

Date: 24 October 2011  
Our ref: WLM / 2011 / 1801  
Your ref:



[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

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Dear [REDACTED]

**Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**

**Buzzard predation of free-range laying hens [REDACTED]**

I refer to your application for a licence, received on 03 October 2011.

Based on the information provided in support of your application and consideration of other relevant factors, we have decided to defer the decision on this application.

There appears to be reasonable evidence that Buzzards have preyed on a number of your hens. Human presence and occasional use of other preventative measures have so far failed to keep Buzzards away for an extended period of time, but use of preventative measures have not yet been shown to be completely ineffective or impractical. It is suggested that you enhance existing measures with more frequent shooting-to-scare. Firing a shotgun to scare away birds does not require a licence. This action should be combined with the use of a life-like scarecrow that closely resembles the person who carries out the shooting-to-scare, so the Buzzard associate this with being shot at.

The benefit of clustering the chicken sheds is not known but as a consequence this or of Buzzard predation close to the sheds, egg production has greatly reduced. However, restricting the space for chickens has allowed most of the field to be let out to sheep grazing. Consideration should be given to what is the best configuration of chicken shed within the field.

Buzzard predation should be monitored further to determine if the rate changes and if the birds responsible can be identified. Buzzards can sometimes vary in plumage and individual birds can sometimes be identifiable.

At present, there is insufficient evidence at this time to support justification for a licence since losses to predation are not regarded as significant. However, we are aware that the business produces only small profit margins and that you have invested heavily in it.

We will contact you again in late-November to re-assess the situation at that time. Please maintain records to further assist the assessment of your application.

If circumstances change, please contact us straightaway for advice. In certain situations, it may be possible to bring forward the decision on this application.

If you have any queries, please contact me on [REDACTED]

If you experience a problem with our service, please let me know and I will try to resolve the issue. Alternatively, you may wish to write to the Head of the Wildlife Licensing Unit at the address above. To find out more about Natural England's complaints procedure, you can call our Enquiry Service (Tel: 0845 6003078; or email: [info@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:info@naturalengland.org.uk)) or view the details on our website <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/contact/complaints.htm>.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Wildlife Adviser