

General Licensing Changes FAQs - February 2020

FAQs

What are General Licences?

Licences enable actions that would otherwise be illegal. General Licences (GLs) are a streamlined approach to licensing covering certain types of activity relating to birds, such as preserving public health or air safety and preventing serious damage. No application is required, but users are expected to follow a strict set of conditions.

Why are you changing them?

Things are always changing in nature and we want to make sure our licences remain relevant, evidence based and fit-for-purpose. Our new GLs will better balance recent conservation research with the needs of licence users.

What are the main changes to the licences?

The main changes relate to which species are included on certain licences for certain purposes. There are 15 changes to the species lists, which are summarised in Annex 1. We have also introduced greater transparency around the use of traps, which requires individual users to register to help us understand how GLs are being used. In addition, the use of GLs will be restricted over a number of designated sites in Scotland.

We have also made some changes to the way birds can be controlled around airports, seeking to streamline the process and tailor licences to the individual needs of each airfield.

Why were these changes made?

These changes were made because we want to ensure our licences are based on the best available information. Species populations change as do their impacts and while some birds are doing really well, others have become a conservation concern. It is important that our licences are adaptive and based on up to date information.

When will the changes take place?

The changes to our licences will come into force on the 1st of April 2020.

For those species that are no longer listed on GLs will I still be able to control them?

In most cases yes, but you will need to apply for a specific licence to do so. For advice and application forms for these licence types go to- <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/licensing/species-licensing-z-guide/birds-and-licensing>

Why have you added restrictions on using GLs on some designated sites?

We take our responsibilities to protect designated sites seriously; the legislation governing these sites means we need to take a precautionary approach. From the work we carried out on assessing the potential impacts of using GLs on designated sites we couldn't conclude there would be no adverse impacts on a limited number of sites.

What will I need to do if I want to use a GL on a designated site?

A list of sites where restrictions occur can be found at - <https://www.nature.scot/professional-advice/safeguarding-protected-areas-and-species/licensing/species-licensing-z-guide/birds-and-licensing/general-licences-birds>

Contact us at licensing@nature.scot or on 01463 725 364 if you want to use GLs on these sites. You will need to let us know what you want to do, where and when. We will advise you on whether you can proceed. We expect in most cases we will be able to allow action.

Why have you taken over trap registration from Police Scotland?

We have been in discussion with Police Scotland about taking over this service for some time. We can offer a centralised point of contact for this service along with the ability to apply online and improve communication with Licence users. Individual registration will ensure greater accountability when using traps and will potentially assist with crime prevention and enforcement

Why do you need to be registered?

As of 1st April 2020 you will need to be registered with us in order to use

- Larsen traps
- Larsen mate traps
- Larsen pod traps
- Multi-catch cage crow traps

You'll need to register with us even if you have previously registered with Police Scotland. Registrations are now issued to people rather than properties.

How do I register?

Trap registration should only take 5 minutes and you won't need any special information other than your own contact details. Register with SNH as soon as you can by visiting- <https://licensing.nature.scot/trap-registration>

Why do I need to register to use traps as an individual rather than on behalf of a landholding?

Having individuals register to use traps means that there will no longer be any question as to who is responsible for an individual trap. This will ensure that as a regulator we have direct contact with those operating under our licences which will lead to clearer understanding of user responsibilities and better accountability.

How long will trap registration last?

Trap registration will last for a period of 5 years.

When will my Police Scotland trap number no longer be valid?

Police Scotland numbers will no longer be valid after 1st April 2021 but we urge you to get registered with SNH as soon as you can by visiting- <https://licensing.nature.scot/trap-registration>

Why haven't we added raven to General Licences

During the consultation we sought views on the inclusion of ravens on GL2-to prevent serious damage. The response was mixed and due to significant regional differences in abundance of the raven and the regionalised demand, we are not proposing to add raven to GL2, but instead to simplify the process for applying for a licence. This will still enable SNH to monitor licenced take and record where licences are being used.

Annex 1 – Summary of Changes in Species for 2020 General Licences

GL 01		GL 02		GL 03	
To kill or take certain birds for the conservation of wild birds		To kill or take certain birds for the prevention of serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables and fruit		To kill or take certain birds for the preservation of public health, public safety and preventing the spread of disease	
Species	Likely Outcome of Assessment	Species	Likely Outcome of Assessment	Species	Likely Outcome of Assessment
Magpie	Retain	Feral pigeon	Retain	Feral pigeon	Retain
Carrion crow	Retain	Collared dove	Remove	Woodpigeon	Remove
Jackdaw	Retain	Great black-backed gull	Remove	Lesser black-backed gull	Remove
Great black-backed gull	Remove	Resident Greylag goose	Extend control period	Great black-backed gull	Remove
Hooded crow	Retain	Hooded crow	Retain	Herring gull	Remove
Canada goose	Retain	Canada goose	Retain	Carrion crow	Remove
Ruddy duck	Retain	Carrion crow	Retain	Collared dove	Remove
Rook	Remove	Woodpigeon	Retain	Canada goose	Retain
Jay	Retain	Rook	Retain	Jackdaw	Remove
		Magpie	Retain	Magpie	Remove

	Jackdaw	Retain	Rook	Remove
			Hooded crow	Remove

Red-Remove
Green-Retain (no changes)
Amber-Retain (changes)