

Your ref:
Our ref: CEO 0260
Date: 11 February 2013

Mr Sandy Smith
BBC One
The One Show
BBC Television Centre
White City, Wood Lane
London
W12 7RJ

Dear Mr Smith,

The One Show: Misleading Comment - 23 January 2013

I am writing on behalf of Scottish Land & Estates, which represents landowners across Scotland, and the Scottish Gamekeepers' Association. Our organisations watched with interest and a sense of dismay your programme of 23 January featuring Stuart Benn and Brian Etheridge commenting on behalf of RSPB Scotland.

While the golden eagle footage filmed in the North of Scotland was an interesting wildlife feature, members of the rural landowning community including grouse moor owners and gamekeepers found the comments made immediately afterwards in the studio by the RSPB to be misrepresentative of the facts. It was stated that golden eagles are routinely "poisoned, trapped and shot" by gamekeepers and that this happens on the "intensively managed grouse moors" in the East of Scotland.

The last conviction in relation to golden eagles was of a keeper in the North of Scotland in 2010 for possession of Carbofuran after three poisoned golden eagles were found on land under his management. Since then there have been four incidents where dead golden eagles have been found in Scotland, two of which were in the East, and no charges have been brought against anyone involved in grouse moor management.

You may not be aware of the progress being made by the landowning community across Scotland whose members are working through the Partnership Against Wildlife Crime Scotland (PAWS) in reducing all forms of wildlife crime. Our combined efforts with the police, rural communities, the RSPB and over 120 other relevant stakeholders have been universally acknowledged as a key factor in reducing the number of raptor persecution incidents. Owners of moorland estates

all over Scotland look after golden eagles and have in fact been working with Scottish Natural Heritage to provide surplus birds for export to Ireland. We note the blog written by Stuart Benn of RSPB after the programme which included the statement: *“We were obviously really tight for time as we could only cover some of the stuff we’d rehearsed but I got the main points about the eagles...the thing I wish I’d been able to do was give praise to all the good estates and gamekeepers that look after their eagles and are proud of them but, under the pressure of the moment, it just wasn’t possible.”* Given the seriousness of the comments made earlier, it is very surprising that Stuart was not allowed time to qualify the comments, particularly in light of the importance the BBC attaches to balance in their reporting.

As a follow up to the One Show’s feature, since landowners were not afforded the opportunity to counter the RSPB comments with a more realistic picture of the efforts being made to combat golden eagle persecution, we would like to offer you the opportunity to visit a grouse moor and find out for yourself the valuable conservation measures being implemented by landowners and gamekeepers to protect and nurture a wide range of rare birds.

Thank you for your time in this matter and I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Douglas McAdam
Chief Executive
Scottish Land & Estates