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Janet Finch-Saunders AM/AC  
Chair  
Petitions Committee  
By email: [SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales](mailto:SeneddPetitions@Assembly.Wales)

4 July 2019

Dear Janet Finch-Saunders

### **Petition P-05-813 Ban the use of Larsen Traps (multi-corvid traps)**

Thank you for your letter of 23 May 2019. Please accept my sincere apology for the lateness of my reply.

As you may be aware, in April 2019, following legal challenge by way of judicial review by Wild Justice, Natural England revoked three of their General Licences (GL04-06). The basis of the Wild Justice challenge was that in so far as those General Licences were concerned, they had been granted unlawfully as Natural England had not complied with section 16(1A) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

As a result of the challenge, as outlined above, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) are currently in the process of reviewing and revising a suite of General Licences, these are GL 001-004<sup>1</sup>, that apply to 15 bird species<sup>2</sup> in Wales. These General licences allow lethal action and capture to be carried out (including the use of Larsen Traps to catch corvids), which would otherwise be illegal, without the need to apply for a bespoke licence.

As part of our review NRW are currently appraising the evidence base for General Licences 001-004, focussing on two principal areas:

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<sup>1</sup> NRW General licence 001 - 2019 Licence to kill or take certain wild birds to prevent serious damage to agriculture, forestry or fisheries, or prevent the spread of disease, 002 - 2019 Licence to kill or take certain wild birds for the purpose of preserving public health and public safety, 003 - 2019 Licence to kill or take certain wild birds for the purpose of preserving air safety, 004 - 2019 Licence to kill or take certain wild birds for the purpose of conserving flora and fauna, including wild birds.

<sup>2</sup> Carrion crow, jackdaw, jay, magpie, rook, lesser black-backed gull, herring gull, great-black-backed gull, common gull, black-headed gull, lapwing, wood pigeon, collared dove, feral pigeon, Canada goose.

- i. Identifying the level of evidence available to support inclusion of the 15 species of wild bird variously listed on General Licences 001-004 in Wales.
- ii. Appraising the evidence base to determine whether, in Wales, there are no other non-lethal satisfactory solutions available.

Currently, we have established a General Licence 'user' stakeholder group, held regular update calls with them and chaired two face-face meetings. Additionally, we are also in the process of establishing a 'non-user' group meeting to identify their concerns and points of view to ensure we have a balanced view from all stakeholders.

As you may appreciate, the current issue surrounding General Licences in Wales and indeed elsewhere throughout the UK is both complex and sensitive. In support of this view, NRW are engaged in ongoing delicate discussions with both 'user' and 'non-user' stakeholders. The use of Larsen Traps as a means of lethal control of corvids is referenced, together with conditions of use, within the General Licence suite we are currently revising. Therefore, NRW recommend to the Petitions Committee that we investigate the use and regulation of Larsen Traps in Wales after we complete our appraisal of the evidence base during our review of General Licences 001-004.

I trust the contents of my response reassures the Petitions Committee that NRW will take the use and regulation of Larsen traps in Wales seriously.

Should you need any further clarification please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Clare Pillman  
**Chief Executive**

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Mike Evans, Head of Knowledge and Evidence  
Ruth Jenkins, Head of Natural Resource Management Policy