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RSPB Scotland

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Dear Phil

CONSULTATION ON DESIGNATION OF NEW AREAS FOR CROFTING

RSPB Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

The extension of designations to the new areas for crofting has the potential to bring environmental benefits to those areas, through the encouragement of positive land management. Crofting land management is typified by High Nature Value (HNV) agriculture, and RSPB Scotland would like to see HNV systems recognised and supported through public policy intervention in Scotland. This is in line with Scotland's commitments under the Kyev resolution and also with the objectives of the Scottish Rural Development Strategy and the Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP). However, the current consultation proposes extending the regulatory framework that applies to crofting, without the additional land management incentives available in the crofting counties.

RSPB Scotland would like to see the extension of crofting grants to the new areas, if they are re-designated, in order to secure the potential for positive land management. Clearly, this would require an increase in the existing budget for crofting grants, as this should not be spread more thinly than is currently the case. We hope that this recommendation will result from the Committee of Inquiry on Crofting. Otherwise, it is difficult to see how the potential benefits to Scotland's environment that could result from extending crofting land management can be realised.

Yours sincerely

M. Gloyer

Mandy Gloyer
Head of Land Use Policy