

Supporting guidance for Predator Control

This is an old version of the page

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To see recent changes to this guidance, [check the bottom of this page](#).

Introduction

The [Predator Control](#) option supports predator control on permanent grassland or rough grazing to benefit 'qualifying bird features' on designated sites, or active black grouse leks.

Predator control is an important part of conservation and wildlife management.

It can be carried out to control members of the crow family (corvids), foxes, stoats, weasels and mink which prey on birds such as black grouse and waders, particularly during the breeding season.

You may apply for either:

- crow control only (which funds the purchase of individual crow traps)

or

- mammal and crow control (which funds on a hectare basis; note that the individual trap payment is not available under this option)

Where to locate the option

For bird features on a designated site, carry out predator control where you have evidence predators are contributing to impacts on the breeding bird interest to the point the bird features are at risk of being in 'unfavourable condition', or prevented from returning to 'favourable condition'.

In your predator control plan, mark the locations where you intend undertaking predator control and what sort of traps you propose to use.

Also show what the current predator control activities are and what is being proposed above and beyond the current situation.

This option only supports actions over and above the current activities that are focused within or immediately adjacent to the boundary of the designated site.

Predator control aimed at protecting black grouse leks is limited to the area within 1.5 kilometres of the lek, and the lek must be verified by your local Black Grouse Project Officer or the RSPB.

Predator control adjacent to a site designated for ground-nesting bird interest will be limited to land sharing a boundary with the designated site and within 1.5 kilometres of the designated site boundary.

How to increase the success of this option

In order to carry out predator control in a legal and humane manner make sure you comply with all legislation and codes of practice, including:

- the general licence as issued each year by Scottish Natural Heritage
- the British Association for Shooting and Conservation codes of practice on shooting, lamping, trapping of pest mammals and trapping of pest birds
- the British Association for Shooting and Conservation code on snaring

The British Association for Shooting and Conservation [codes of practice](#) provide information about the law and predator control, and also provide guidance on health and safety.

When reviewing your predator control plan Scottish Natural Heritage will assess:

- whether the designated ground nesting bird features are vulnerable to predation

- whether they are likely to benefit from predator control
- that the level of predator control is sufficient to benefit the bird feature over the whole of the area included within the predator control option

For small mammal trapping

[The British Association for Shooting and Conservation: Trapping Pest Mammals](#)

There are several types of small mammal traps. The most commonly used are smooth-jawed spring traps or live-catch cage traps, but multi-catch drop traps may also be used. Operators of these do not require an identification number, nor do the traps. The use of spring traps is governed by the Spring Traps Approval (Scotland) Order 2011 and operators must comply with this.

Live capture traps are governed by the Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. The main requirements are for humane dispatch / release of non-target animals and the need to check such traps at least once every 24 hours. Applicants must comply with these legislative requirements.

For corvid trapping

[The British Association for Shooting and Conservation: Trapping Pest Birds](#)

Two types of live-catch types are commonly used – Larsen traps and larger multi-cage traps.

Whichever kind of trap is used it is essential to ensure that they are of a legal design and operated legally – including obtaining a trap operator ID from Police Scotland and displaying it on all of your crow traps.

You must:

- provide all decoy birds with adequate shelter from the prevailing weather conditions, a perch, suitable food and drinking water at all times
- make sure you have enough time, in the case of a single occupier / owner, or staff to inspect traps every day at intervals of no more than 24 hours
- kill captured crows quickly and humanely
- release all non-target species immediately, unharmed

For snaring

[Joint agency guide for practitioners guide on snaring](#)

Accreditation certification is available from the following providers:

- Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT)
- Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA)
- The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC)
- Scottish Association For Country Sports (SACS)
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
- North Highland College
- University of the Highlands and Islands
- Borders College

You will also need to register with Police Scotland to obtain an operator ID and ensure all of your snares are tagged with this ID.

For lamping

- The British Association for Shooting and Conservation – [code of practice for lamping \(night shooting\)](#)

Recent changes

Section	Change	Previous text	New text
Introduction	Clarification on what you can apply for.	-	You may apply for either: • crow control only (which funds the purchase of individual crow traps) or

			mammal and crow control (which funds on a hectare basis; note that the individual trap payment is not available under this option)
Where to locate the option	Clarification around the impact of predators.	For bird features on a designated site, carry out predator control where you have evidence predators are impacting on the breeding bird interest to the point the bird features are at risk of being in 'unfavourable condition', or prevented from returning to 'favourable condition'.	For bird features on a designated site, carry out predator control where you have evidence predators are contributing to impacts on the breeding bird interest to the point the bird features are at risk of being in 'unfavourable condition', or prevented from returning to 'favourable condition'.
	Additional information on option location.	-	Predator control aimed at protecting black grouse leks is limited to the area within 1.5 kilometres of the lek, and the lek must be verified by your local Black Grouse Project Officer or the RSPB. Predator control adjacent to a site designated for ground-nesting bird interest will be limited to land sharing a boundary with the designated site and within 1.5 kilometres of the designated site boundary.
For small mammal trapping	Additional information on legislative requirements.	There are several types of small mammal traps. The most commonly used are smooth-jawed spring traps or live-catch cage traps but multi-catch drop traps may also be used.	There are several types of small mammal traps. The most commonly used are smooth-jawed spring traps or live-catch cage traps, but multi-catch drop traps may also be used. Operators of these do not require an identification number, nor do the traps. The use of spring traps is governed by the Spring Traps Approval (Scotland) Order 2011 and operators must comply with this. Live capture traps are governed by the Animal Health & Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006. The main requirements are for humane dispatch / release of non-target animals and the need to check such traps at least once every 24 hours. Applicants must comply with these legislative requirements.
For corvid trapping	Additional information on IDs.	Whichever kind of trap is used it is essential to ensure that they are of a legal design and operated legally.	Whichever kind of trap is used it is essential to ensure that they are of a legal design and operated legally – including obtaining a trap operator ID from Police Scotland and displaying it on all of your crow traps.
For snaring	Additional information on IDs.	-	You will also need to register with Police Scotland to obtain an operator ID and ensure all of your snares are tagged with this ID.
For lamping	New section	-	For lamping The British Association for Shooting and Conservation – code of practice for lamping (night shooting)

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