
From: [REDACTED]@rspb.org.uk>
Sent: 15 January 2025 18:12
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: RE: HH project bid [OFFICIAL SENSITIVE: POLICE AND PARTNERS]

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for sharing the business case for the Hen Harrier project bid, following our meeting back in October last year, which I have read with interest. It is obvious that a huge amount of thought and consideration has gone into this proposal.

I wanted to provide a clear steer on the RSPB's view of the proposal and principle for the project described. Following careful consideration, the RSPB would not be able to support this bid to Defra.

There are a number of considerations and particular concerns, some of which I share below:

- We disagree with the assertion in the proposal that addressing the deep-rooted causes of the conflict has not yet been attempted. We would note that there have been several attempts at constructive dialogue through various means over the last few decades, including the involvement of expertise in conflict resolution via the Environment Council. The RSPB does not agree that further stakeholder dialogue is a good use of public money at this time or would offer meaningful prospects of progress in reducing Hen Harrier persecution.
- We consider the proposed approach – which over only three years moves from reaching agreement on how IUCN principles can be applied in practice, through using the IUCN principles to design and co-design solutions and then implementation and monitoring and evaluation to assess how these solutions work in practice – is highly ambitious and unrealistic. We anticipate that significantly more time would be required, with an associated increase in project costs.
- The outline costs given in the proposal is £400,000, which is a hugely significant sum of public money that we would expect to increase as above. We do not agree that this would be the most effective use of public money for Hen Harrier recovery and would be better and more effectively spent on supporting ongoing enforcement.
- The proposal is described as the product of the Hen Harrier Taskforce but we would note that our understanding is that this has been produced following discussion to date with just a subset of Hen Harrier Taskforce members. If any proposal is eventually submitted specifically on behalf of the Taskforce, we believe that should only be done with the agreement of all Taskforce members.

We agree with much of the context provided in the proposal, notably that despite the recent increases in England's Hen Harrier breeding population, persecution continues and remains the principal barrier to recovery. We also agree that the Hen Harrier Action Plan has not so far delivered a population of self-sustaining and well-dispersed breeding Hen Harriers or coexistence with local businesses in moorland areas. We remain highly aware of the ongoing resources required for monitoring, investigation, and enforcement – and remain committed to supporting all parties with this work.

Despite this, we consider overall that further stakeholder dialogue raises the risk of repeating the methods that have failed to produce meaningful progress in previous years, and do not consider that the proposal and IUCN context provides any significantly new or innovative approaches. The RSPB believes that we have reached the stage where regulation, through the licensing of grouse shooting, provides the only realistic means of successfully tackling this ongoing significant conservation issue, and that this should be the focus of government action.

As a related point, following licensing in Scotland, where the shooting industry leaders have largely accepted regulation as workable, similar regulation is now increasingly considered inevitable in England by many in the

industry (for example, see [WPS-Winter-Newsletter-2024.pdf](#)). It might therefore have been reasonable for regulation to be directly reflected in the options analysis in section 6 of the proposal.

If you want to discuss our feedback in any more detail, then please do let me know and we can arrange some time.

Kind regards

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From: Heydon, Matthew <matt.heydon@naturalengland.org.uk>
Sent: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 11:46 AM
To: [REDACTED]@rspb.org.uk; [REDACTED]@cla.org.uk;
[REDACTED]@basc.org.uk; [REDACTED]@nationalgamekeepers.org.uk
Cc: [REDACTED]@nwcw.police.uk; [REDACTED]@naturalengland.org.uk
Subject: HH project bid [OFFICIAL SENSITIVE: POLICE AND PARTNERS]

Hello everyone

I hope you have all had a great Christmas and New year.

Attached is the draft proposed project bid that we discussed for using the IUCN guidelines to find and implement long term solutions relating to conflict associated with Hen Harriers. Everyone has been extremely busy over the last few months, and it has taken time to get this work done. Note that this is a draft, and nothing has been agreed at this time. Please read it and offer any comments as soon as you can. If you can get your comments back to [REDACTED] by the 17th Jan that would be perfect. [REDACTED] will collate everything and liaise with me and [REDACTED] at NE to work on a final version.

Kind regards and I look forward to speaking to you all soon.

Best wishes
Matt

Matt Heydon
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