



Falconry – Inscribed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind

Minutes of the Meeting of the Hawk Board held on 19th July 2023

The Chairman opened the meeting at 12:30

Present:

Mark Upton (MU); Rachelle Upton (RU); Nick Havermann-Mart (NHM); Gordon Mellor (GM); Nick Fox (NF); Helen Nakielny (HN); Dean White; Jim Collins (JC)

Virtual:

Cameron Balfour (CB); Bob Dalton (BD); Martyn Standley (MS); Gary Biddiss (GB); Jimmy Robinson (JR)

Apologies:

Alan Collins; Tom Dutton; James Legge; Paul Manning; Don Ryan

Minutes of last meeting / Matters arising:

Minutes approved

Matters Arising

- Non-Native Species:

GM: Having been in touch with Defra and Natural England ad nauseam over the summer, it's all gone a bit quiet for them. I think we do need to have as much good information at our fingertips as we possibly can get and so that will be ongoing. This is an issue I think we will come back later.

- Meeting re Vowley: See appendix 5.

- Possible MP list for Vowley invite: Not yet done.

NF: How about inviting journalists of some bigwigs?

GM: Let's get lists of people

HN: James Grey, constituency MP

NF: Robert Buckland, Swindon MP

RU: Richard Benyon – Lords minister for DEFRA, also very pro UNESCO

GM & RU to create list for invites

- Who from CA to invite to Vowley: Not yet done – JL not at meeting.

- Nick Fox co-opting email to HB members: Done

- Try and contact The Wildlife Crime Unit:
GM: The WCU have no remit to respond to queries from the public so this is ongoing
MU: Could we bring this up with MP's?
DW: FOI request?
- Speak to CB re. SPCA investigatory powers:
CB: The Scottish SPCA is unique among animal charities in that it is the only one which is a reporting agency to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal. Under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006, **their inspectors have powers to enter and search properties under warrant**, seize animals and issue Animal Welfare Notices.

Section 8 of Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Ministers may by regulations modify the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 in order to add powers that a person may be appointed under section 49(2)(a) of that Act to exercise in connection with the investigation of offences under

- Part 1 of this Act, and
- Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

(2) Regulations under this section are subject to the affirmative procedure

GM: Can you find out if they are going to get more power?

CB: Police don't want that, but I will check and get back to you.

NF: How will that affect their charitable status?

CB: It has been brought up in parliament.

- Email Jim regarding possible SUN sub uplift: Done

Chairman's Report:

We continue to face challenges across a number of areas. The major being to establish, or rather re-establish, good communication and dialogue with Government departments. Having been set up at the behest of the Home Office/DoE way back in the 1980s and having worked consistently to represent falconry and the interests of bird of prey keepers ever since, it is regrettable that we have real difficulty in having our voice heard in the operational levels of Government. Nonetheless we continue to write, phone, lobby, and attend meetings, seeking positive outcomes in the face of an increasing tendency for restriction.

I can report that whilst Avian Influenza continues to be a major threat to all birds, there does seem to be an uncoupling between cases across the domestic poultry stock and the wild bird populations. Good biosecurity and increased understanding about this pernicious disease, have seen instances in the poultry industry fall sharply. Recordings of wild bird die off are however, at a worryingly high level, with the black headed gull suffering mortality at levels never hitherto seen. The advice, as we prepare for the new season, is to avoid waterfowl wherever possible, not to feed wild-sourced avian food, and maintain high standards of biosecurity.

Bird gatherings (field meetings) still require to be licensed, which adds considerably to the administrative burden those for undertaking the organisation of such events, but it remains an important safeguard for attendees and their hawks and falcons.

DEFRA/APHA are still silent about the likely hood of a viable AI vaccination being licensed for general use in the near future.

We are facing continued scrutiny from the newly expanded 'compliance' arm of DEFRA and have repeatedly ask for explanation of quite why at this time, budgets and capacity have been expanded where there is no evidence of a significant problem. The only measure that can be accepted as proof is successful prosecution of illegal activity, and these remain very limited. I reiterate that the Hawk Board fully supports action against any criminality in our ranks, but despite a continued clamour in protectionist and wildlife organisations, echoed by the National Wildlife Crime Unit, the number of prosecutions remains very low.

What we are seeing, with DEFRA's compliance activity is an increase scrutiny of our paperwork requirements - they are looking at completion and submission of ringing and registration or A10 application, with vigour. Indeed, we have seen this before in the early 2000s. Whilst I may be criticised for saying so, it does seem that if they cannot find significant criminality to pursue with regard to illegally taken wild birds of prey, they are seeking to ensure that their somewhat arbitrary timescales and paperwork demands are adhered to in the captive stock.

The Sustainable Users Group is vital for us as we seek to influence and engage with Government.

The Natural England Wild Take review rumbles along, and I reiterate that our position is that the facility for licensing should be kept on the statute book for the very small numbers of falconers that wish to pursue this traditional aspect of falconry. The aspiration is legitimate, but very limited. Wild take is no substitute for our successful domestic/captive breeding that continues to supply the vast majority of our requirements. It is positive to see the range of engagement from falconry and bird of prey keeping, represented at the stakeholders meetings.

We have recently published a position statement regarding the threat of positive lists. This has been sent to Scotland where the positive list proposal is still live. Positive lists are unwelcome and a threat to us all.

We are trying to galvanise support in Scotland by contacting falconers north of the border, asking for a commitment to action. For understandable reasons our voice there has been quite muted in recent years, and the situation there is one where we are challenged on a number of fronts. I firmly believe that we need proactivity in Scotland, this does not have to be under the Hawk Board banner and I am hoping to work with all committed parties to have our voice heard. Our Chairman there, Cameron Balfour, is making good strides at pulling likeminded people together.

We are seeking to renew and upgrade our website to make it more accessible and reflective of the modern Hawk Board. We hope that we can involve a greater proportion of the bird of prey keeping community and we are looking at several initiatives to achieve this. It is not sustainable to rely so predominantly upon the fees paid by our major club, the BFC. Without them the Hawk Board would not exist and falconry and bird of prey keeping would lose its representative voice.

The Board will be at the falcon racing at Vowley again this year, and we will be available to engage and debate issues and challenges with attendees. We have invited some of the DEFRA/APHA team to attend with us and it may be an opportunity for those so interested, to engage with our civil servants.

On a personal note, I have been pleased to spend some time recently with Iain Timmins, a former and highly effective HB Coordinator. Iain and his wife now reside in Canada but have been back for a short visit. We should all remember and indeed be grateful to Iain – way back in the 90s he, almost single handedly, ensured that quarry licenses for merlins were retained. We owe him real thanks for this and a good deal more besides.

Treasurers Report:

At present the HB Current and Saving accounts are still in reasonably good health.

In the last financial year, we made a loss of £4,565.00 against the previous year's loss of £4,303.00. There is a corporation tax liability of £29.26, but as with previous years it is not expected that HMRC will try to collect it.

Thank you to all clubs that have paid their subs for this year, the following clubs have still to pay:

Bedfordshire Hawking Club

Irish Hawking Club

South East Falconry Group

Wessex Falconry & Hampshire Hawking Club

RU: Northern England Falconry Club have very kindly given The Hawk Board a donation of £100.00

GM to send a thank you to the NEFC.

GM: We need to become self-sustaining; we cannot keep losing money.

NF: Getting big companies involved could help, we have 2 of the big pest controllers coming to Vowley.

HN: How about individual supporter members.

GM: Time taken for lots of members would be difficult.

DW: Could have an online payment button.

MS: Non-club falconers could get together and have 1 person to represent them.

GM: Buy a badge, be a supporter – could do something like that at Vowley?

Avian Influenza

NF: In Europe can you buy a vaccination?

NHM: You can in Brazil.

GM: APHA are slow at grasping this, months ago Zoos were told they could vaccinate.

NHM: We applied as a zoo and were told that there was no vaccine.

Vowley:

Minutes of meeting regarding Vowley – See Appendix 5

MU: Will need help getting the information to go on the banners.

GB: John Dixon is happy to help HB.

GM: Would be good to spread our net – I will email him.

Website/Re-Branding:

RU: I've sent the logo branding to those attending virtually.

NF: Logo eyes are dead, need to tweak to make more alive.

MU: I will speak to the company to see if they can tweak.

DW: Just needs a white crescent in the eyes – the book connection isn't obvious.

MU: The book in the logo is to show that HB looks and deals with policy.

MS: I think it looks good.

Wild Take (Stud Book):

GM: Wild take and the stud book reappeared during the wild take consultation with Natural England a little while ago. Some of the conclusions the NE team had drawn from the consultation and from the first stakeholders meeting were a little bit spurious and they were spurious because they suggested, as an alternative to wild take, those who wanted to engage with the wild could become ringers - it's a bit like saying someone who wants to play football should go out and play golf.

GM: So, they have drawn some very odd sort of conclusions about what would be possible of course. Both Natural England and indeed our opponents, the RSPB, and what have you constantly conflated taking for falconry and taking for breeding, taking for breeding under sites would not be allowed as we understand it. Therefore, that's a no no. Therefore, they shouldn't really be talking about it, but they constantly defaulted to. "Well, if you get these birds in how do we track their offspring when people have used them to breed and then get them into the system so that goes back to laundering", that is completely spurious, but they seem to be a little bit hung up on that. In the same breath, the RPG man repeated several times how you can't breed from anything that is annex A.

GM: They had option an A, which is basically the status quo and an Option B, which is to suspend them, subject to a change in circumstances where they may well at some point in the future re-establish the licencing system. I've got a feeling that that is the option B that they are actually going to go for.

Furthering Communications Between NE; DEFRA; JNCC:

MU: I received an email re communications between us and DEFRA; NE; JNCC; APHA. I suggested that we invite them to meetings and said I would get back to them after the board meeting.

GM: I agree, lets invite them to meetings.

NF: Invite them to Vowley

SUN Update:

See Appendix 1

JC: We are getting older, the average age of representatives within SUN is 60-65, younger people aren't getting involved.

GM: It's all groups, I mean, everywhere you look it's our generation that are doing things and I don't know whether that's a just a generational thing and that youngsters don't want to get involved or whether we're not pitching it the right way.

RU: In Europe they encourage families to go to the field meets and dinners, over here if you are not a falconer you aren't really made to feel that welcome.

GM: HB is very much a product of the 80s really and you know I'm not complaining about that it's just a fact of life, I think even the way that we are constituted and reliant on the clubs is a product of that time. But you know there has to be some real changes going forward but and we'll just end this little bit by saying, and I've said this within the BFC, but I would say it anywhere that would listen to me if the Hawk Board folded the clubs would have to reinvent it.

Scottish Update:

See Appendix 2

IAF Update:

See Appendix 3

MU: We've been fighting on this Nature Restoration Law that's been going through the EC. The secretariat started off by fighting it at the request of the IAF biodiversity group who ruled in favour of lobbying MP's along with FACE who were lobbying hard for this. But there was some criticism, particularly from ANFA, for who said this is going upset farmers and we don't want to upset farmers. So, the secretariat came back to me and said as Vice President for Europe what's your decision? Do we fight this or not? And I said yes, we do fight it because this is long term improvement of Environmental Conservation. Originally it was going through the whole process quite well until the farmers, (some weren't really farmers, they were big agricultural business), got hold of this and lobbied all the conservative parties and all the Conservative MP's who then suddenly changed their mind and started to fight. The 12th of July was the last vote on it and we were told we were going to lose by about two votes and we actually got 336 in favour and 300 against, with 13 abstentions. So, it just went through. There will be more fighting about exactly what's in it, but it's looking like it's going through.

Countryside Alliance Update:

See Appendix 4

AOB:

None

The meeting closed at 15:30

Next Meeting: TBC Oct 2023

Location: TBC

Rachelle Upton, Co-coordinator – 20th July 2023

SUN Report from Jim Collins

The "antis" biggest push by far remains that on Positive Lists (with the second push for the introduction of the equivalent of the U.S.'s Lacey Act across Europe). Both these lobbying pushes are equally dangerous to us here in the U.K. not only because of the near certainty of a Labour Party General Election victory within the next 12-18 months but also because if such initiatives get traction on the Continent it makes it almost impossible for any UK Government to counter the clamour for it here. Accordingly, we continue to help Continental colleagues fight this in countries from The Netherlands, Germany and Spain, through Slovenia, Finland, Italy, Malta and Austria. Our opponents also continue to push for these legislative changes with the European Commission i.e. seeking them to become EU-wide Directives. We attended two events via computer link last week - both hosted in Brussels with the Commission in attendance - one covering the hunting fraternity and the other all keeping and trade of non-domesticated species. Both meetings had the theme of combating illegal wildlife trade. Noticeably the one on hunting had very few "antis" turn-up but the one on keeping and trading non-domesticated species was awash with the loonies. Disappointingly, the European Commissioner - who was present in person - was very wishy-washy on both Positive Lists and a Lacey Act equivalent (whilst last year the Commission stated clearly that they could see no merit in either) and said that the Commission were now commissioning consultants to review whether or not either made sense and were workable in the context of Europe. This goes to show the power the "antis" wield with the big spending they do on incessant lobbying - the European Parliament has already voted heavily in favour of both a Lacey Act equivalent and an EU-wide Positive List, somewhat forcing the Commission into softening their opposition to these legislative proposals. We of course also have the Scottish proposals put forward for a Positive List for which we have been heavily involved in two detailed rebuttals of the proposals.

SUN has been heavily involved assisting the Hawk Board and individual bird-of-prey breeders in getting a more forceful representation at the highest levels of DEFRA regarding inappropriate wording of compliance letters from APHA/DEFRA, Article 10 and Bird Registration issues. These efforts are certainly moving us in the right direction and with separate meetings plus the CSUG meeting coming-up in the next two weeks we should be able to further update in a positive light in the coming weeks.

Members may have seen the political situation developing in Spain. In the past months we have been helping Spanish colleagues in countering the move to the highly restricted Positive List that is set to become law on 1st September. In May there were Regional and Local Elections in Spain and the ruling Socialist/Extreme Left took a bit of a hammering. As a result, the Prime Minister called a snap General Election for 23rd July (it was previously scheduled for December of this year). The current polls show it neck-and-neck overall between a coalition of all the left-leaning parties (current coalition partners, plus Communists, Greens, Basque Separatists and Catalan Separatists) and the right (Popular Party - essentially our Conservative Party and the hard-line right Vox Party). Obviously if the left triumph, the law will come into place as designated on 1st September but the right coalition have committed to ditching it if they come into power.

The recent CITES Animals Committee Meeting in Geneva was actually an overall good one for pro-utilisation standpoints, despite the mass of anti-NGO's present. Able to push back substantially on the attacks on captive-breeding initiatives (though countries like the U.S. and Israel continue to support such attacks) and minimise the number of species going through review. Nevertheless, the CITES Secretariat have concentrated on the UK and EU for not forcing registration of all premises breeding Annex A species - the U.S. amongst others have been pressurising the

CITES Secretariat on this for at least two years. The U.S. and others think that this will be a way to close a lot of breeding facilities (all taxa) because they are convinced that a lot of breeding operations will not be able to prove legal provenance of the founder stock to the satisfaction of the CITES Secretariat and CITES Parties who would get to vote on each registration application. Representation by SUN affiliates and/or associated Continental organisations behind the scenes helped steer things in our direction on a number of specific areas, for example keeping Saker Falcons off the Review of Significant Trade, pushing for better direct stakeholder representation at workshops, keeping a focus on animal transportation only as it relates to genuine animal welfare, etc.

Members will also have noticed that the Government has ditched its Kept Animals Bill. The aspect most problematic for Hawk Board members was that for the keeping of primates in private hands (the reason being that this element had a clause towards the end that gave any subsequent Minister the right to add any other taxa for special licensing conditions - for which birds-of-prey would be a prime candidate - without recourse to Parliament but instead solely by Secondary Legislation. Although the keeping of primates section is now being rushed through instead as an amendment to the Animal Welfare Act already in existence, the death of the Kept Animals Bill does mean that addition of any other animal taxa for special licensing conditions would need to go through a full consultation process (although not a debate or vote in Parliament).

Appendix 2

Scottish Report from Cameron Balfour

IAF Report from Mark Upton

The registration for the IAF Council of Delegates Meeting 2023, IAF-NAFA International Meeting: Kearney, Nebraska 19 – 24 November, 2023 is now open at <https://www.n-a-f-a.com/event/2023NAFAMeet> for the NAFA Meeting and <https://form.123formbuilder.com/6422361/2023-registration-for-the-55th-annual-council-of-delegates-meet> for the IAF Council of Delegates Meeting.

A conference organised by IUCN-IAF on the Role of Falconers and Local Communities in Conservation and Sustainability was held in Cape Town, South Africa between the 24-26 June. The conference aimed to discuss joint projects between IAF and IUCN-SUME, prepare for the Sustainability Conference to be held later this year in Abu Dhabi, promote falconry in Sub-Saharan Africa, and develop closer relationships between IUCN, IAF, CMS Raptors MoU, and Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Raptor Conservation Fund. The conference covered various topics including the work of IUCN-SUME and IAF, management of urban ecosystems, biodiversity conservation in farmlands, and reversing biodiversity loss. The latter includes addressing the loss of the Black Harrier as a biomarker for ecosystem loss and degradation. Additionally, the conference will focus on the Cape Renosterveld biome loss.

At the end of May the IAF Biodiversity Group was re-established. Headed by Michael Greshake (Chairman) and joined by Paul Robinson as and on the 30th of May, IAF Biodiversity WG members and IAF Secretariat attended an event on "New solutions to help reverse Europe's biodiversity and pollinator crisis on farmland" in the Committee of the Regions which celebrated the conclusion of the Interreg North Sea Region Partridge and Beespoke projects to gain further information on these two indicator, umbrella species based habitat conservation measures.

Since then the IAF Vice-president for Europe, the IAF Biodiversity Group and the IAF Secretariate in conjunction with FACE have been involved with lobbying MEP's on the proposed Nature Restoration Law (NRL) making its way through the European Parliament. It has been felt that the proposed law is extremely important for the protection of biodiversity and conservation of many important species throughout Europe, including those of important to falconry, in particular our quarry species. Lots of large agri businesses and political groups thought that the proposed laws could damage commercial interests and lobbied hard against the proposal making it a hard fought battle. The last hearing was on the 12 July when a vote in favour of Nature Restoration Law has been adopted. The final casting vote of 640 MEPs was made up of 336 in favour, 300 against, and 13 abstentions. The Parliament's ENVI Committee will now be given the mandate to enter negotiations with other EU institutions, in particular the Council of Europe.

On June the 17th the IAF attended the 100th Anniversary of the Deutscher Falkenorden at the Orangerie, Schloss Charlottenburg, Berlin. A great achievement for any falconry club in the 21 Century. The event had interesting stands organised by the different regional groups of the DFO and was ended with a gala dinner and speeches by falconers, dignitaries and politicians. The event was attended by Falconers from around the world.

Countryside Alliance Report from James Legge

POLITICAL/POLICY

The Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill

The Government has withdrawn the Animal Welfare (Kept Animals) Bill, faced with unnecessary and divisive amendments directed at trail hunting and working dogs. The Government will instead introduce the measures contained within the Bill through a range of new, tightly-drawn primary and secondary legislation, and has for instance opened a short consultation on measures to license the keeping of primates.

The Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill

The Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill has passed Second Reading in the House of Lords and awaits dates for its Committee Stage.

Equipment Theft (Prevention) Bill

Greg Smith MP obtained Government support for his Equipment Theft (Prevention) Bill, which was drawn up in consultation with the Alliance. It passed the House of Commons following debates in which various MPs quoted Alliance research in support, and had its Third Reading in the House of Lords on 14 July.

Online Safety Bill

The Alliance has drafted and supported amendments to the Online Safety Bill by Baroness Buscombe and Lord Garnier, which address ideologically motivated bullying and harassment. The Bill has passed its Committee Stage in the House of Lords. The Government has thus far refused to accept the amendments, but we have received assurances that the concerns may be addressed through the related Digital Markets Bill. Discussions continue.

Rural crime

The Countryside Alliance was a key partner and organiser at the National Rural Crime Network conference at the end of June. The conference was addressed by the Environment Secretary and brought together rural Police and Crime Commissioners, the NPCC lead for rural crime, stakeholders and academics. The audience heard from the rural crime lead from Wales, they received the headline findings from the Organised Criminal Gang report which is going to be released over the summer – you can read about the day here: <https://www.countryside-alliance.org/resources/news/new-rural-crime-conference-will-address-the-key-issues>.

The Countryside Alliance leads the communications for the NRCN and will be putting the comms plan together for this research. We are also organising the National Rural Crime Week for September which will bring together PCCs, stakeholders and police with the single aim of raising the issue of rural crime with a view on how we can tackle it. The Countryside Alliance has launched the rural crime survey 2023.

Future Countryside

Future Countryside was held on 6 June and had over 230 delegates. The delegates heard from a lineup of speakers – including co-Chairs Julian Glover and Countryside Alliance Chairman Nick Herbert, Defra Secretary Therese Coffey, Lord Mandelson, and Labour Shadow Defra Minister Daniel Zeichner. At the event, we shared some important research about people's feelings about the countryside based on polling which showed that British people are incredibly proud of our countryside, second only to our NHS, with almost everyone polled (93%) agreeing that it should be regarded as part of our national heritage. Most people

(54%) do not feel the countryside is being taken seriously enough by the Government, and three-quarters (75%) want more political debate on the challenges facing rural areas. The event received extensive media coverage and had a reach of over 1 million people. A report on the day's events will be released over the summer.

SHOOTING

Knives consultation

The Alliance responded to a Government consultation on banning certain types of knives, emphasising that while we support action to tackle knife crime, any changes to the law must not restrict or prohibit knives or other bladed implements, used legitimately in farming, land management, wildlife management and shooting, or by gardeners, thatchers, chefs and butchers for whom they are essential tools.

Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds

Defra still plans to review the Code of Practice for the Welfare of Gamebirds Reared for Sporting Purposes at a time to be determined.

Snares

Defra also plans to review the use of snares by means of a call for evidence. We now aim to support a licensing scheme as an alternative to a ban and have prepared a paper discussing legislative options. Wales has voted to ban snares entirely and the situation in Scotland is also likely to come under further scrutiny.

Cages

A consultation into ending the use of cages for laying hens following a petition by campaigners remains to be launched in due course. We still expect gamebird laying systems to be included in this.

Release of gamebirds and SPAs – GL43

The decision by Defra to remove Special Protection Areas (SPA) from the new General Licence (GL) 43 published on 31 May 2023, a day after the previous GL had expired, with those wishing to release gamebirds on or within 500m of the boundaries of those sites now having to apply for an Individual Licence, has had significant implications for numerous stakeholders. The Countryside Alliance and other members of the Aim to Sustain partnership wrote to Defra Secretary of State on 8 June calling for GL43 to be re-issued as a matter of urgency, with SPAs included alongside Special Areas of Conservation. As of 6 July, no response had been received.

Firearms licensing consultation

The Government has launched its long-awaited consultation to seek views on the recommendations it has received for changes to the legislation on firearms licensing, possible changes to the system of referees, and changes in other areas of firearms licensing. A recommendation that shotgun and firearms legislation should be aligned is not being taken further. The consultation, which is open to all those with an interest in firearms licensing in England, Wales, and Scotland, runs 23 August 2023.

Avian Influenza

The risk of avian influenza for all poultry has reduced to low (meaning the event is rare but does occur) and the Avian Influenza Prevention Zones for poultry and captive birds in England, Wales and Scotland was lifted from midday on the 4 July 2023. Whilst the risk level in kept birds has reduced, the risk in wild birds remains high.

Poultry Register

Defra's consultation on the Government's proposals to amend the current poultry registration requirements so that it becomes compulsory for all those that keep captive birds to register their birds, regardless of species or number, closed on 31 May. It is essential that adequate information is held on all premises that keep captive birds across Great Britain, and the information on the poultry register is important in the prevention and control of notifiable avian disease outbreaks.

SCOTLAND

Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill

The long-awaited draft guidance has now been published and is being digested and dissected by our sector. NatureScot will arrange a meeting so that we can feed back directly in order to encourage changes to some of the detail within the guidance.

Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill

With the summer recess underway at Holyrood, the evidence sessions of Stage 1 came to a close at the end of June. Licensing will be going ahead for the taking of grouse (by anyone anywhere), muirburn and trapping. Snaring is still being debated. It is also likely that the SSPCA will be afforded additional powers relating to the investigation of welfare offences, against the advice of stakeholder organisations and Police Scotland. Licensing detail will be affected by amendments as the Bill passes through Stages 2 and 3 this year and the SCA continues to engage with the Scottish Government, stakeholders and MSPs. A positive reaction came from the Minister when it was suggested that a licence for grouse should be extended to 3 or 5 years, rather than the annual licence that is currently proposed in the Bill.

WALES

Gamebird Release Licensing Consultation

The consultation on the proposed licensing system for the release of pheasant and red legged partridge in Wales closed on the 20 June, which Natural Resources Wales (NRW) says received over 42,000 responses. The Alliances e-lobby figures are incorporated into that and reached 12,906 signatures. We await further information from NRW. A series of meetings were held across Wales with fellow Aim to Sustain members which were exceptionally well attended. The intention is to hold further meetings in September.

Agriculture (Wales) Bill – Snares

Members of the Senedd have approved the first Wales agriculture bill which sets out the future support for farming. It is expected to come into force later this summer, after it has received Royal Assent. The main source of future government funding for farmers in Wales will come through the proposed Sustainable Farming Scheme due to begin in 2025. Whilst we welcome the development and the progression of the Agriculture (Wales) Bill, we are incredibly disappointed by the Welsh Government's refusal to engage with stakeholders in our sector on their proposals to ban the use of snares, which forms part of the Bill.

Appendix 5 – Minutes of Vowley Meeting



Falconry – Inscribed by UNESCO as Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind

HB at Vowley Meeting held on 23rd June 2023

The Chairman opened the meeting at 13:00

Present:

Nick Fox (NF); Gordon Mellor (GM); Helen Nakielny (HN); Mark Upton (MU); Rachelle Upton (RU)

MU: I had a chat with NHM, there will not be many HB people at Vowley so we will have manpower problems. NHM offered for us to share a tent/marquee – if we do this then I think HB should pay half his costs.

NF: There are 2 things to consider

1. Presence on the ground/hospitality
2. HB Seminar – would be more challenging

We have the big falcon ban, but people would rather be in a tent and watching the hunt racing.

HN: People aren't going to give up their time to come and listen to HB, better to put names to faces for people.

NF: How about a compromise and we create posters, etc.?

- Wild Take/AI/other issues
- Constitution
- Photos of specialists/club reps

MU: That is what I thought; HB tent connected to Honeybrook – our tent for chat and Honeybrook for refreshments.

GM: RU and I will look at what is needed – banners; flags/pop-ups.

HN: Leaflets – information to take away.

RU: I will get the specialists badges made up.

MU: Banner – what we've done and what we are doing.

GM: Position ourselves to talk to anyone who comes in.

MU: If we get lots of people asking the same question, we can arrange a time for meeting to discuss the issue/question.

- **GM to contact NHM to offer to pay 50% food costs.**