

Carl Sargeant AC / AM
Y Gweinidog Cyfoeth Naturiol
Minister for Natural Resources



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Eich cyf/Your ref P-04-544
Ein cyf/Our ref CS/01418/15

William Powell AM
Assembly Member for Mid & West Wales
Chair - Petitions Committee
Ty Hywel
Cardiff Bay
Cardiff
CF99 1NA

committeebusiness@Wales.gsi.gov.uk

18 September 2015

Dear William Powell AM,

Thank you for your letter dated 18 June regarding petition P-04-544; ban the shooting of Greenland White-fronted geese (GWfG).

In your letter you explain the Committee agreed to write to me to pass on the latest correspondence it has received, seek my general comments on that correspondence and to ask me to reconsider the Welsh Government's position on a legislative ban on shooting this species.

I have very recently undertaken a review of the Welsh Government's position on this issue. Following a meeting between my officials and Natural Resources Wales, I received in July of this year a comprehensive briefing by Natural Resources Wales together with advice from my officials. I considered this carefully.

In Wales and England it is illegal to shoot GWfG during the close season (1 February – 31 August in, or over, any area below high water mark) but not during other periods of the year. However, there has been a long-standing, 40 year + voluntary ban on hunting GWfG by local wildfowling clubs on the Dyfi estuary. It is acknowledged by all parties that this voluntary shooting ban has been instrumental in protecting the birds there.

I understand that, during 2014, the British Association of Shooting and Conservation (BASC) worked with all wildfowling clubs across Wales to bring in similar voluntary bans on shooting GWfG on land over which the wildfowling clubs have specific rights to shoot. This is particularly important in north Wales and Anglesey because the birds migrate over these areas to reach the Dyfi. I have been advised that all BASC affiliated wildfowling clubs in Wales have now agreed a club rule preventing the shooting of GWfG.

We have no records or evidence of GWfG being shot in Wales between 2008/09 to the present. I have received no new evidence that suggests that these birds are currently being shot in Wales. The available evidence therefore suggests that the voluntary ban on the shooting of GWfG in Wales is being adhered to.

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay
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Wedi'i argraffu ar bapur wedi'i ailgylchu (100%)

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I have therefore concluded that it is appropriate to maintain the current Welsh Government position which was agreed, following consultation, in 2013.

However, I have agreed that my officials should continue discussions with Natural Resources Wales and other stakeholders to both strengthen our evidence base concerning the ecology of the GWfG in Wales, and to support land management measures which will promote GWfG conservation in the Dyfi Valley and elsewhere in Wales. My officials are meeting NRW in early October to take this forward.

I believe that this approach will have a greater impact on the conservation of the GWfG in Wales than a statutory ban on shooting.

I will however keep the Welsh Government position under review, and if new evidence comes to light concerning the shooting of GWfG in Wales, then the option of pursuing a statutory prohibition on shooting GWfG in Wales will be reconsidered.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CS', written in a cursive style.

Carl Sargeant AC / AM

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Minister for Natural Resources