

Press release: Innovative licence issued to help hen harrier

Natural England has today [issued a licence](#) permitting the trial of a brood management scheme of hen harriers with the long-term aim of increasing their numbers across England.

The licence is time-limited for a 2-year period and places stringent conditions on the trial, which will take place in the northern uplands of England. Brood management will only take place with the permission of the land owner.

Brood management is the sixth action within the Defra Hen Harrier Recovery Plan, ultimately aiming to reduce hen harrier predation of grouse chicks on driven grouse moors, leading to an improvement in the conservation status of hen harrier.

The licence permits the removal of hen harrier eggs and/or chicks to a dedicated hatching and rearing facility, where they will be hand-reared in captivity, before being transferred to specially-constructed pens in hen harrier breeding habitat, from which they are then re-introduced into the wild in the uplands of northern England. This intervention may only occur where hen harrier nests have reached an agreed density.

Natural England experts have rigorously scrutinised the licence application and will work closely with the licence applicant throughout the duration of the trial to ensure that all elements are carried out proportionately and effectively, to bring about the best possible outcome for hen harriers.

Natural England Chairman, Andrew Sells, said:

Improving the conservation status of hen harriers across England is something I feel very passionate about. The principles of this trial have been carefully researched by those best-placed to understand the conflict which can occur between hen harriers and driven grouse moors.

It is a complicated and emotive picture and we have considered this application very carefully. Licensing this trial will allow important evidence to be gathered which, I sincerely hope, will lead to a self-sustaining and well-dispersed breeding population of these beautiful birds across England.

Amanda Anderson, Director of the Moorland Association said:

The Moorland Association is delighted that Natural England has issued a ground-breaking research licence to test if brood

management will help improve the Hen Harrier population and range in upland northern England. The Hen Harrier Brood Management Group has sought to provide a pragmatic solution to a proven predator-prey conflict while safeguarding important land use.

Moorland managed for red grouse contributes significantly to remote rural communities, businesses and treasured landscapes. This new wildlife management licence will give land managers confidence that impacts of hen harriers breeding on their land can be minimised creating a win-win scenario.

Dr Adam Smith of the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust said:

GWCT research has over many years described the tension between grouse moor management and hen harrier conservation. We believe it important that the hen harrier recovery plan includes this practical trial of a well understood raptor conservation tool, the brood management scheme. If successful this approach should help hen harriers and red grouse thrive – in the interests of both, and of moorland.

Further information

We have published [a redacted version of the full licence issued and the application submitted](#).

Guidance: Reclaim minerals extraction and landfill sites to agriculture

These guides apply to proposals for:

- mineral extraction
- landfill and land raising (structures made from above ground waste) – referred to as ‘landfilling’ in these guides

You should refer to guide for government policies and legislation when considering proposals affecting agricultural land in England.

You should use the planning and aftercare advice to make sure developers understand what’s needed to reclaim sites to agriculture.

Guidance: Agricultural land: assess proposals for development

This guide explains how local planning authorities can assess proposals to protect the best and most versatile (BMV) agricultural land from inappropriate and unsustainable development.

Press release: Colne man sentenced for running illegal landfill

John Leslie Allison (72) of Southfield Lane, Colne, Lancashire, was sentenced on Friday 5 January 2018 at Preston Crown Court having pleaded guilty and been convicted on 7 July 2017 to the offence of operating an unpermitted waste facility. He was also ordered to pay the Environment Agency's investigation costs of £9,190.64 in full.

Sentencing was postponed whilst the Court directed investigations into Mr Allison's means.

In September the Court heard how Mr Allison had deliberately, over a 10-month period, between 20 September 2015 and 15 June 2016, been seen to repeatedly dispose of waste on land previously used for grazing livestock. This activity had continued despite a number of verbal and written warnings from the Environment Agency and a formal notice requiring him to clear waste from the land.

Sites where waste is disposed of by burying require an environmental permit from the Environment Agency and are subject to strict conditions and considerable investment in infrastructure to manage risks to the environment.

The illegal operation of this site has caused considerable concern to a number of local residents and potential harm to the environment.

The Environment Agency had sought to work with Mr Allison to bring about a change in his behaviour and had provided him with a number of opportunities to take action to remove waste from the land off Delves Lane.

An Environment Agency spokesperson said:

Mr Allison has entirely failed to respond to our efforts and, even

following an interview under caution, continued to import waste to the land without regard to warnings given by the Environment Agency.

Waste crime is a serious offence, which can damage the environment, undermine legitimate business and cause misery for local residents.

The Environment Agency is determined to make life hard for criminals. Our specialist crime unit uses intelligence to track and prosecute those involved in illegal waste activity and we rely on information from the public to bring those responsible to justice.

People can report waste crime 24/7 to the Environment Agency's incident hotline on 0800 80 70 60. Alternatively, you can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Press release: Waste company fined for permit breaches

A north east waste management company has been fined thousands of pounds for breaching environmental laws leading to a fly infestation which blighted the local community.

Niramax Group Limited appeared at Teesside Crown Court on Monday 15 January where it pleaded guilty to breaching its environmental permit, leading to a fly infestation at its site at Monument Park, Washington.

It also pleaded guilty to failing to comply with an enforcement notice by not removing waste as required at its site at Tofts Farm in Hartlepool after large amounts of waste tyres created a potential fire hazard.

The prosecution follows an investigation by the Environment Agency. They were fined a total of £16,000 and ordered to pay costs of £10,000.



Flies on the waste at the Washington site

Fly infestation

Lee Fish, prosecuting for the Environment Agency, told the court that at the Washington site a pre-arranged audit took place on 2 April 2015 where Environment Agency officers discovered a fly infestation.

Two of the bay doors to the waste shed were not operating satisfactorily which caused problems with pest control measures. Waste was not sufficiently divided between the four bays.

A second visit on 9 April saw the flies still present both outside and inside the waste storage shed. Efforts had been made to empty the waste from the bays. A visit on 12 April saw the site and issues had been cleared.

During the investigation Environment Agency officers spoke with neighbouring businesses and residents which confirmed the impact of the infestation.

Excessive tyre storage

At Hartlepool, where Niramax treats waste tyres, the Environment Agency originally attended the site in June 2015 after receiving complaints about dust.

On 28 July an Action Plan was signed by the operator to resolve a number of permit breaches, which included a dust management plan. And the large amounts of waste tyres on site were to be stored within bays in accordance with permit conditions and fire prevention guidance.

The operator agreed to return the site to compliance by 30 November 2015.

In February 2016, Environment Agency officers attended the site to assess its compliance with its permit. It was noted the site was still operating as it was in June the previous year and the bays were still buried under piles of waste tyres.

An enforcement notice was served on the company to clear the site of tyres by 14 June, 2016. On 15 June the Environment Agency visited the site, and while the amount of shredded tyre waste had reduced permit breaches were still evident – waste was not contained in the bays and no fire breaks were noted.

The bays were capable of storing 1490.4m³ and the contents were measured to be 2461.71m³.



Piles of waste tyres at the Hartlepool site.

‘Negative impact on local areas’

The company told the court that they had been caught out by an unseasonably sharp rise in temperature. This meant their fly suppression methods proved inadequate.

At the tyre site they suffered when a fluctuation in the market made it more difficult to remove the shredded tyres from the site. They said they had done everything in their power to comply with the enforcement notice.

Rachael Caldwell, Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency in the north east, said:

Environmental laws exist for a reason – to protect the environment and communities – so it is vital that waste operators meet the conditions of their permits.

In both of these cases there was a negative impact on the local areas, which is extremely unpleasant and unacceptable and not something communities should have to endure.

We always treat operators fairly and ensure they understand the potential impact their activities can have, and work together with them to help bring sites into compliance.

At Hartlepool we gave Niramax ample opportunity to bring their site back into compliance, and at Washington we gave them five days to act on what was a serious fly infestation.

But they repeatedly showed little regard for the detrimental impact on their neighbours and the environment. And during our investigation they even described our actions – to protect the environment and the community – as ‘nit picking’.

I hope this case reassures our communities that we will do everything possible to ensure operators comply with their permit, and take enforcement action when they don’t.