

Joint Hen Harrier Recovery Plan

Note of 4th Brood management trail meeting

Date: 29 September 2016

Present: Adam Smith (GWCT), Phillip Merricks (H&OT), Jemima Parry-Jones (H&OT), Amanda Anderson (MA); Robert Benson (MA); Rob Cooke (NE - Chair), Adrian Jowitt (NE).

Points discussed and agreed:

Release sites and criteria for them

- The Ecological criteria for release sites were discussed and agreed, and the importance of prey density recognised
- The group acknowledged the measuring of prey density can be difficult because absolute densities fluctuate. However if the release site was in the area where the chicks were removed from then we could be reasonably sure that at least, within that general area, there were not macro issues with prey density (adults would not have settled if there was no prey base).
- GWCT agreed to look at the prey density results from Langholm, and will advise further on suitable methods and densities. This would help us to undertake checks if required to ensure that release sites had suitable prey density. They also agreed to do vole and pipit surveys on potential sites, once they are identified.
- Potential release sites need to be identified ahead of the trial starting as they need to be in locations which have landowner permission, suitable habitat and are secure and accessible as people will need to access the site regularly to feed and check the birds whilst in captivity.
- NE will identify suitable geographic area/ areas of search and the MA will identify potential release sites within these.

Social Science

- Social Science proposals were discussed in light of the feedback on costs. We are clear that a) the issue we are facing is a social problem not (just) an ecological one b) that one of things we wish to test as part of the trial is attitudinal change. In light of this we agreed that the work was a core part of the trial.
- NE confirmed that if Government funds are going to be used for part or all of this work we will have to abide by public sector procurement rules.

Funding

- There are potentially a number of different sources of funding from different organisations. Given the view that social science and the physical brood management are both key parts of trial we moved to the concept of a single funding pot. However we also acknowledged that given that when/in which years the actual brood management might happen could not be predicted this created some problems re budget bids.
- Adam agreed to speak to Teresa about the possibility of GWCT also contributing.
- JPJ said she would email Philip who had left the meeting at this point for matching funds.

Licencing

- Natural England have undertaken some work to look at what the group needs to pull together/ take consideration of as part of the licence application: This includes:
 - Mapping of area within which Brood Management might happen
 - SSSI consent
 - Habitats Regulation assessment
 - Disease risk assessment
 - Consideration of any planning requirements (re pens)
- Much of this work will need to be started immediately if we are to keep to proposed timeline.

Other

- We had a discussion about the location of nests which would trigger a brood management intervention. MA stated that for them a first nest need not be within the area where brood management had been licenced, to trigger an intervention at a second nest (within the licence area) if the density threshold had been exceeded. It was acknowledged that nests could only be moved with the consent of the landowner, irrespective of any licence which may be in force.

Action:

Who	What	By when
AS	Look at the prey density results from Langholm, and advise further on suitable methods for measuring density at release sites	Next meeting
AJ	To commission production of a map of geographic areas within which pre agreed release sites could be situated.	ASAP
SR	To draft a more expanded Social Science proposal	Next Meeting
MA+ Natural England	Map Brood management licence area.	
Natural England	Start on licence application, SSSI consent work and HRA.	ASAP
GWCT	Look into Planning permission considerations – short note for next meeting	Next meeting