

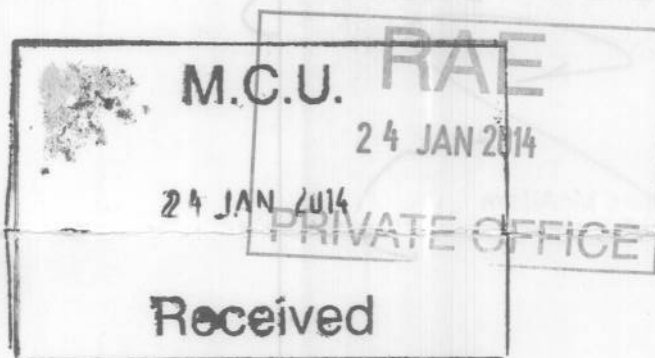
Your ref:
Our ref: CEO 0268
Date: 21 January 2014



Paul Wheelhouse MSP
Minister for Environment and Climate Change
St. Andrew's House
Regent Road
Edinburgh
EH1 3DG

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Paul Paul'.

GOLDEN EAGLE "FEARNAN"



We do not normally comment on wildlife crime cases when a police investigation is active, but given the speculative press comment and James Dornan's Parliamentary motion, we are writing to you on behalf of our members in the area where "Fearnan" was found. We and they want the police investigation to be resolved quickly so this does not become another lingering case with no outcome.

Firstly, we want to reiterate our total condemnation of this act. We have spoken to our members in the Glenlethnot area and they echo that wholeheartedly and are perhaps more keen than anyone that the culprit is found and prosecuted. That may sound glib, but I am sure you will understand the damage that these incidents do to the reputation of specific estates, and of sporting management in general, when an assumption of guilt is made because a dead bird of prey is found on or near moorland managed for grouse shooting. It is especially difficult for our members when the circumstances, insofar as they are known, do not show them to be responsible but cases rarely reach the stage where that can be proven.

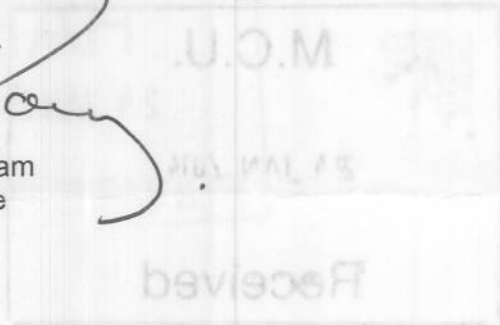
However, the key point is to discover who poisoned "Fearnan". We understand that estate staff in the area have (among others) been asked to give witness statements and are helping the police in all aspects of the investigation. Our members have conducted their own internal enquiries and are sure that none of their staff were involved. Their gamekeepers are all under strict instructions not to take any illegal action and working practices have been closely reviewed over the last two years as part of due diligence for vicarious liability. We believe that the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011 has had an impact in this respect and best practice management has taken a big step forward, helped by the Wildlife Estates Scotland initiative.

On a more general note, many keepers believe that Golden eagles are not a big problem for grouse management. In fact, being highly territorial, they have a natural deterrent effect on other birds of prey such as Hen harrier and Buzzard which are serious predators of other moorland birds. Keepers in the area see Golden eagles frequently and value them as an important part of the upland bird assemblage.

We are discussing with our members how they could join together to set up a Golden eagle monitoring or conservation project in the Angus Glens area, harnessing the presence of estate staff with scientific advice, and ideally linked to Wildlife Estates Scotland. This is at a very early stage but we will talk to SNH about how it could be set up. We are looking to develop a positive way forward, and want to reassure you of our strong desire that grouse moors are clearly seen as a force for conservation in the area, not mired in a seemingly constant series of unresolved raptor incidents.

Yours Sincerely

Douglas McAdam
Chief Executive



[Faint, illegible text from the reverse side of the paper is visible through the page.]