



NATURALCARE

# The Orkney Hen Harrier Scheme

## For Orkney Mainland Moors SPA and surrounding farmland

### **Orkney Mainland Moors**

The Orkney Mainland Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) is of outstanding interest for its variety of upland habitats and breeding birds. It is internationally important, and has been made an SPA, for breeding hen harrier, short-eared owl and red-throated diver. The SPA is made up of four Sites of Special Scientific Interest: West Mainland Moorlands, Keelylang Hill & Swartaback Burn, Orphir & Stenness Hills and Glims Moss & Durkadale.

Special Protection Areas are a European Union designation which recognise sites of international importance for certain birds.

Orkney Mainland Moors SPA comprises large tracts of blanket bog and heather moorland, and, amongst them, sheltered dales with willow scrub and other tall plants and wetlands. It is this diversity of habitats that, in turn, supports its rich variety of birds. The site is of national importance for its moorland breeding bird community which includes merlin, golden plover, whimbrel, wigeon, lapwing, dunlin, snipe, curlew, arctic skua, great skua and twite.



## 1. The Scheme

The Orkney Hen Harrier Scheme (OHHS) aims to support management on the hills and nearby farmland which will help the birds and habitats of special interest. One of the main objectives is to restore the fortunes of the declining hen harrier population.

Hen harriers are a characteristic sight over Orkney's hills. The SPA hosts about 90% of Orkney's breeding population. They nest in tall heather on moorland and often forage over surrounding farmland.

Harrier breeding success and numbers are strongly influenced by land-use patterns, and have declined seriously since the 1980s. This is linked mainly to conditions outside the SPA. As agriculture has developed, much of the rougher grazing land has become quite heavily grazed, or has been converted to improved grassland. The mosaic of crops, grassland and rough vegetation associated with former farming practices has become simplified. As a result, numbers of Orkney voles and small farmland birds have declined.

On the hill land within the SPA conditions have been very different. There has generally been little grazing by livestock, muirburn has almost ceased and heather has become long and dense in many areas.

These land-use changes affect the numbers of small birds and Orkney voles and the hen harriers which prey on them. To ensure the future of the Orkney hen harrier population and increase the diversity of moorland habitats, SNH has developed management prescriptions for moorland within the SPA and for adjoining farmland.

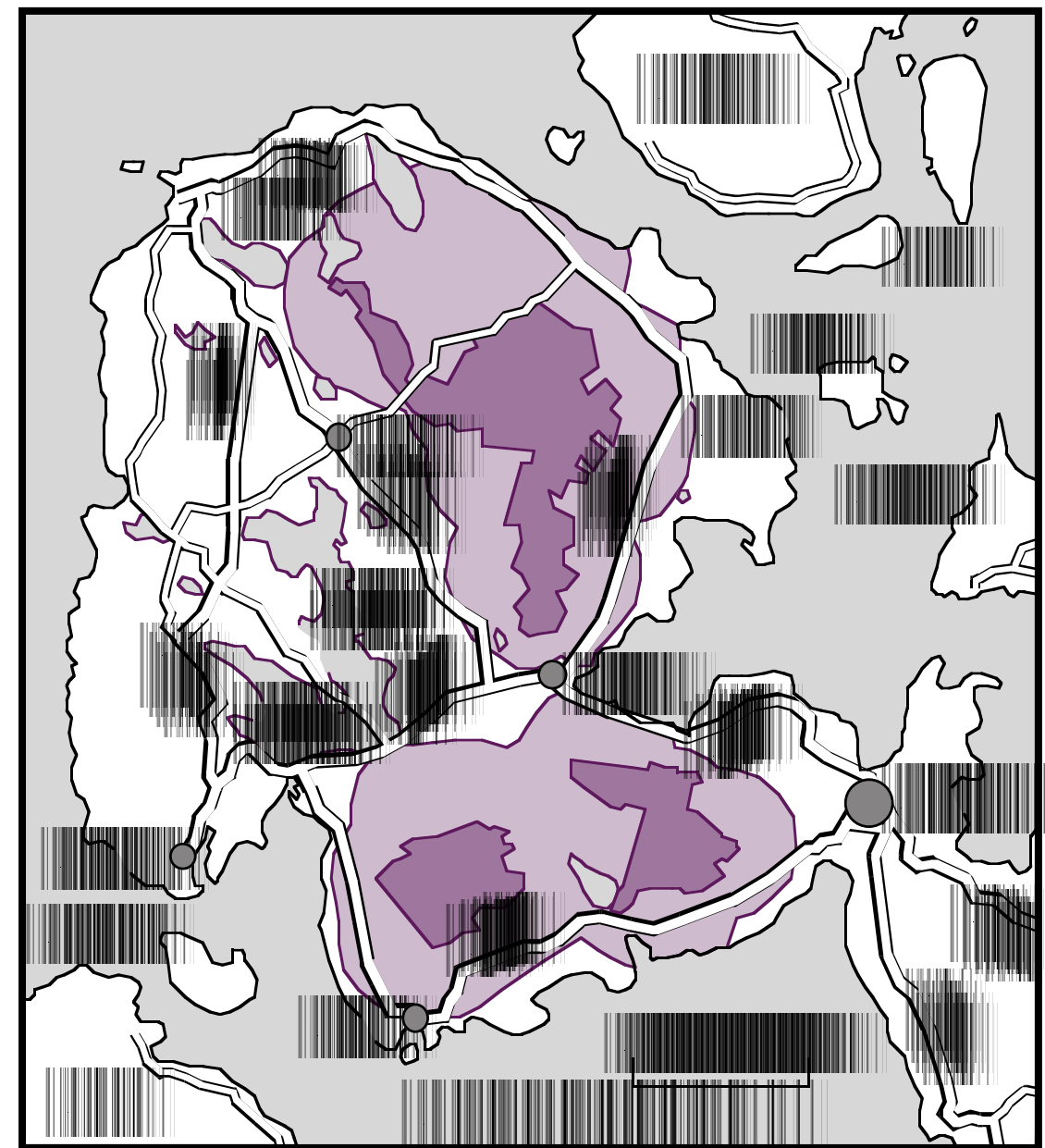
You can get further information about the Orkney Hen Harrier Scheme from  
 Scottish Natural Heritage  
 54/56 Junction Road,  
 Kirkwall,  
 Orkney  
 KW15 1AW  
 Tel: 01856 875302.

For general information about SNH's Natural Care schemes you can email our helpline at [natural.care@snh.gov.uk](mailto:natural.care@snh.gov.uk) or visit our website at [www.snh.org.uk](http://www.snh.org.uk)

You may also find the leaflet "*Frequently asked Questions*" answers your queries.

### The Scheme Area

The area comprises the Orkney Mainland Moors SPA and surrounding farmland. The surrounding area includes all the land within a line drawn 2 km from all known recent hen harrier breeding sites.



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## 2. Making an Application

### Natural Care Schemes

The OHHS is part of SNH's Natural Care programme of voluntary management schemes and agreements. There are some basic rules concerning eligibility and agreement conditions which are common to all Natural Care schemes. They are set out in the "Frequently Asked Questions" leaflet, which you should read first.

### Who can apply?

If you have a legal right to manage land of suitable quality within the Scheme area and expect to have that right for at least five years you can apply.

### What land can I include in an application?

If you occupy land within the Orkney Mainland Moors SPA; you must include all of that land in your application. You may choose whether or not to include additional areas of suitable land within the 2 km fringe zone.

If your land is outside the SPA and within the 2 km fringe zone; you may choose specific areas to enter for one or more of the grassland/vole habitat and farmland birds prescriptions.

You will not generally be able to include significant areas of moorland outside the SPA.

Where the 2 km fringe zone boundary splits a field, we will try to be flexible about what land can be included.

It is not essential for the land to be in agricultural use.

### How do I apply?

1. You must first get an application form from SNH. The Scheme is being managed from SNH's Orkney office in Kirkwall. Everyone with a legal right to manage the land included in the application must complete the form and send it back to the Scheme Officer in Kirkwall. Where more than one party is involved (e.g. landlord & tenant) this must be declared on the application and an indication given that there is general agreement between the different people involved.
2. When SNH confirms in writing that you are eligible to enter the Scheme, you can prepare a management plan. If you intend to manage land inside the SPA, you must have a Moorland Management Plan (MMP). If you intend to manage land outside the SPA, you must have a Farmland Management Plan (FMP).
3. Following completion of the Plan and provisional agreement between all parties, an Agreement will have to be signed by the relevant parties and the agreed work can then commence. The management plan you agree with SNH will form part of your formal management agreement contract with SNH.

### When can I apply?

The Scheme is open for applications from 21st January 2003 until 31st January 2005.

When you apply will depend on when you intend management to start, and whether the land you wish to enter is inside the SPA, outside the SPA, or both:

- a. For land **outside** the SPA, you must submit your **Farmland Management Plan** by 1 February at the latest, with a view to management starting on 1 April. For 2003 only, management will be permitted to start up to 15 May, and plans will be accepted up to 1 April.
- b. For moorland **inside** the SPA, management can start on any date, but you must submit your **Moorland Management Plan** at least 2 months before you want to start management under the scheme.
- c. If your application will include land **both inside and outside** the SPA, it will be simpler for everyone if management of all the land starts on the same date, and you stick to the deadline given at (a) above. If circumstances require it, we will consider management starting on different dates for your land inside the SPA and other land, but this is likely to make administration of payments etc more complicated for you and us.

We will aim to process all applications without delay but, when time is tight, early applications will receive priority. Remember too that some prescriptions will require preparatory work (e.g. fencing to exclude stock) and an early application will leave you more time to carry out the work.

If you have an existing management agreement with SNH, which ends on a specific date, we will make special arrangements to accept that land into the scheme without a break if possible. Contact the Scheme Officer for further information.

### How long will agreements last?

Agreements will be for five years.

### Will all applicants be accepted into the Scheme?

SNH fully expects to be able to admit all eligible applicants into the Scheme. There will be discretionary ceilings on payments and on certain management prescriptions.

### How does the Scheme affect those with current management agreements over the SPA?

If you have a current management agreement with SNH, you will have the opportunity to replace it with a new agreement under the OHHS. In the new scheme you will also have opportunities to create grassland and other habitats on farmland outside the SPA.

### 3. Relation to other schemes

#### Can I still claim other grants and subsidies?

Generally, yes. Providing you continue to meet the conditions of the OHHS and any other schemes in which you are participating and there is no possibility of conflict or double funding, you can claim other grants and incentives. If in any doubt, you should consult SEERAD about the conditions of agricultural grants and subsidies.

#### Can I be in the Rural Stewardship Scheme (RSS) at the same time?

Generally, yes. You can enter either or both schemes provided you are not being paid for the same work on the same land by more than one public agency or department, and that there is no conflict between the various objectives. There is presently no equivalent to the OHHS 'Rough Grassland' measures in RSS. If in future there is, you may be able to apply for, and transfer into, RSS to manage these areas.

#### Will participation in the scheme affect my IACS forage area?

Most of the grazing management prescriptions of the OHHS include sufficient utilisation to still qualify as IACS forage. Exceptions are where grazing is nil or insignificant. You should check with SEERAD if you are in any doubt.

### 4. Your records

#### Will I have to keep records?

You will need to record the management you carry out each year under the Scheme and send this to SNH in the form of an annual record of management. Depending on which prescriptions you choose, your record of management may be in the form of a map showing the area in which you have carried out work and/or a brief written summary of the work done. What you need to record for each prescription is described in the prescriptions details.

SNH will monitor a sample of works carried out under agreement each year.

SNH and RSPB will also be carrying out regular monitoring of the hen harriers and, in some cases, will also wish to record changes in vegetation and numbers of voles and small birds. This work is part of ongoing research into hen harrier behaviour and breeding success, and is needed to gauge the effectiveness of the Scheme prescriptions. It is separate from any monitoring of Scheme compliance.

### 5. Payments

#### When will payments be made?

- For writing a Management Plan: after completion and approval by SNH
- For annual management: each year, for the year before, in April
- For capital and other management works: after completion or each year, for the year before, in April

For regular and ongoing management, you need to give us your Annual Record of Management by the end of March each year.

For other management (e.g. one-off works) you will need to send us a claim or a copy invoice or other form of evidence of it having been completed.

#### Are there limits on the capital and managements payments?

There is no defined upper financial limit to payments on SPA land. There are limits to total payments per participant in the farmland measures (i.e. land outside the SPA), and to the areas that may be entered for some of the farmland prescriptions.

The overall limit per holding will normally be £9,000 in total for the 5 years of your Scheme agreement. Limits on areas for certain prescriptions are given in the section below on payments and prescriptions. These limits are not absolute, and may be varied if individual circumstances justify it. Applicants proposing to exceed limits should discuss plans in advance with SNH.

#### Must the areas managed and payments be the same every year?

In most cases, yes. Management will begin in the first year and be maintained throughout the agreement, though for some prescriptions there may well be minor variations in area from year to year. Other exceptions would be any experimental works and management.

## Prescriptions and payment rates

Level	Moorland Management Prescription	Payment rate	Limit (if applicable)
1	Write a Farmland Management Plan	20% of the annual value of prescriptions undertaken, ex. capital works. (One-off payment)	Min £100; max £300 per plan
2	Creation and Management of Rough Grassland on unimproved grassland	£125 per ha per year	
2	Creation and Management of Rough Grassland on improved grassland and arable land	On AAPS-eligible land: £265 per ha per year On non AAPS-eligible land: £225 per ha per year	Generally, 0.5 ha Generally, 1-2 ha
		Supplementary payment for ungrazed strips: £50 per ha per year	
2	Maintenance of Rough or Unproductive land	£30 per ha per year	Generally, 1-2 ha
2	Bird-feeding Crops, unharvested crops	£300 per ha per year	Generally, up to 0.5 ha
2	Bird-feeding Crops, fodder crops	£160 per ha per year	Generally, up to 0.5 ha
2	Conservation Headlands	£150 per ha per year	Generally, 0.5 hectares
1	Write a <b>Moorland</b> Management Plan	£1.50 per ha. (One-off payment)	Min £100; max £500 per plan
3	Moorland Management	£1 per ha per year	
3	Muirburn (or cutting)	£110 per ha burned or cut	
3	Stock reduction - disposal of sheep	£34 per ewe per year	
3	Stock reduction - off wintering of sheep	70p per head per week	Maximum of £14 per head per winter
3*	Grazing control	To be agreed	
4	Scrub management	£55 per ha per year	Generally, 1 ha
4	Wetland creation or enhancement	Based on actual costs	
4	Species management - Crow control	£50 per trap (One-off payment)	1 per Scheme participant
4	Experimental measures	To be agreed	
4	Fencing	Based on actual costs.	Generally not more than £3 per metre

\* Only available to occupiers exiting compensatory management agreements with SNH.

The available management prescriptions are described in further detail below:

**Level One** comprises the production of a Farmland Management Plan (FMP) for land outside the SPA and/or a Moorland Management Plan (MMP) for moorland within the SPA. These are separate documents. They are required for entry into the Scheme. Both MMP and FMP must be submitted on the template forms available from the SNH Orkney office, or in an equivalent format.

**Level Two** comprises habitat enhancement and creation activities for land outside the SPA, as identified in the FMP, for which SNH will make annual payments at standard rates.

**Level Three** comprises moorland management activities for land within the SPA as identified in the MMP. As for level two, SNH will make annual payments for these at standard rates.

**Level Four** comprises other beneficial management measures which need to be individually tailored and capital items which are beneficial in themselves or are necessary for implementing management. SNH will make payments for these prescriptions based on actual costs.

## Level 1

### 1. Writing a Farmland Management Plan (FMP)

Applicants need to write a FMP and agree it with SNH. The FMP will identify those areas on the holding which are proposed for management to be paid for under Levels Two and Four.

Your plan needs to:

- identify areas and features of the holding which can be expected to currently support vole populations, such as moorland, rough grassland and wetland;
- identify areas and features which currently have the most potential for rapid conversion to vole habitat, such as unimproved grassland, track and burn sides and double fence lines;
- identify any designated sites such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, SSSIs and Natura sites;
- show specific areas of interest or activity on one or more maps;
- explain how sites and management prescriptions have been selected to make best use of the prescriptions available for habitat creation and enhancement;
- describe and map the management actions to be undertaken; and
- ensure that management proposed will not be detrimental to any special biodiversity interest of a site, or to archaeological and historical sites.

SNH will provide an example FMP layout with guidance.

### 2. Writing a Moorland Management Plan (MMP)

Applicants need to write a MMP and agree it with SNH. Where the land is managed by more than one person, for example by a landowner, an agricultural tenant and/or a sporting tenant, the plan must be written jointly. Joint applicants must agree and record in the plan which of them has the lead responsibility, and will receive payment from SNH, for each prescription.

MMP are key to deciding how management for the natural heritage, farming and sporting interests of a moorland are to fit together. Your plan needs to include enough detail about the past, present and proposed management of your moorland for all involved to see and understand what is being done and why.

#### The land, its interests and its managers

Your MMP needs to:

- describe the land - accompanied by a map;
- state who is responsible for which management;
- describe the current and past agricultural, conservation and sporting management of the land and any designated sites such as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, SSSIs, Natura 2000 sites (SPAs or Special Areas of Conservation), Nitrate Vulnerable Zones, Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESAs) and Wildlife Sites;
- describe the condition of moorland habitats - based on a habitat condition assessment;
- state the farming, sporting, natural heritage and any other objectives for the land;

- consider how these objectives can be achieved, how any problems will be overcome and state the targets for the five years of the Management Agreement;
- list the management actions needed and the relevant scheme prescriptions & monitoring;
- include an action timetable; and
- show specific areas of interest or activity on one or more maps.

Where the following prescriptions are selected, the MMP needs to include further detail.

#### Muirburn or cutting

Include a map of

- areas suitable for muirburn or cutting (mostly dry heaths);
- areas to be left unburned or un-cut (such as bird nesting areas, wind-clipped heaths, close to bracken, steep or rocky ground, blanket bogs and other areas with fire-sensitive interests); and
- areas where muirburn is difficult (such as close to public roads, buildings and crops).

Consider

- the appropriate frequency of muirburn or cutting - the rotation length;
- the percentage of suitable moorland you aim to burn or cut in each year; and
- the availability of labour or equipment to carry out the programme.

#### Grazing management

- Consider the current and past grazing impacts of sheep and cattle.
- Identify a grazing level that will sustain the moorland habitats and, where appropriate, allow them to recover.
- Consider how the grazing level will be achieved - for example by removal of stock for all or part of each year, or changes to stock management practices.

#### Notes

Moorland outside the SPA is not eligible for the scheme, except where contiguous moorland is managed as part of the same unit e.g. because it is not separately fenced. If in doubt, ask before proceeding with your MMP.

#### Getting Advice

Staff at the Orkney SNH office will answer questions about the scheme, advise on habitat management, suggest an outline for plans, and conclude agreement details. Copies of maps will be made available, showing the precise boundary of the Scheme area, habitats within the SPA and the results of a recent survey of the 2 km moorland fringe zone.

As you may require professional advice to complete your plan, SNH will pay for plans when they have been approved. There are local and national organisations, including FWAG, SAC, other consultants and individuals, with the knowledge and expertise to provide advice.

## Level 2

### Management outside the SPA

#### 1. Creation and management of rough grassland

Orkney voles are a key food of hen harriers. They prefer a dense cover of grass and other plants under which to hide and feed. With appropriate management a variety of low vegetation types can provide these conditions. Suitable sites may include existing unmanaged or lightly grazed grass, heather and rushes; permanent grassland; and improved grassland or arable. In all cases, no or very light grazing should achieve the desired vegetation cover.

SEERAD classifies land by its productive quality. The calculation of payment rates for these prescriptions reflects this classification

##### 1.1 Creation of rough grassland on unimproved grass

###### Sites

- Enclosed fields or part fields currently used for grazing, where less than one third of the vegetation cover is made up of rye-grass, Timothy, cock's-foot or white clover, either singly or in mixture. This covers a wide variety of vegetation types. Most are likely to be semi-improved grassland and reverted improved grassland but may also include marshy grassland and fragments of dwarf-shrub cover on the low ground.

###### Requirements and Conditions

- Generally, grazing limited to May to September only, at a maximum rate of 0.15 Livestock Units per hectare. Variations from these requirements may be agreed with SNH if seen to be beneficial to the objectives of the scheme.
- Where there is doubt about the classification of land as 'unimproved' or 'improved', SNH will make individual assessments. This situation might arise for instance where vegetation quality is uneven or there is significant cover of white clover among plants more typical of unimproved grassland.
- Standard annual payment.

##### 1.2 Creation of rough grassland on improved grassland and arable land

###### Sites

- Fields or parts of fields currently in improved grass or arable rotation.
- This prescription is particularly suitable for the creation of strips, for instance along ditch, burn and loch sides, little-used tracks and farm boundaries. The creation or enhancement of 'corridors' linking semi-natural areas or created habitats is especially valuable. As a guide, such strips should be 6 - 10 metres wide, as hen harriers cannot hunt effectively, and risk being impaled on wire, within narrower strips.

###### Requirements and Conditions

- Generally, no grazing, though light grazing may be carried out where practicable. This is unlikely to be so for narrow strips. Where practised, grazing will be limited to a maximum of 0.15 Livestock Units per hectare from May to September. Variations from these requirements may be agreed with SNH if seen to be advantageous to the objectives of the scheme.

- Generally, up to 0.5 ha of AAPS-eligible land and 1 - 2 ha of other improved grassland per farm business will be accepted into the Scheme, although consideration will be given to larger areas.
- Improved grassland is defined as having at least one third of the vegetation cover made up of rye-grass, Timothy, cock's-foot or white clover, either singly or in mixture. Where there are doubts about the classification of grassland as 'unimproved' or 'improved', this will be decided by individual assessment as described for Prescription 1.1.
- Standard annual payment, with an enhanced rate for AAPS eligible land, and a supplement where there is to be no stock grazing.

##### 1.3 Maintenance of habitat on rough or unproductive land

###### Sites

- Areas of rough vegetation including heather and native scrub, situated in the low ground but with little or no current grazing use. Such sites already provide good vole habitat. They are particularly valuable where they form links or corridors between other existing or created habitats.

###### Requirements and Conditions

- Normally, no grazing, but SNH may agree other arrangements if these are advantageous to the objectives of the scheme.
- Standard annual payment for maintaining existing suitable habitat.

#### 2. Bird-feeding crops

Unharvested crops and late-harvested fodder crops, left over winter, provide valuable feeding for flocks of small farmland birds. On Orkney these flocks include twite, reed bunting, skylarks, and linnet. The variety of seed types and sizes produced by a mixed crop, together with weed seeds, matches the differing preferences of these bird species.

###### Sites

Plots on improved grassland or arable land (not necessarily AAPS-eligible land). Where possible, sites should be next to created or existing semi-natural habitats.

## Requirements and Conditions

### 2.1 Unharvested Crops

- A suitable seed mixture agreed with SNH, similar to those already in use in Orkney, will be sown in spring and left unharvested for wintering birds.
- The seed mixture may be designed to last either one or two years.
- No herbicides or pesticides to be used.
- Do not plough down before 15 March.
- Generally, one plot of up to 0.5 ha, which can include an unsown strip around the margin.
- Unharvested crops are not eligible for AAPS.

### 2.2 Fodder crop

- A kale or neeps fodder crop will be sown in spring and not harvested, grazed or otherwise used, before 31 December.
- Can be grazed or harvested from 1 January.
- Herbicide use is limited to one pre-emergence treatment.
- Fertiliser limited to 100kg per ha, of which no more than 30 kg will be nitrogen.
- In the year following crop establishment, ploughing or similar cultivation of the land will not be carried out before late March and will be completed by mid April, though weather and ground conditions may determine some variation to these dates. (Ploughing earlier would destroy the birds' food supply at a critical time, whilst later ploughing would risk destroying birds' nests. Any birds whose nests are destroyed in early spring will attempt to nest again.)
- Generally, plot or plots of up to 1 ha in total, which can include an unsown margin.

SNH will make a standard annual payment. Your Annual Record of Management must include details of seed mix, sowing dates, method of establishment and any fertiliser or pesticides used.

## 3. Conservation headlands

Cereal field headlands managed without pesticide inputs support annual weeds and insects, providing food for wintering birds.

### Requirements and Conditions

- Headlands at least 6 m wide, left free from herbicides, insecticides and nitrogenous fertiliser.
- Generally up to 0.5 ha per farm business can be entered, though consideration will be given to larger areas.
- You can continue to claim Arable Area Payments on land entered into OHHS provided all other AAPS eligibility conditions are met. Areas managed under the 'Conservation Headlands' prescription will be eligible, subject to these conditions. If you are in any doubt, you should check with SEERAD.
- Standard annual payment.

You may move Bird Feeding Crops areas and Conservation Headlands to fit with crop rotations. If your holding is split by the 2 km fringe boundary, you can locate these prescriptions in fields outside the 2 km boundary

# Level 3

## Moorland Management in the SPA

### 1. Moorland Management

SNH will make payments for areas where you make improvements to shepherding, stock management and feeding practices as described in your MMP. Payments for stock removal and muirburn are dealt with separately.

- Standard annual payment per hectare managed.

### 2. Muirburn or cutting

Fire is probably one of the most useful, and oldest, land management tools and has been used to manage heather moorlands for hundreds of years. It is a powerful tool, which needs to be used with skill and understanding if it is not to do more harm than good.

Muirburn (or cutting) is important in maintaining a mosaic of moorland vegetation types, especially heather of different heights, needed by feeding and nesting birds, and Orkney voles. Burning of the right amount of the suitable heather habitats at the right time of year can benefit a wide range of moorland wildlife and help ensure that grazing by sheep is evenly spread.

### Requirements and Conditions

1. You will need to describe the extent, location and method of muirburn or cutting in a MMP agreed with SNH and any others with responsibility for managing the land. This plan will identify areas suitable for burning, the appropriate burning rotation length and the labour and methods to be used. Swiping may be carried out either as an alternative to burning or as an aid.
2. Muirburn and cutting will be carried out in accordance with *"The Muirburn Code" (1)* and its supplement *"Prescribed Burning on Moorland"*. In particular:
  - Up to 7% of the suitable heather area is to be burnt or cut in any one year and / or up to 35% over five years, unless otherwise justified in the Moorland Management Plan and agreed with SNH.
  - Individual fires or cut areas to be between 0.4 hectares (approximately 20m by 200m) and 1.0 hectare (approximately 30m by 330m) in size. Larger or smaller fires or cuts will be excluded from payment calculations unless justified in the MMP agreed with SNH.
  - Burning or cutting should not be carried out on areas of blanket bog, steep and/or rocky ground, areas of wind clipped heath, areas of older heather used by nesting raptors or of importance for other fire-sensitive interests.
  - For safety purposes, fires must be manned by two or more people.

### Monitoring and payments

SNH will make payments for muirburn, annually, on receipt of your Annual Record of Management. If you have primary responsibility for muirburn, you will need to show the previous season's individual burnt or cut areas on a map and give a copy of this to SNH with your Annual Record of Management.

SNH will inspect the quality and extent of muirburn on a number of areas each year. SNH will calculate your payments on the area of moorland burnt in accordance with *"The Muirburn Code" (1)*.

### 3. Moorland grazing management

Grazing pressure and timing requires careful management on moorlands. Sheep are responsible for heavy heather losses during the winter months, particularly when they are being fed on the hill. Excessive grazing of heather regenerating after burning can lead to the loss of heather to grass.

You can apply for the stock disposal and/ or off wintering prescriptions if your moorland habitat condition assessment and the Moorland Management Plan indicate that the current stocking of sheep or cattle, in terms of their numbers or the timing of grazing, is having an adverse impact on the habitats of moorland birds. You may also apply if your current stocking needs to be adjusted to fit with planned changes to other aspects of moorland management.

#### Requirements and Conditions

1. Your MMP will recommend an appropriate grazing regime and include the following details:
  - Type and number of stock.
  - Timing of grazing.
  - Stock feeding arrangements.
  
2. Where your MMP recommends stock disposal for the duration of the agreement:
  - State the present and recent stock numbers on the hill and in the farm business.
  - Total stock numbers in the IACS business must be reduced by at least the agreed number and must not be increased for the term of the agreement.
  - Payments will only be made in respect of management that is within the "Standard of Good Farming Practice". If over-grazing is occurring, payments cannot be made for reducing stock numbers to a level consistent with the Standard.
  - SEERAD will continue to apply the normal quota usage rules. Quota will not be frozen in the way that it is under RSS or CPS.
  
3. Where your MMP recommends off-wintering:
  - Payment will be made only for a number of sheep additional to that off-wintered in previous years.
  - You may transfer sheep off the hill to elsewhere within the holding or winter them away, off the holding. If you transfer them within the holding, you must show that this does not lead to overgrazing or other damage to habitats elsewhere.

#### Monitoring and payments

SNH will make payments annually, for the year past, on receipt of your Annual Record of Management.

Your Annual Record of Management must include, as appropriate, details of the numbers of sheep off-wintered, confirmation of the number of ewes sold and stock numbers in the farm business during participation in the Scheme together with a summary of the grazing regime that has been carried out in the year past. You will also be required to authorise SEERAD to release relevant details of your claims to SNH. SNH may also inspect the effect of grazing management on a number of areas each year.

### 4. Grazing Control, for occupiers with management agreements

If you are coming into the Scheme from an existing management agreement with SNH over the SPA, you may apply for the Grazing Control prescription. Please contact the SNH scheme officer for further details.

## Level 4

### Other prescriptions for Moorland and Farmland

#### 1. Scrub Management

Areas of short scrub increase the variety of habitats for birds and other wildlife. In particular, scrub provides cover for small birds and foraging habitat for hen harriers and other birds of prey.

##### Sites

- Areas of suppressed native scrub or tall herb vegetation in the SPA or the fringe zone.

##### Requirements and Conditions

- No Grazing. You may carry-out other works such as small-scale native tree planting and subsequent maintenance.
- Generally up to 1 ha per farm business can be entered, though consideration will be given to larger areas.
- Standard annual payment for no grazing. Other works and labour to be individually assessed.

#### 2. Wetland creation or enhancement

Wetland areas provide valuable feeding areas for waders, and especially their chicks.

##### Sites

- Only in the SPA and where the MMP identifies a potential benefit from additional or enhanced wetland areas.

##### Requirements and Conditions

- Works to create or restore wetland may include blocking of drains by turf dams and/or plastic piling.
- Payment will be for capital works and labour only, to be individually assessed.

#### 3. Control of crows

The control of crows can benefit moorland ground nesting birds. Where crow numbers are controlled, the rates of predation on eggs and young birds can be reduced and the rate of chick survival improved.

If crow predation is adversely affecting the special bird interest on your land within the Scheme area, you may apply for the crow control prescription.

Crow control will be carried out in accordance with *"Trapping Pest Birds - A Code of Practice" (2)*.

In particular:

- Traps will be of a legal design and operated in a legal manner.
- You will provide all decoy birds with shelter, food and water at all times.
- You must have the labour resource to inspect traps every day.
- Captured crows will be killed quickly and humanely.
- All non-target species will be released immediately and unharmed.

#### Monitoring and payments

SNH will make a one-off contribution only towards the purchase or manufacture of each trap to be used on or near the Scheme area.

You will need to provide SNH with details of the number of days traps were operated and the number of crows killed each year in your Annual Record of Management.

#### 4. Other capital and management measures

You may undertake various experimental and small-scale actions to enhance or create more diverse moorland habitat. These might include temporary stocking with cattle. Proposals for such actions will be welcome. Appropriateness and payment will be individually assessed.

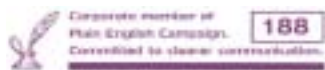
#### 5. Fencing

Several of the management measures under Levels Two, Three and Four will require stock control through fencing. In some instances new fences will be required, most often to create strips of Rough Grassland on improved grass and arable. The type of fencing chosen, whether permanent or temporary, high-tensile or electric, scare or full stock-fence, must be appropriate to the task.

Payment will be based on actual costs including labour.

## References

- (1). "The Muirburn Code" copies are available from your SNH Scheme Officer or you can find it on The Scottish Executive's website at <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library3/environment/mbcd-00.asp>
- (2). "Trapping Pest Birds - A Code of Practice" (BASC) copies are available from your SNH Scheme Officer or you can get one direct from BASC, Croft Cottage, Trochry, Dunkeld PH8 0ED, Tel 01350 723226.



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