

# **WILDLIFE ESTATES SCOTLAND**

## **THE TEN COMMITMENTS – EXPLANATORY NOTES**

November 2010

- 1. *Identification of the land owner or nominated representative for the estate concerned.***
- 2. *Undertaking active wildlife management following a long-term integrated wildlife management plan.***
- 3. *Maintaining records and monitoring delivery of the wildlife management plan.***
- 4. *Undertaking sustainable shooting, stalking and/or fishing.***
- 5. *Managing for a sustainable balance of game, deer and other species and their shared habitats.***
- 6. *Maintaining best practice standards of animal welfare.***
- 7. *Compliance with all legal requirements and relevant Scottish codes of practice.***
- 8. *Adhering to the requirements of the Agreement between Birdlife International and FACE on Directive 79/409/EEC, the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity and the EU Commission’s Guide on Hunting under the Birds Directive.***
- 9. *Maintaining active engagement with local communities and undertaking education/awareness raising activities.***
- 10. *To apply for the Level 2 Accreditation process.***

### **Explanatory Notes**

- 1. Identification of the land owner or nominated representative**
  - *Named representative responsible for management.*
- 2. Undertaking active wildlife management following a long-term integrated wildlife management plan**
  - *In this context the term “Wildlife management” means actions, where relevant, in relation to wild animals/birds that will secure:*
    - *Their sustainable use and harvest for economic or recreational benefit*
    - *The management of conflicts of interest between wildlife and with people*
    - *Control of invasive non- native wildlife*
    - *Conservation of vulnerable native wildlife*

*The estate is committed to undertake the above activities and does so in accordance with a written plan that integrates them with each other and with other estate land uses or business activities. There is no prescribed format for such a plan and the detail of its content is not subject to scrutiny at this level. Long-term will be for not less than 5 years but will typically set a considerably longer term context for actions within this time-frame.*

### **3. Maintaining records and monitoring delivery of the wildlife management plan**

- *Keeping basic levels of information regarding management or sporting activities undertaken, the efforts/resources involved and the outputs from them including cull levels and bag/catch returns.*

### **4. Undertaking sustainable shooting, stalking and/or fishing**

- *Applicable where these activities are undertaken on an estate. While this will be the case on most estates it may not always be so. In this context 'sustainable' embodies the concepts of sustainable utilisation and wise use as set out in the introductory text. These involves the use of biological diversity in a way that meets the social and economic needs of society today but which does not lead to its long-term decline, so maintaining its potential to meet the (social and economic) needs and aspirations of future generations. The balance between different interests that this involves is likely to vary in space and time and the absence of unresolved conflicts is indicative of a balance that is sustainable.*

### **5. Maintaining a sustainable balance of habitats and species**

- *'Sustainable balance' in this context recognises the role of active and positive management of the natural environment. This may be designed either to enhance the survival and productivity of certain species, or to manage their behaviour or population so as to reduce negative impacts on other species or interests. This will involve taking account both of the needs of other species and how the different components of an ecosystem interact, so that its functions remain healthy and it continues to provide the full range of services society requires. Just as an ecosystem is dynamic so will be the balance necessary to sustain it in this way.*

### **6. Maintaining best practice standards of animal welfare**

*The avoidance of unnecessary suffering is an important consideration in all wildlife management activities and the tools and techniques used should follow best practice to minimise the risks of this occurring. A number of the codes listed below provide more detailed guidance on this.*

### **7. Maintaining active engagement with local communities and undertaking education/awareness raising activities**

*It is important that there are opportunities for people and communities to find out about the way the land is managed, to understand the issues and to have an appropriate voice in decisions about land use and management. This strengthens the mutual connections between people and the land and between different groups in society. This can be achieved at a number of different levels. It may involve active participation in local groups and organisations, or consultation and engagement with community councils, formal education opportunities such as hosting school visits, open days etc. or informal awareness raising and basic levels of information provision/welcome.*

### **8. Adhering to the requirements of the [Agreement between Birdlife International and Federation of Associations for Hunting and Conservation of the European Union \(FACE\) on Directive](#)**

[79/409/EEC](#), [the European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity](#) and the EC's [Guide on Hunting under the Birds Directive](#)

- *These documents have their origins in the EU Sustainable Hunting Initiative which flowed from Article 8 of the Convention on Biological Diversity, and there are a number of cross-linkages between them. In general they are high level documents often more specifically aimed at national administrations and representative organisations rather than individual land managers which it would not be practical to summarise in great detail here.*
- *The **Birdlife International/ FACE Agreement** recognises the Birds Directive as the appropriate legal framework for the conservation and hunting of wild birds and endorses the EC Guidance on Hunting as the basis for the practical implementation of the compromises embodied in the Directive. It supports the establishment of the Natura 2000 network of protected areas, and calls for appropriate initiatives to ensure respect for conservation legislation through enforcement and education, It expresses agreement on the desirability of local and national agreements on bird hunting practices achieved through constructive dialogue and the rational assessment of effects and measures taken based on the best available, reliable data and evidence.*
- *The **EC Guidance on Hunting** relates, as its full title indicates, to the hunting of birds. In the Scottish context this primarily means shooting of game and other legal quarry species and the trapping of certain pest species, although falconry is also covered by it. It is primarily provided as guidance to Member States, in applying the provisions of the Birds Directive, specifically Articles 7 and 9 in domestic legislation and associated administrative arrangements. The first of these allows the hunting of certain species provided that this does not jeopardise their conservation and is undertaken in accordance with the principles of wise use and ecologically balanced control which are proportionate to the problem taking account of the conservation status of the species involved. It specifically recognises the rationale for hunting and the beneficial contribution that sustainable hunting can make to the conservation of habitats and species and expands on the underlying principles involved. The second provides for the exceptions that Member States may make to the general provisions of the Directive protecting birds to provide some flexibility in their application to the circumstances of that country and the steps that need to be fulfilled to do so.*
- *The **European Charter on Hunting and Biodiversity** provides a further set of principles that help translate the underlying principles of wise use and sustainable hunting into land/wildlife manager and hunter practice so as to facilitate biodiversity conservation and rural development. They encourage involvement in monitoring, management and research efforts directed towards good stewardship and conservation of natural resources; promote collaboration between hunters and other stakeholders in the conservation and management of biodiversity; seek to ensure that country sports-based tourism is sustainable and provides local communities with incentives for conserving biodiversity; promote best practice and hunter proficiency; and encourage education, awareness and information provision.*

**9. Adhering to all legal requirements and relevant Scottish codes of practice**

- *These notes cannot provide a definitive summary of the relevance and requirements of domestic and other legislation and codes of practice, whether drawn up on a statutory or voluntary basis. In any event these will change over time.*
- *However the principal legal provisions include those contained in the following statutes:*
  - *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended,*

- *The Conservation (Habitats & etc.) Regulations 1994 as amended,*
  - *The Deer (Scotland) Act 1996*
  - *The Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003,*
  - *The Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 as amended,*
  - *The Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004 ,*
  - *Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill 2010 as enacted.*
- *And key codes of practice and related guidance for Wildlife Estates currently, or are soon likely to, include:*
- *The Code of Practice for Responsible Land Management (Scottish Land & Estates),*
  - *The Scottish Outdoor Access Code (SNH),*
  - *The Muirburn Code (SG),*
  - *The Deer Management Code (to be published by SNH),*
  - *Wild Deer Best Practice Guidance (The Wild Deer Best Practice Partnership)*
  - *Snaring in Scotland- A practitioners guide (GWCT,SGA,BASC)*
  - *The Code of Good Shooting Practice (GWCT,SGA,BASC, Scottish Land & Estates and others)*
  - *Code of Practice for Gamebirds reared for sporting purposes in Scotland (subject to consultation by SG)*
  - *Codes of Good Practice for Fisheries Management, Stillwater Fisheries and Stocking when published by the Freshwater Fisheries Forum..*

#### **10. To apply for the Level 2 Accreditation process**

- *This commitment will be subject to the conclusions of a Pilot Scheme focussed on a handful of estates in the Cairngorms National Park together with a small number from elsewhere in Scotland to ensure regional variances in land use and sporting activities are all reflected. This pilot will help define the details of what will be involved in gaining accreditation in a way that is relevant to Scottish circumstances and sporting practice.*
- *However, in broad terms, and taking the European Landowners Organisation's Wildlife Estates Initiative ([www.wildlife-estates.eu](http://www.wildlife-estates.eu)) as a starting point, it will involve the provision of information on a range of attributes that individually and together form a set of sustainable management indicators by which the estate's performance can be assessed. These reflect the principles outlined in the guidance to the 8<sup>th</sup> Commitment above and , subject to the pilot scheme's findings, are likely to include such matters as levels of recreational use; management/supervision and monitoring; the relationship between different estate activities, how they are undertaken and the employment created; the sporting management carried out; the biodiversity of the estate – it's habitats, and key species and work undertaken to enhance their conservation; and details of community engagement and education activities.*

