

HELPING SPECIES

Problem

There are many dangers to the plants and animals that call Scotland home.

Birds of prey, like hen harriers, red kites and peregrines and golden eagles, are important birds in our ecosystems. However, these birds are being illegally killed and this is happening in areas managed for grouse shooting, because they eat game birds.

There are other dangers to nature. When people illegally move animals and plants around the world and release them into Scotland's environment, these new species can cause damage to ecosystems that are not prepared for them. These invasive species can also cause damage to human health or the economy.

An example of this is stoats on Orkney, which harm many of the birds that lay their eggs on the ground instead of in trees. Every year, at least 12 species like the stoats are introduced to environments where they don't belong.



Importance

Top predators, such as birds of prey, can show the health of our environment. While not all predator control is illegal, the illegal killing of birds of prey is occurring and has an impact on the bird populations and the health of the ecosystem.

Invasive, non-native species (INNS) can spread quickly, preying on native species or competing with them for food or space, spreading disease or altering habitats. Some can change the shape of nature by blocking rivers or eroding land, and some are a risk to human health through toxins or allergens.

Once INNS have moved into an environment, it is difficult to get rid of them. For example, as the stoat population grows in Orkney, it is harder to stop them from spreading and preying on birds and their young. The total costs of INNS in the UK is estimated at about 2 billion pounds per year.

Solution


Grouse moors should be required to hold a license from the government to run their business and manage land in a way that works for climate and nature. If illegal activity, such as killing birds of prey is found, then the license to run the grouse moor should be taken away.

In order to stop INNS from spreading, we need a Scottish Non-Native Species Inspectorate. This Inspectorate would keep a watch on new invasive species arriving in Scotland and stop their spread before they grow out of control and affect ecosystems.



The Nature Recovery Plan, written by RSPB Scotland, WWF Scotland and the Scottish Wildlife Trust is supported by organisations across Scotland all asking the Scottish Government to take these 11 actions to save nature.

Find out more at: rspb.org.uk/reviveourworldscotland

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