

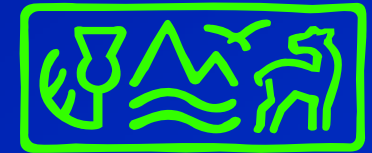
SNH and Licence Applications to Shoot Seals and Piscivorous Birds

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For more information, contact:

Licensing@snh.gov.uk

Application process – SNH involvement



1. Application received by SEERAD (FFA)
2. SEERAD consult SNH (SASA and FRS also consulted)
 - Application assessed by SNH licensing officer (Ben Ross)
 - Comments received from relevant SNH staff (area staff, species specialists, natura staff)
 - SNH advice letter sent to SEERAD
3. SEERAD consider advice from consultees & determine application



Key Considerations

- Will there be an impact on a designated site?
- Will there be an impact on conservation status of the target species?
- Is the application in line with the assumptions of the licensing provision?

Licences to shoot piscivorous birds

SCOTTISH
NATURAL
HERITAGE

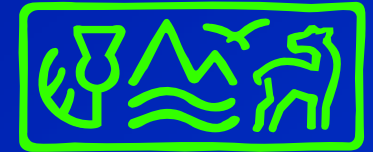


Designated sites: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- What is a SSSI?
- What will the impact be on the site?
- Consents and procedures

Designated sites

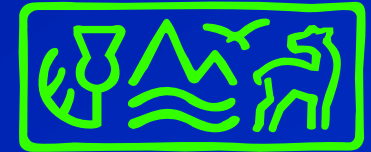
Special Protection Areas
(SPA) and Special Areas of
Conservation (SAC)



- What are SPA and SAC?
- How do they differ from SSSI
- How are impacts assessed?....

Designated sites

Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

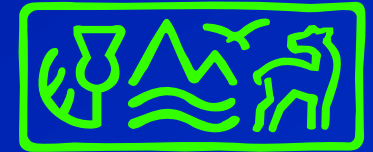


1. Is the proposal connected with site management for nature conservation?
2. Is it likely to have a significant effect on the site?
3. Appropriate Assessment i.e. Can it be ascertained that the proposal (and others) will not adversely affect site integrity?
4. Next steps



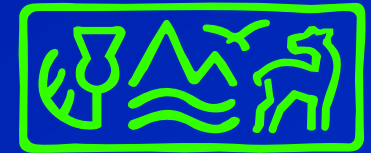
Impact on conservation status

- Requirements of the Birds Directive
- National trends and information
- Local trends and information
- Application information



Assumptions of the licensing Authority (other considerations)

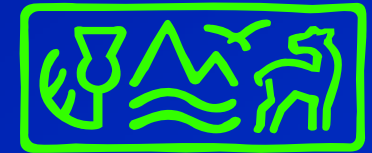
- No other satisfactory solution
- Birds are causing serious damage
- Birds are shot as an aid to scaring, not as a cull



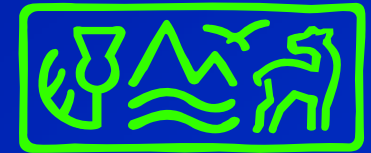
Next steps

- **Transparent approach**
- **Better guidance**
- **Strategic thinking**
- **Moray Firth sawbill management plan....**
- **Others**

Application process – SNH involvement



1. Application received by SEERAD (FFA)
2. SEERAD consult SNH (SMRU and FRS also consulted)
 - Application assessed by SNH Seal casework adviser (Mark Steward)
 - Comments received from relevant SNH staff (area staff, species specialists, natura staff)
 - SNH advice letter sent to SEERAD
3. SEERAD consider advice from consultees & determine application



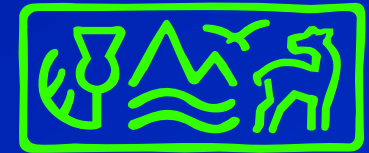
Information Required

1. Fully completed application form

- *Nature of fishery to be protected*
- *Evidence of damage to fishery from seal predation*
- *Whether alternative non-lethal predator measures have been used or considered*
- *Number and species of seal applicant proposes to shoot*
- *Number and species of seal shot by applicant outwith the close season*
- *Return of seals shot under any previous licence*

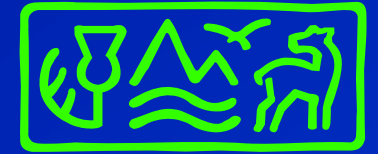
2. Maps showing areas where shooting is proposed

3. SNH may ask for additional information which SEERAD will request from the applicant



How SNH assess an application

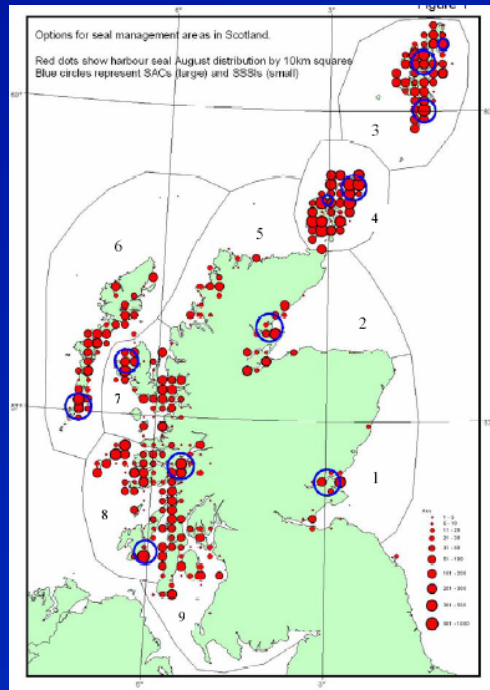
1. Is evidence of *seal predation* and *serious damage to fishery* sufficient to warrant a licence for the number and species of seal proposed?
2. What is the status of salmon fishery concerned?
3. Are areas where shooting is proposed appropriate?
 - *Targeted to river mouths & within rivers*
 - *Seal haul-outs should not be included*
4. Is shooting proposed within or adjacent to a Special Area of Conservation, designated for seals?
5. Will the proposal affect the seal population of an SAC or the wider population?
6. Is the number of seals that the applicant wish to shoot appropriate?



Other information SNH use when considering applications

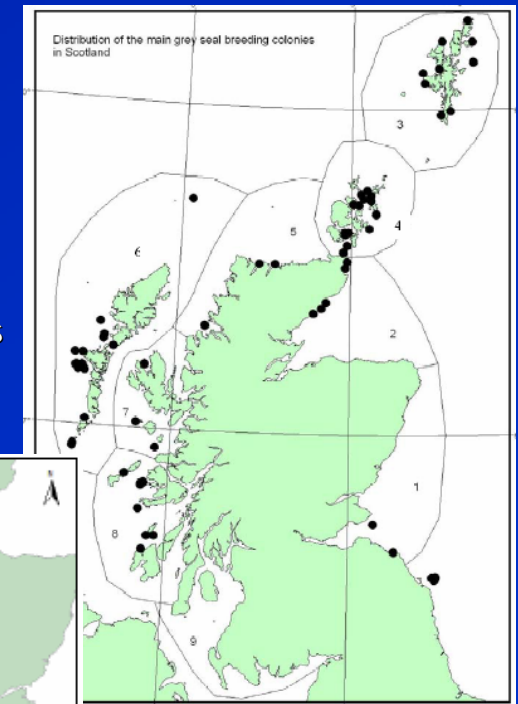
1. Sea Mammal Research Unit (SMRU) seal counts

Common (Harbour) seals are counted during the annual moult in August, covering the entire UK coast within a 5 year cycle.

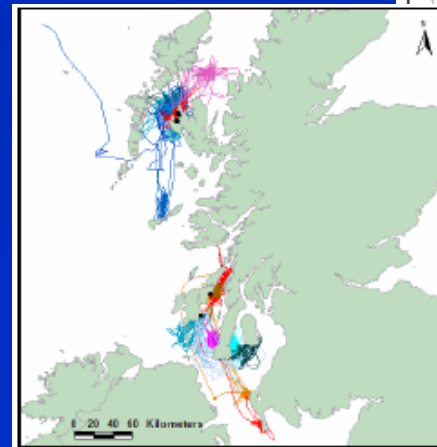


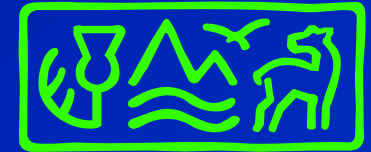
Grey seals are counted annually during the breeding season (October /November)

Pup production is used to estimate total population



2. Available satellite tracking information



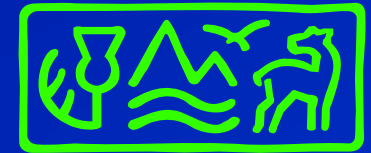


General issues

1. Identification of grey and common seals
2. Lack of information on numbers of seals shot outwith the close season (DSFB, netsmen, fish farms) or during the close season by netsmen

Recommendations

Every effort is made to retain the carcasses of all shot seals which should made available for examination by SMRU



Examples of good practice

1. Moray Firth Seal Management Plan
 - Pilot project for management of seal-salmon conflict
 - Coordinates activities of 12 different DSFB's
 - Outcomes of Plan's 'Seal & Salmon Research Programme' will inform seal-salmon management elsewhere in Scotland
 - If successful, this type of management could be applied in other areas of Scotland
2. Seal Management Training Course
3. Trialling of non-lethal measures