@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Okay thanks for coming back on that [REDACTED] we'll hold off until we've got the green light from you.

We may need a media line to explain our decision to grant or deny a licence, but we can agree this once you've advised us of the outcome.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:46

To: MEDIA ; LICENSING

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:
[REDACTED]

Yes we have received it and assessed it. We will be going back to the applicant imminently. Please can you stall the journalist for a little while longer as it would be inappropriate for him to know our decision before the applicant.

Licensing – as discussed at this mornings meeting, we have all the info we need from the ornithologists so this is a straightforward response, please can we look to get it issued as soon as, so we can then let the journalist know

Thanks
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:13

To: LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: FW: Guga Hunt:

Hi Licensing,

Local journalist checking in again on whether we've received a licence application for the Guga hunt. He's also asking if there would be a cut-off date for us to receive one, if they were planning on going ahead this year.

Please could you let us know and we'll get back to him.

Many thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 18 June 2025 12:34

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Caution! This message was sent from outside NatureScot.

Good afternoon, I'm back for a third time.

Has there been a license application? If not, what would the cut off date be? Any other information would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks again,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 April 2025 12:30
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thank you.
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 21 April 2025 12:15
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]
I've just heard back from our licensing team and there's no change - we haven't received a licence application.

Many thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>

Sent: 21 April 2025 10:11
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

No bother at all, [REDACTED]

Thanks again,
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 21 April 2025 10:10
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

[REDACTED]
We'll check for you but please be aware it might be tomorrow until we have an update due to the Easter holiday.

Many thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>

Sent: 21 April 2025 09:58
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Good morning, I am just checking if there has been any change on the below?

Thank you.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 12:26

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

We'd only be able to advise on this if/when an application is received.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:59

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

On another note, can you advice if bird flu would be an issue should they apply?

Greatly appreciated again.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Many thanks, [REDACTED]

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:38

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] here in the media team.

Our licensing team has advised that we have not yet received an application for this.

For all media enquiries you can email media@nature.scot.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 09:18

To: ENQUIRIES <ENQUIRIES@Nature.scot>

Subject: Guga Hunt:

Good afternoon, [REDACTED] from the BBC in Stornoway here.

We are led to believe that the community of Ness have applied for a license to restart the Guga hunt on Sulasgeir, which has not taken place for a number of years.

Is this correct and if so, are Nature Scotland willing to allow that? Thanks in advance.

Kind regards,



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Tha am post-dealain seo agus fiosrachadh sam bith na chois dìomhair agus airson an neach no buidheann ainmichte a-mhàin. Mas e gun d' fhuair sibh am post-dealain seo le mearachd, cuiribh fios dhan manaidsear-siostaim no neach-sgrìobhaidh.

Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] MEDIA; [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] West; Robbie Kernahan; [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:
Date: 25 June 2025 16:39:19

[REDACTED] Please **HOLD** on this until we have managed internal comms.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]
NatureScot | Great Glen House | Inverness | IV3 8NW | [REDACTED]
nature.scot | @nature_scot | Scotland's Nature Agency | Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 16:07
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>;
Robbie Kernahan <Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks [REDACTED] including the MO advice in the licence conditions.

Might it be possible for the licence to begin on the earliest date as stated in the licence application [REDACTED] as the disturbance risk would be significantly higher from [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

And [REDACTED] am I right in thinking that you've been the main point of contact for general discussions with the Men of Ness? If so then would you be best placed to discuss the other main point included in the MO advice ([Sula Sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 295851 - Marine Ornithology advice - 25 June 2025 \(A5231095\) - View](#)):

- *“Marine ornithology advice is for the work to be completed as late in the season as possible, [REDACTED]”*

I understand that this work is highly dependent on available weather windows and that it's therefore perhaps not appropriate for the licence to be restricted to [REDACTED] but it would be great if that point could be discussed with the Men of Ness so that if there is a flexible weather window they could err towards going later.

Best wishes,
[REDACTED]

NatureScot | Meadowbank House | 6th Floor South | 153 London Road | Edinburgh | EH8 7AU | [REDACTED]

NàdarAlba | Taigh Bruach an Àilein | 6mh Làr a Deas | 153 Rathad Lunnainn | Dùn Èideann | EH8 7AU

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From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 15:27

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>; Robbie Kernahan <Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks all for input into this.

[REDACTED] – I have attached a draft of the licence for consideration above, with specific MO conditions now added based on [REDACTED] advice. Are you happy for this to now be issued, or would you like me to wait on email confirmation receipt from SG? Happy to wait until tomorrow am if necessary.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 15:03

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>; Robbie Kernahan <Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks for the update [REDACTED] Yes if we are not in a position to confirm today suggest we respond with:

We can confirm that we have received a licence application. We are currently assessing

this and will update you as soon as we can.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 15:01
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>; Robbie Kernahan <Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED] can you make sure Robbie is sighted also please as he will advise on any need to inform chair / board.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]
NatureScot | Great Glen House | Inverness | IV3 8NW | [REDACTED]
nature.scot | @nature_scot | Scotland's Nature Agency | Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 14:58
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

I have advised SG that we will be issuing the licence, but I will need to wait to hear back from them.

If we need to respond to the journalist by COP today, can we just say we are still assessing it and will advise them further in due course?

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 12:06
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]

<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Yes we have a media enquiry about it with a deadline of COP today so we need to respond to that today.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 11:57

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks [REDACTED] that sounds great.

To confirm, Media will be happy from a preparedness point if the licence is issued today?

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 11:31

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Thanks for this. We're in the process of finalising media lines with [REDACTED] and area/marine team colleagues. I will send these to SG comms once finalised for their info.

Liaison with SG policy teams is done separately so hopefully [REDACTED] can advise on

that.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:03
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>;
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>;
West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Hope all well.

[REDACTED] has asked me to issue this by close of play today – is there any critical advice that you have before it is issued?

[@MEDIA](#) – to confirm, do you have the necessary lines for this, or do you need more time/info before it is issued?

[REDACTED] – I noted that you asked in the team meeting that Scottish Government were forewarned, but was unsure what the proper channels were to contact the appropriate team, would you please be able to advise?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatriona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

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From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 19 June 2025 10:49
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

The pre app advice provided was purely focused on assessing the bag limit. Per the usual process, I will respond to the advice request I received on 13th June with advice looking at the overall application which may include additional advice.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 19 June 2025 10:00

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED] – if your advice now is pretty much the same as your pre-app advice which was that the bag limit of 500 would not adversely impact the population, I suggest in the interests of everyone time that we have sufficient marine ornithology advice and can just issue the licence.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:34

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Sounds great, thank you. I will make sure to wait on your comments before issuing and ensure they are saved down against the licence alongside this chain.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA
NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

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From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:26

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I think you're still waiting on my marine ornithology advice prior to issuing the licence. I'll aim to get something back to you by Friday – likely to reflect my pre-application comments but I will put something in writing to confirm that.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:25

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] for info)

Thanks for this, that's great. I will therefore get it issued asap with a 500 bird bag limit.

I note that the 2021 licence was issued without a statement of reasons - is this standard procedure? Happy to take this up with assigned D grade tomorrow if you are unsure.

[Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - Licence Issued - 12 August 2021 \(A3526793\)](#)

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA
NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

[nature.scot](#) – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](#)

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:10

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have had several conversations with [REDACTED] in the area who has been involved in all the discussions and is supportive of issuing a licence for a bag limit of 500 birds.

He is copied in as he has already provided advice which he can probably forward to you, or at least confirm that he is happy for us to issue.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 15:52
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have just picked this chain up and I note that you suggest we have received all we need from Marine Ornithology.

The licence is assigned to me, but the most recent item that I could find saved down against the licence in erdms was the attached email, which suggests that we are still waiting on comments from [REDACTED] West Ops.

For this reason, I was holding off issuing until we had received all relevant information. Is there something that I have missed or has not been saved down?

Please advise.

All best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA

NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

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From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 14:00
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Okay thanks for coming back on that [REDACTED] we'll hold off until we've got the green light from you.

We may need a media line to explain our decision to grant or deny a licence, but we can agree this once you've advised us of the outcome.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 18 June 2025 13:46
To: MEDIA ; LICENSING
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:
[REDACTED]

Yes we have received it and assessed it. We will be going back to the applicant imminently. Please can you stall the journalist for a little while longer as it would be inappropriate for him to know our decision before the applicant.

Licensing – as discussed at this mornings meeting, we have all the info we need from the ornithologists so this is a straightforward response, please can we look to get it issued as soon as, so we can then let the journalist know

Thanks
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 13:13
To: LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: FW: Guga Hunt:

Hi Licensing,

Local journalist checking in again on whether we've received a licence application for the Guga hunt. He's also asking if there would be a cut-off date for us to receive one, if they were planning on going ahead this year.

Please could you let us know and we'll get back to him.

Many thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>
Sent: 18 June 2025 12:34
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Caution! This message was sent from outside NatureScot.

Good afternoon, I'm back for a third time.

Has there been a license application? If not, what would the cut off date be? Any other information would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks again,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 April 2025 12:30

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thank you.

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 21 April 2025 12:15

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

I've just heard back from our licensing team and there's no change - we haven't received a licence application.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 21 April 2025 10:11

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

No bother at all, [REDACTED]

Thanks again,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 21 April 2025 10:10

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

[REDACTED]

We'll check for you but please be aware it might be tomorrow until we have an update due to the Easter holiday.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 21 April 2025 09:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Good morning, I am just checking if there has been any change on the below?

Thank you.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 12:26

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

We'd only be able to advise on this if/when an application is received.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:59

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

On another note, can you advice if bird flu would be an issue should they apply?

Greatly appreciated again.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Many thanks, [REDACTED]

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:38

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] here in the media team.

Our licensing team has advised that we have not yet received an application for this.

For all media enquiries you can email media@nature.scot.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 09:18

To: ENQUIRIES <ENQUIRIES@Nature.scot>

Subject: Guga Hunt:

Good afternoon, [REDACTED] from the BBC in Stornoway here.

We are led to believe that the community of Ness have applied for a license to restart the Guga hunt on Sulasgeir, which has not taken place for a number of years.

Is this correct and if so, are Nature Scotland willing to allow that? Thanks in advance.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

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Tha am post-dealain seo agus fiosrachadh sam bith na chois dìomhair agus airson an neach no buidheann ainmichte a-mhàin. Mas e gun d' fhuair sibh am post-dealain seo le mearachd, cuiribh fios dhan manaidshear-siostaim no neach-sgrìobhaidh.

Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] [MEDIA](#); [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] [West](#); [Robbie Kernahan](#)
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:
Date: 25 June 2025 17:12:44

[REDACTED]

Please can we wait for confirmation from SG

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 15:27
To: [MEDIA](#) <[MEDIA@nature.scot](#)>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <[West@nature.scot](#)>; Robbie Kernahan <[Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot](#)>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks all for input into this.

[REDACTED] – I have attached a draft of the licence for consideration above, with specific MO conditions now added based on [REDACTED] advice. Are you happy for this to now be issued, or would you like me to wait on email confirmation receipt from SG? Happy to wait until tomorrow am if necessary.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [MEDIA](#) <[MEDIA@nature.scot](#)>
Sent: 25 June 2025 15:03
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [MEDIA](#) <[MEDIA@nature.scot](#)>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <[West@nature.scot](#)>; Robbie Kernahan <[Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot](#)>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks for the update [REDACTED] Yes if we are not in a position to confirm today suggest we respond with:

We can confirm that we have received a licence application. We are currently assessing this and will update you as soon as we can.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 15:01

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>; Robbie Kernahan
<Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED] can you make sure Robbie is sighted also please as he will advise on any need to inform chair / board.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

NatureScot | Great Glen House | Inverness | IV3 8NW | [REDACTED]
nature.scot | @nature_scot | Scotland's Nature Agency | Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 14:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

I have advised SG that we will be issuing the licence, but I will need to wait to hear back from them.

If we need to respond to the journalist by COP today, can we just say we are still assessing it and will advise them further in due course?

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 12:06

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West

<West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

██████████

Yes we have a media enquiry about it with a deadline of COP today so we need to respond to that today.

Many thanks

██████████

From: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:57
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>
Cc: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks ██████████ that sounds great.

To confirm, Media will be happy from a preparedness point if the licence is issued today?

Thanks,

██████████

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:31
To: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>
Cc: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

██████████

Thanks for this. We're in the process of finalising media lines with ██████████ and area/marine team colleagues. I will send these to SG comms once finalised for their info.

Liaison with SG policy teams is done separately so hopefully ██████████ can advise on that.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:03
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>;
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>;
West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Hope all well.

[REDACTED] has asked me to issue this by close of play today – is there any critical advice that you have before it is issued?

@MEDIA – to confirm, do you have the necessary lines for this, or do you need more time/info before it is issued?

[REDACTED] – I noted that you asked in the team meeting that Scottish Government were forewarned, but was unsure what the proper channels were to contact the appropriate team, would you please be able to advise?

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA
NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatriona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

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From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 19 June 2025 10:49
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

The pre app advice provided was purely focused on assessing the bag limit. Per the usual process, I will respond to the advice request I received on 13th June with advice looking at the overall application which may include additional advice.

Best wishes,

██████████

From: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Sent: 19 June 2025 10:00

To: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████
<██████████@nature.scot>

Cc: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

██████████ – if your advice now is pretty much the same as your pre-app advice which was that the bag limit of 500 would not adversely impact the population, I suggest in the interests of everyone time that we have sufficient marine ornithology advice and can just issue the licence.

██████████

From: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:34

To: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████
<██████████@nature.scot>

Cc: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

Hi ██████████

Sounds great, thank you. I will make sure to wait on your comments before issuing and ensure they are saved down against the licence alongside this chain.

Best wishes,

██████████

██████████ ██████████

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NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

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From: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:26

To: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I think you're still waiting on my marine ornithology advice prior to issuing the licence. I'll aim to get something back to you by Friday – likely to reflect my pre-application comments but I will put something in writing to confirm that.

Best wishes,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:25

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]

<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

Hi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] for info)

Thanks for this, that's great. I will therefore get it issued asap with a 500 bird bag limit.

I note that the 2021 licence was issued without a statement of reasons - is this standard procedure? Happy to take this up with assigned D grade tomorrow if you are unsure.

[Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - Licence Issued - 12 August 2021 \(A3526793\)](#)

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA
NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

[nature.scot](#) – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](#)

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:10

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have had several conversations with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the area who has been involved in all the discussions and is supportive of issuing a licence for a bag limit of 500 birds.

He is copied in as he has already provided advice which he can probably forward to you, or at least confirm that he is happy for us to issue.

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 15:52

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

Hi [REDACTED]

I have just picked this chain up and I note that you suggest we have received all we need from Marine Ornithology.

The licence is assigned to me, but the most recent item that I could find saved down against the licence in erdms was the attached email, which suggests that we are still waiting on comments from [REDACTED] West Ops.

For this reason, I was holding off issuing until we had received all relevant information. Is there something that I have missed or has not been saved down?

Please advise.

All best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

NatureScot | County Buildings | St Catherine Street | Cupar | Fife | KY15 4TA

NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

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From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 14:00

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; LICENSING

<LICENSING@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Okay thanks for coming back on that [REDACTED] we'll hold off until we've got the green light from you.

We may need a media line to explain our decision to grant or deny a licence, but we can agree this once you've advised us of the outcome.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:46

To: MEDIA ; LICENSING

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Hi [REDACTED]

Yes we have received it and assessed it. We will be going back to the applicant imminently. Please can you stall the journalist for a little while longer as it would be inappropriate for him to know our decision before the applicant.

Licensing – as discussed at this mornings meeting, we have all the info we need from the ornithologists so this is a straightforward response, please can we look to get it issued as soon as, so we can then let the journalist know

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:13

To: LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: FW: Guga Hunt:

Hi Licensing,

Local journalist checking in again on whether we've received a licence application for the Guga hunt. He's also asking if there would be a cut-off date for us to receive one, if they were planning on going ahead this year.

Please could you let us know and we'll get back to him.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 18 June 2025 12:34

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Caution! This message was sent from outside NatureScot.

Good afternoon, I'm back for a third time.

Has there been a license application? If not, what would the cut off date be? Any other information would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks again,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 21 April 2025 12:30
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thank you.
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 21 April 2025 12:15
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]
I've just heard back from our licensing team and there's no change - we haven't received a licence application.
Many thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>
Sent: 21 April 2025 10:11
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:
No bother at all, [REDACTED]

Thanks again,
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 21 April 2025 10:10
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi Alex
We'll check for you but please be aware it might be tomorrow until we have an update due to the Easter holiday.
Many thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED][bbc.co.uk](mailto:[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk)>
Sent: 21 April 2025 09:58
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Good morning, I am just checking if there has been any change on the below?

Thank you.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 12:26

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

We'd only be able to advise on this if/when an application is received.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:59

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

On another note, can you advise if bird flu would be an issue should they apply?

Greatly appreciated again.

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Many thanks, [REDACTED]

Kind regards,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:38

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] here in the media team.

Our licensing team has advised that we have not yet received an application for this.

For all media enquiries you can email media@nature.scot.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 09:18

To: ENQUIRIES <ENQUIRIES@Nature.scot>

Subject: Guga Hunt:

Good afternoon, [REDACTED] from the BBC in Stornoway here.

We are led to believe that the community of Ness have applied for a license to restart the Guga hunt on Sulasgeir, which has not taken place for a number of years.

Is this correct and if so, are Nature Scotland willing to allow that? Thanks in advance.

Kind regards,



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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Tha am post-dealain seo agus fiosrachadh sam bith na chois dìomhair agus airson an neach no buidheann ainmichte a-mhàin. Mas e gun d' fhuair sibh am post-dealain seo le mearachd, cuiribh fios dhan manaidsear-siostaim no neach-sgrìobhaidh.

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From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] [MEDIA](#); [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED] [West](#); [Robbie Kernahan](#); [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:
Date: 25 June 2025 16:07:25

Thanks [REDACTED] for including the MO advice in the licence conditions.

Might it be possible for the licence to begin on the earliest date as stated in the licence application [REDACTED] as the disturbance risk would be significantly higher from [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

And [REDACTED], am I right in thinking that you've been the main point of contact for general discussions with the Men of Ness? If so then would you be best placed to discuss the other main point included in the MO advice ([Sula Sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 295851 - Marine Ornithology advice - 25 June 2025 \(A5231095\) - View](#)):

- *“Marine ornithology advice is for the work to be completed as late in the season as possible, [REDACTED]”*

I understand that this work is highly dependent on available weather windows and that it's therefore perhaps not appropriate for the licence to be restricted to the [REDACTED] date, but it would be great if that point could be discussed with the Men of Ness so that if there is a flexible weather window they could err towards going later.

Best wishes,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

NàdarAlba | Taigh Bruach an Àilein | 6mh Làr a Deas | 153 Rathad Lunnainn | Dùn Èideann | EH8 7AU
[REDACTED]

[nature.scot](#) – Scotland's Nature Agency – Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba - [@nature_scot](#)

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 15:27
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>; Robbie Kernahan <Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks all for input into this.

■■■■■ – I have attached a draft of the licence for consideration above, with specific MO conditions now added based on ■■■■■ advice. Are you happy for this to now be issued, or would you like me to wait on email confirmation receipt from SG? Happy to wait until tomorrow am if necessary.

Many thanks,

■■■■■

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 15:03

To: ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>

Cc: ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>; Robbie Kernahan <Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks for the update ■■■■■ Yes if we are not in a position to confirm today suggest we respond with:

We can confirm that we have received a licence application. We are currently assessing this and will update you as soon as we can.

Many thanks

■■■■■

From: ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 15:01

To: ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>

Cc: ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; ■■■■■ <■■■■■@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>; Robbie Kernahan <Robbie.Kernahan@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

■■■■■ can you make sure Robbie is sighted also please as he will advise on any need to inform chair / board.

■■■■■

■■■■■ | ■■■■■

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 14:58
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

I have advised SG that we will be issuing the licence, but I will need to wait to hear back from them.

If we need to respond to the journalist by COP today, can we just say we are still assessing it and will advise them further in due course?

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 12:06
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Yes we have a media enquiry about it with a deadline of COP today so we need to respond to that today.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 25 June 2025 11:57
To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; West <West@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thanks [REDACTED] that sounds great.

To confirm, Media will be happy from a preparedness point if the licence is issued today?

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 11:31

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>;
West <West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

Thanks for this. We're in the process of finalising media lines with [REDACTED] and area/marine team colleagues. I will send these to SG comms once finalised for their info.

Liaison with SG policy teams is done separately so hopefully [REDACTED] can advise on that.

Many thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 25 June 2025 11:03

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>;
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>;
West <West@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Hi [REDACTED]

Hope all well.

[REDACTED] has asked me to issue this by close of play today – is there any critical

advice that you have before it is issued?

[@MEDIA](#) – to confirm, do you have the necessary lines for this, or do you need more time/info before it is issued?

██████████ – I noted that you asked in the team meeting that Scottish Government were forewarned, but was unsure what the proper channels were to contact the appropriate team, would you please be able to advise?

Many thanks,

██████████

██████████ ██████████

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From: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Sent: 19 June 2025 10:49

To: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Cc: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

██████████

The pre app advice provided was purely focused on assessing the bag limit. Per the usual process, I will respond to the advice request I received on 13th June with advice looking at the overall application which may include additional advice.

Best wishes,

██████████

From: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Sent: 19 June 2025 10:00

To: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>; ██████████

<██████████@nature.scot>

Cc: ██████████ <██████████@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

██████████ – if your advice now is pretty much the same as your pre-app advice which was that the bag limit of 500 would not adversely impact the population, I suggest in the interests of everyone time that we have sufficient marine ornithology advice and can just issue the licence.

■

From: ■ <■@nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 16:34
To: ■ <■@nature.scot>; ■ <■@nature.scot>
Cc: ■ <■@nature.scot>
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

Hi ■

Sounds great, thank you. I will make sure to wait on your comments before issuing and ensure they are saved down against the licence alongside this chain.

Best wishes,

■

■ | ■
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From: ■ <■@nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 16:26
To: ■ <■@nature.scot>; ■ <■@nature.scot>
Cc: ■ <■@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

■,

I think you’re still waiting on my marine ornithology advice prior to issuing the licence. I’ll aim to get something back to you by Friday – likely to reflect my pre-application comments but I will put something in writing to confirm that.

Best wishes,

■

From: ■ <■@nature.scot>
Sent: 18 June 2025 16:25
To: ■ <■@nature.scot>
Cc: ■ <■@nature.scot>; ■ <■@nature.scot>
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

Hi [REDACTED]

(cc [REDACTED] / [REDACTED] for info)

Thanks for this, that's great. I will therefore get it issued asap with a 500 bird bag limit.

I note that the 2021 licence was issued without a statement of reasons - is this standard procedure? Happy to take this up with assigned D grade tomorrow if you are unsure.

[Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - Licence Issued - 12 August 2021 \(A3526793\)](#)

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]

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From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 16:10

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

[REDACTED]

I have had several conversations with [REDACTED] [REDACTED] in the area who has been involved in all the discussions and is supportive of issuing a licence for a bag limit of 500 birds.

He is copied in as he has already provided advice which he can probably forward to you, or at least confirm that he is happy for us to issue.

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 15:52

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>

Subject: Re: Guga Hunt:

Hi [REDACTED]

I have just picked this chain up and I note that you suggest we have received all we need from Marine Ornithology.

The licence is assigned to me, but the most recent item that I could find saved down against the licence in erdms was the attached email, which suggests that we are still waiting on comments from [REDACTED] West Ops.

For this reason, I was holding off issuing until we had received all relevant information. Is there something that I have missed or has not been saved down?

Please advise.

All best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

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From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 14:00

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Okay thanks for coming back on that [REDACTED] we'll hold off until we've got the green light from you.

We may need a media line to explain our decision to grant or deny a licence, but we can agree this once you've advised us of the outcome.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:46

To: MEDIA ; LICENSING

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Hi [REDACTED]

Yes we have received it and assessed it. We will be going back to the applicant imminently. Please can you stall the journalist for a little while longer as it would be inappropriate for him to know our decision before the applicant.

Licensing – as discussed at this mornings meeting, we have all the info we need from the ornithologists so this is a straightforward response, please can we look to get it issued as

soon as, so we can then let the journalist know

Thanks

■

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 18 June 2025 13:13

To: LICENSING <LICENSING@nature.scot>

Cc: ■ <■@nature.scot>

Subject: FW: Guga Hunt:

Hi Licensing,

Local journalist checking in again on whether we've received a licence application for the Guga hunt. He's also asking if there would be a cut-off date for us to receive one, if they were planning on going ahead this year.

Please could you let us know and we'll get back to him.

Many thanks,

■

From: ■ <■@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 18 June 2025 12:34

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Caution! This message was sent from outside NatureScot.

Good afternoon, I'm back for a third time.

Has there been a license application? If not, what would the cut off date be? Any other information would be greatly appreciated.

Thanks again,

■

From: ■

Sent: 21 April 2025 12:30

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Thank you.

■

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 21 April 2025 12:15

To: ■ <■@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi ■

I've just heard back from our licensing team and there's no change - we haven't received a licence application.

Many thanks

■

From: ■ <■@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 21 April 2025 10:11

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

No bother at all, [REDACTED]

Thanks again,
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 21 April 2025 10:10

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

[REDACTED]
We'll check for you but please be aware it might be tomorrow until we have an update due to the Easter holiday.

Many thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 21 April 2025 09:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Good morning, I am just checking if there has been any change on the below?

Thank you.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 12:26

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

We'd only be able to advise on this if/when an application is received.

Thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:59

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

On another note, can you advice if bird flu would be an issue should they apply?

Greatly appreciated again.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:58

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

Many thanks, [REDACTED]

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 01 April 2025 11:38

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt:

External: Think before clicking

Hi [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] here in the media team.

Our licensing team has advised that we have not yet received an application for this.

For all media enquiries you can email media@nature.scot.

Many thanks,
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@bbc.co.uk>

Sent: 01 April 2025 09:18

To: ENQUIRIES <ENQUIRIES@Nature.scot>

Subject: Guga Hunt:

Good afternoon, [REDACTED] from the BBC in Stornoway here.

We are led to believe that the community of Ness have applied for a license to restart the Guga hunt on Sulasgeir, which has not taken place for a number of years.

Is this correct and if so, are Nature Scotland willing to allow that? Thanks in advance.

Kind regards,
[REDACTED]

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Sula Sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 295851 - Final Update
Date: 25 June 2025 13:39:00

Hi both,

I have met with [REDACTED] who is going to get MO comments to me within the next few hours.

She made it clear that it was pre-application advice only that was given to Area/Licensing originally, specifically concerning bag limit in line with the population viability analysis, and so that the Men of Ness could make their application with an approved bag limit; the advice did not take into account factors such as the other designated breeding bird features of the SPA / HPAI protocol / general scrutiny as per standard post-application MO advice.

Once I have her comments, I will append any mitigations as specific conditions, and will aim to get the licence to the Men of Ness by COP today. You will see from the other email chain that Media are up to date and are happy for the licence to go today. I will make sure to inform all concerned parties, including yourselves, once the licence is issued.

Does this sound ok?

All best,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] | [REDACTED]
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NàdarAlba | Toglaichean na Sgìre | Sràid Chille Chatrìona | Cùbar | Fìobha | KY15 4TA

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Advice Request From NatureScot LicensingPlease return all advice by email to Licensing@Nature.Scot

Licence Number:	Licence 192787 to 295851
Licence Location:	Sula Sgeir (North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA)
Date Licence application received:	11 th June 2025
Date of advice request:	13 th June 2025
Date response is required by:	27 th June 2025
Name of licensing officer or licensing support officer seeking advice:	[REDACTED]
Name of advisor request is directed to: See "ornithology roles and responsibilities" eRDMS A3643586 , or A3192592 for up to date list of other internal advisors by species.	[REDACTED]

Case Documentation

Document Name	ERDMS Reference	Most relevant section / pages advisor should refer to
<i>e.g. Current Licence Application</i>	A111111	<i>Section E, page 6</i>
<i>Licence Application Email</i>	A5211349	Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 to 295851 - Renewal Request - 11 June 2025 (A5211349)
Marine ornithology pre-application advice	A5159580	2025 Sula Sgeir gannet harvest - [REDACTED] advice - 15 May 2025 (A5159580)

Case Information

<p>Brief description of licence application:</p>	<p>Information provided by the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dates of Expedition: We propose to travel to Sulasgeir, on [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 the vessel [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.
<p>Specific questions, to advisor:</p>	<p>Please provide any comments you may have in due course to allow us to process this request prior to the requested date of [REDACTED]. You will find previous comments and background by search for the previous licence number: 192787.</p>
<p>Summary of most recent advice to applicant (if relevant):</p>	<p>2021 [REDACTED] Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - CMS ALC163867 - 1/2 Final Comments from [REDACTED] - 29 July 2021 (A3515106) - View Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - CMS ALC163867 - 2/2 Final Comments from [REDACTED] - 29 July 2021 (A3515069) - View</p> <p>2021 licence: Sula sgeir - Gannets - Human Consumption - Licence 192787 - Licence Issued - 12 August 2021 (A3526793) - View</p>
<p>Any other relevant background information:</p>	<p><u>North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA</u> Qualifying features: Atlantic puffin, black-legged kittiwake, common guillemot, great black-backed gull, European storm-petrel, Leach's storm petrel, northern gannet, northern fulmar, razorbill.</p> <p>Conservation objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that the qualifying features of the North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA are in favourable condition and make an appropriate contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status. 2. To ensure that the integrity of North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA is restored in the context of environmental changes by meeting objectives 2a, 2b and 2c for each qualifying feature: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2a The populations of the qualifying features are viable components of the North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA. 2b. The distribution of the qualifying features is maintained, or where appropriate restored, throughout the site by avoiding significant disturbance of the species. 2c. The supporting habitats and processes relevant to qualifying features and their prey resources are maintained, or where appropriate restored, at North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA.

Advice Given

Summary of [REDACTED] comments:

Guga harvest limit:

- Pre-application advice was provided that used updated survey data to predict the impact of different harvest levels over the short and long term. Please refer to this document for additional detail on that analysis: [2025 Sula Sgeir gannet harvest - marine ornithology advice - 15 May 2025 \(A5159580\)](#).
- The recommended harvest limit for 2025 per the above analysis, is 500 individuals. **It is therefore recommended that a licence for a harvest of no more than 500 gugas be consented for 2025.**
- It is also recommended that:
 - More detailed population modelling work is contracted ahead of the 2026 breeding season that will allow NatureScot to provide advice on harvest limits based on the best available, robust scientific evidence.
 - That the annual license the situation be kept under review to ensure that any population changes are factored into the decision making process.

Additional advice:

- **Please see the table of suggested mitigation measures at the end of this document.**
- The applicant has offered two potential dates: [REDACTED]. The application wording implies that work will be completed in a day trip – however I'm aware this is usually a 2-week trip and assessment in this document has been made for the usual overnight trip.
- Discussion with [REDACTED] confirmed that the Men of Ness plan to complete this work as a day trip in 2025. **Marine ornithology advice is for the work to be completed as late in the season as possible, with a preference for [REDACTED]**. [REDACTED] This would mean that many fulmar chicks have already fledged the colony before the work takes place, and would mean that more Leach's and European storm petrel chicks have hatched and survived their particularly vulnerable first week post-hatching before the work takes place.
- This advice is provided noting that no other landings on Sula Sgeir have been permitted by operations staff for the purpose of seabird census during the breeding season due to the high disturbance risk on this island.

Summary of proposed activities in relation to the conservation objectives:

1. To ensure that the qualifying features of the North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA are in favourable condition and make an appropriate contribution to achieving Favourable Conservation Status.

Provision to licence the annual guga hunt for the purpose of providing food for human consumption is in place through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Despite this exemption, each year the licence application and harvest limit is carefully assessed, and the assessment for 2025 can be found here: [2025 Sula Sgeir gannet harvest - marine ornithology advice - 15 May 2025 \(A5159580\)](#). The most recent assessed condition for gannet as a feature of North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA was "favourable maintained" (most recent assessed condition being 2023).

2a The populations of the qualifying features are viable components of the North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA:

2b. The distribution of the qualifying features is maintained, or where appropriate restored, throughout the site by avoiding significant disturbance of the species.

Conclude no LSE in regards to disturbance for great black-backed gull, kittiwake, guillemot, and razorbill which will no longer be breeding when the proposed activities begin. There may be some overlap with the end of the breeding season for Atlantic puffin and potential disturbance to fledging young, this can be mitigated for with the measures outlined at the end of this document.

Fulmar

The fulmar colony on Sula Sgeir is dense and extends across most of the island. The colony is in unfavourable condition at Sula Sgeir and conservation objectives seek to restore this condition. [REDACTED] mid-large chicks will be present on nest sites, and the proposed activities are expected to cause disturbance to breeding fulmar. Disturbance may take the form of direct disturbance through displacement of chicks from their breeding sites, (it is likely that fulmar chicks are displaced from nest sites by the proposed activities), which may affect the ability of adults to provision for those chicks.

Human presence in the colony is expected to cause disturbance to both adults and chicks through: stress and increased vigilance, additional energy expenditure if human presence causes chicks/adults to 'spit' in defence. Human presence may prevent adult birds from provisioning chicks or cause reduced feeding times, and may increase the risk of adults abandoning their nest sites. Such disturbance could result in a reduction in breeding success through reduced chick survival post-fledging (due to chicks fledging in poor condition), or chick mortality at the colony.

LSE should be concluded for fulmar. Mitigation measures should be put in place as outlined at the end of this document to minimise the impact of disturbance (but with mitigation measures in place, the activities would still be expected to cause disturbance due to the extent of the fulmar colony).

European storm petrel, Leach's petrel

Storm petrels (both ESP and LP) will be provisioning young chicks in [REDACTED] (and some may still be incubating eggs) when the proposed activities take place. Both species nest in rocky crevices and inside stone walls, and Leach's petrels may also nest in areas of dense undergrowth. The proposed activities are expected to cause disturbance to European storm petrel and Leach's petrel. Direct disturbance may be caused by the prevention of birds accessing their nest sites, for example by tarpaulin covering stone walls where birds are nesting, or equipment preventing birds accessing nest sites. Storm petrels are sensitive to human disturbance and human presence in the colony could cause stress to adults and chicks, causing adults to return to their nest sites less frequently, reducing the rate of provisioning to their chicks, or to abandon nest sites. Light disturbance could cause adult birds to become disorientated. Such disturbance could cause a reduction in breeding success through nest abandonment or chick mortality.

LSE should be concluded for Leach's petrel and European storm petrel. Mitigation measures should be put in place as outlined at the end of this document to minimise the impact of disturbance (but with mitigation measures in place, the activities would still be expected to cause disturbance due to the sensitivity and breeding distribution of these species).

Gannet

The proposed activities could cause disturbance to breeding gannets outwith the licensed activities. Human presence in the colony is expected to cause increased stress and vigilance in breeding adults and chicks, and may temporarily prevent adult birds returning to their nest sites, reducing the rate of chick provisioning or increasing the risk of nest abandonment. Additional assessment of the proposed activities for gannet has been made in the document linked above, and mitigation measures should be put in place as outlined at the end of this document.

Biosecurity

Landings on Sula Sgeir are infrequent and the island is free from invasive non-native predators such as rats and mice. The arrival of invasive predators on Sula Sgeir would pose a significant risk to breeding success for the protected features. The proposed activities involve bringing substantial amounts of equipment and food to Sula Sgeir, and there is a risk that rats or mice could be introduced through this route. Biosecurity measures should be taken prior to travelling to Sula Sgeir.

2c. The supporting habitats and processes relevant to qualifying features and their prey resources are maintained, or where appropriate restored, at North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA.

The proposed harvest is not expected to have an impact on the supporting processes relevant to the qualifying features, however, if the hunt takes place over a prolonged period (the trip duration has traditionally been two-weeks) there is a risk that the proposed activity could have a negative impact on the supporting habitat for the protected features, particularly for fulmar where there would be a risk of damage to vegetation, and for European storm petrel and Leach's petrel, since habitation of the stone bothys and installation of tarpaulin over the bothys would restrict access to storm petrel breeding habitat.

HPAI Assessment

Is the project likely to have LSE?

Risk of transmission of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI)

In 2021 and 2022, HPAI was confirmed as present on the west coast of Scotland and caused significant mortality events in some seabird species. Significant mortality was recorded in gannets in 2022 and 2023, and individual gannets continued to test positive in 2024. At the time of writing, there has been no widespread mortality recorded or suspected at gannet colonies in 2025, but there remains a risk of the virus returning in this or future breeding seasons.

HPAI virus can persist on clothes and shoes for several hours (less on skin); humans could fomite virus into wild bird habitats and breeding colonies if they have recently been exposed to the virus elsewhere. Likewise, sequential handling of birds in a colony could result in transfer of virus from an infected to a susceptible bird. **Human transmission therefore poses a risk and should be considered through the appropriate assessment of those features where LSE has been concluded.**

STAGE 4: UNDERTAKE AN APPROPRIATE ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SITE IN VIEW OF ITS CONSERVATION OBJECTIVES

All qualifying species: Assessment of HPAI impacts

The 2021, 2022, and 2023 observed pattern of large-scale mortality in UK wild birds is unprecedented. No severe HPAI mortality events were recorded in Scotland in 2024, though HPAI related mortality has continued to be recorded in various species (including gannet). Individual gannets have continued to test positive for HPAI into the 2025 breeding season (e.g. a gannet in Shetland in April 2025). We currently lack serological data to inform if HPAI has previously circulated widely at subclinical levels in UK wild bird populations or what has led to the change in epidemiology. It could be changing migratory patterns of birds, changes to the virus, enhanced environmental persistence, or simply chance.

There are no simple patterns that enable robust predictions regarding which wild bird populations will be impacted with HPAI. Care should be taken in interpreting species-specific mortality data as they do not necessarily enable clear distinctions between

tolerance to exposure and absence of exposure. Thus, just because a species escaped substantial impacts in one year does not mean it may do so again in future years.

We should anticipate that HPAI will continue to be an issue into the 2025 nesting season, and quite possibly well beyond.

Risk of human transmission:

Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) and other epidemiological evidence indicates that wild birds spread the virus readily between sites within the UK, and between species within the same site. As such, at sites where the virus is already present and exposure to virus high, the possible introduction of additional virus passively transported through human visitation is regarded as negligible and therefore, unlikely that such transmission will make any long-term difference to the size of the outbreak (NatureScot, Scientific Advisory Committee, HPAI sub-group, 2023).

Risk of reduced resilience:

Increased stress can affect innate immunity and increase the virulence of HPAI, potentially negatively affecting productivity and/or adult survival. The degree of potential additional HPAI impact from increased stress to individuals is however unknown and likely to be species specific.

Conclusion

No widespread HPAI related mortality has been reported at gannet colonies in 2025 , however it should be expected that the virus may still affect west coast colonies in 2025. Our current understanding is that exposure resulting from human vectoring of virus is very small and the proposed activities should not create additional risk of spreading HPAI to or between the qualifying features of North Rona and Sula Sgeir SPA. **We therefore conclude no adverse effect on site integrity (NAESI) with respect to HPAI impact risks.**

However, if another severe mortality event is reported at Scottish gannet colonies in the 2025 breeding season, it may be considered appropriate to halt the proposed activities, as the 2025 harvest limit does not account for additional mortality and reassessment of the activities alongside additional mortality would be required.

This conclusion has been drawn based on the scientific evidence available, and mitigation outlined below.

Suggested mitigation measures:

Mitigation measure	Reason
Due care and attention must be taken to avoid any unnecessary disturbance or damage to the gannet colony.	
Pre-departure biosecurity checks should be made to minimise the risk of invasive predators being introduced within cargo.	To prevent the introduction of invasive predators (e.g. rats or mice) to Sula Sgeir.
The footprint of the proposed activities should be kept to a minimum, avoiding fulmar and storm petrel breeding sites where possible.	To minimise disturbance to fulmar, European storm petrel and Leach's petrels.
Minimise the use of external lighting and use red light for torches at night.	To minimise disturbance to and disorientation of storm petrels.

All equipment and waste should be removed from Sula Sgeir at the end of the licensed activities.	To minimise disturbance and displacement of protected features.
Equipment required during the visit should be stored in areas of bare rock where possible, avoiding vegetated areas.	To minimise the risk of preventing access to storm petrel burrows.
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.	This may be an indication that avian flu is present within the colony – which may also pose a human health risk to the guga hunters.
Response Date:	
	26/06/2025
Time taken to process request (if required for casework recording)	Request received on 13th June.

From: [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED]; [MEDIA](#)
Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued
Date: 15 July 2025 09:59:42

Hi all,

Please note that the licence has now been issued.

Thanks all for your contributions on this.

Best,

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 15 July 2025 09:42
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]@nature.scot>;
MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

[REDACTED] – yes I’m happy with the wording.

Please hold off with the BBC until [REDACTED] has actually issued the licence.

[REDACTED] please can you advise everyone once the licence has gone.

Thanks

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 15 July 2025 09:39
To: [REDACTED]@nature.scot>; MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
<[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: Re: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

Hi all,

[REDACTED] - thanks for the confirmation, I will get it issued within the next hour

[REDACTED] I will update this thread as soon as the licence is issued; may be better to wait so that the BBC do not receive notice of the issued licence before the licence holder.

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

nature.scot | @naturescot | Scotland's Nature Agency | Buidheann Nàdair na h-Alba

From: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>

Sent: 15 July 2025 09:37

To: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>

Cc: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

[REDACTED]

I'm happy for this to be issued.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

NatureScot | 32 Francis Street, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2ND | t: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

NàdarAlba | 32 Sràid Fhrangain | Steòrnabhagh | Eilean Leòdhais | HS1 2ND

nature.scot | @nature.scot | Scotland's Nature Agency | Buidheann Nàdair na h'Alba

Pronouns: he/him

From: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>

Sent: 15 July 2025 09:36

To: [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>

Cc: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>;

[REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>;

[REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>; [REDACTED] <[\[REDACTED\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED]@nature.scot)>

Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

Hi [REDACTED]

Thanks for letting us know. Can I just check if we can now issue the following (previously signed off) comment to the BBC?:

We recognise the cultural significance of the guga hunt and this is reflected in the provision to licence this traditional activity through the Wildlife and Countryside Act. This is the first year we have received a licence application from the Men of Ness since 2021, due to concerns about the impact of avian flu on the gannet population. We have thoroughly assessed the application taking into account survey data and population analysis and we have granted a licence with a limit of 500 birds. This is significantly fewer than in previous years where up to 2,000 have been granted. This revised limit for 2025 safeguards the sustainability of the Sula Sgeir gannet population and allows for its continued recovery following avian flu.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 15 July 2025 09:08
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Cc: MEDIA <MEDIA@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: FW: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

[REDACTED]

We are now in a position to go ahead and issue the Guga Licence.

Many thanks everyone for your input. I think I have copied in everyone, but please forward to anyone who I've missed.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Sent: 15 July 2025 09:03
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot
Cc: [REDACTED] - Scottish Government <[REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

Caution! This message was sent from outside NatureScot.

Hi [REDACTED]

Minister has now come back and is content.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 14 July 2025 15:41
To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

Thanks [REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]@gov.scot [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Sent: 14 July 2025 15:40
To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

Hi [REDACTED]

This has gone to the Minister but I want to get a confirmation response from his PO before we go ahead – we'll let you know as soon as we hear something.

Thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Sent: 14 July 2025 10:13
To: [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

[REDACTED]

Please can I check if the Minister is aware of this yet and if e can issue the licence..... we are being chased by the media everyday now.

Thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 June 2025 10:33
To: [REDACTED] - Scottish Government [REDACTED]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED]@gov.scot>
Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>; [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]@nature.scot>
Subject: RE: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

[REDACTED]

Please can you let us know if there are any issues, so we can go ahead and issue the Guga Licence.

Thanks
[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 25 June 2025 14:07

To: [redacted] Scottish Government [redacted]@gov.scot>; [redacted]@gov.scot>

Cc: [redacted] <[redacted]nature.scot>; [redacted] <[redacted]nature.scot>

Subject: Guga Hunt Licence to be issued

[redacted]

Just to let you know that we will be issuing a licence to the Men of Ness for the Guga Hunt this year.

It is the first time they have applied since 2021 in light of HPAI.

We have assessed the licence and will agree a restricted bag limit of 500 birds (previous licences were for 1500 or 2000 birds) which following analysis of survey data and population viability analysis we have concluded will allow the gannet population to continue to recover and enable a sustainable future take.

We are looking to get the licence issued in the next day or so, so please let me know if there are any issues.

There is media interest, and we have lines ready to go.

[redacted]

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Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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mhàin. Mas e gun d' fhuair sibh am post-dealain seo le mearachd, cuiribh fios dhan manaidsear-siostaim no neach-sgrìobhaidh.

Thoiribh an aire airson adhbharan gnothaich, 's dòcha gun tèid sùil a chumail air puist-dealain a' tighinn a-steach agus a' dol a- mach bho NàdarAlba.

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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 the [REDACTED] [REDACTED], in recognition of your proposed dates. However, the NatureScot Marine Ornithology Team have expressed a preference for [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] date, 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 725364



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 .

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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.

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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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