

## Goose Schemes Outline

### What do the Goose Schemes aim to do?

The Schemes aim to maintain sustainable populations of wintering geese whilst minimising the agricultural damage and economic losses that they cause and are important in delivering the Scottish Government's key goose policy objectives which are to:

- Minimise economic losses experienced by farmers and crofters as a result of the presence of geese;
- Meet the UK's nature conservation obligations for geese, within the context of wider biodiversity objectives;
- Maximise the value for money of public expenditure.

### How will the Schemes Operate?

Support will be offered for four years in five areas of Scotland for certain key goose populations associated with Special Protection Areas where goose behaviour causes particular conflict with farming practice. The five scheme areas are shown on the attached map. The Special Protection Areas are focussed on the core goose roosts and the schemes cover the surrounding goose feeding areas.

The schemes will be tailored to reflect local circumstances and as such each differs marginally. The species to be managed and the periods when management will be supported are summarised in Table 1.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Species Managed</b>	<b>Period of Management Support</b>
Islay	Greenland White-fronted goose, Greenland Barnacle goose	October - April
Kintyre	Greenland White-fronted goose	November - April
Solway	Svalbard Barnacle goose	October – mid-April
South Walls	Greenland Barnacle goose	October - April
Strathbeg	Pink-footed goose	March and April

Table 1: Species managed and period of management support

### Management Requirements

The main management requirement will be for land managers to provide safe feeding areas for the geese. This involves providing undisturbed feeding habitat in a condition that is attractive to geese. No goose scaring is allowed in these areas other than from newly reseeded fields which are particularly susceptible to damage.

Outwith the feeding areas scaring will be allowed by any legal method, apart from in the Solway and South Walls schemes where scaring will be restricted to 'quiet' methods<sup>1</sup> only in buffer areas adjacent to the feeding areas.

Land managers will provide an annual report about their management activities as shown at Table 2.

	Islay	Kintyre	Solway	South Walls	Strathbeg
Sowing dates- spring barely	✓				
Reseed frequency	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Cutting dates	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Silage yields	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Stock turnout dates	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2 Annual reports will supply information about cropping practice

Land managers will be required to comply with existing mandatory standards.

For the largest scheme (Islay) a marksman is funded to assist in scaring and to help reduce the Barnacle Goose population to a sustainable level using a derogation under Article 9 of the EC Birds Directive. The costs associated with the marksman are not included in the State Aid application.

## Eligibility & Administration

Only agricultural land with high levels of goose use is eligible for the scheme and this is determined by a combination of historic goose use/ distribution, crop type, crop condition and expert judgement. There is a mixture of animal and crop farmers and many will be both.

On applying to the schemes, and subject to meeting eligibility requirements, land managers will be offered annual management agreements with a single payment in return for undertaking the required management. Annual agreements are proposed because of the variation in field use by geese from year to year and because the benefit to the geese is gained within the wintering season. Payment rates vary between the schemes to reflect differing land management practices/ costs but all are based on a proportion of the income foregone/ additional costs of hosting the geese. The proportion of the income foregone/ additional costs covered by the payment rates varies from 59% to 100% across the individual schemes. A summary of the costs and payment rates is shown at Table 3.

<sup>1</sup> Quiet scaring methods are quiet. For example, streamers and kites are included. Gas guns, rope bangers or shooting are not permitted.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Zone</b>	<b>Cost/ha</b>	<b>Intervention rate</b>	<b>Full Payment Rate (£/ha)</b>
<b>Solway</b>	Feeding area	£396	100%	£396
	Buffer area	£107	100%	£107
	Buffer area – adjacent to NNR	£218	100%	£218
<b>South Walls</b>	Feeding area	£440	61%	£268
	Buffer area	£132	61%	£59
<b>Strathbeg</b>	Feeding area	£146	78%	£114
<b>Kintyre</b>	Feeding area	£392	100%	£392
<b>Islay</b>	<b>Feeding area</b>			
	Rotational pasture	£741	59%	£437
	Permanent pasture	£520	59%	£307
	Grass let – Rotational pasture	£501	59%	£296
	Grass let - Permanent pasture	£317	59%	£187
	Barley	£240	59%	£142
	Root Crops	£247	59%	£146
	<b>Buffer area</b>			
	Rotational pasture	£657	59%	£388
	Permanent pasture	£461	59%	£272
	Minimum activity payment	£100 single payment		£100 single payment

Table 3 - Proposed Payment Rates

For the Solway, South Walls and Strathbeg Schemes the full payment rate applies to all who meet the Schemes' management requirements. Participants of the Islay and Kintyre Schemes receive only a proportion of the full payment rate; their payments are determined by the number of geese the land supports during the current goose season and the payment rates are adjusted on a pro rata basis.

Further details will be published on Scottish Natural Heritage's [website](#).

The schemes are administered by Scottish Natural Heritage, a public body funded by the Scottish Government. The proposed annual budget across the 5 schemes is £1.2m

### **Verification and monitoring**

SNH will undertake the following inspections and checks to ensure eligibility, compliance with the management prescriptions and delivery of the agreed objectives:

- Before land is entered into the Scheme we will check our records to ensure it meets the eligibility criteria (it is in an area of high goose use, with an eligible crop in a suitable condition to attract geese and, for Islay, the maximum scaring area is not

exceeded). Field visits will confirm the eligibility of all land entered into the Scheme before 31 December.

- We will check field size and boundary data against the current IACS system before we make any payments.
- We will make site visits to check compliance with agreed management activities each year. These inspections will be undertaken for a minimum of 5% of the Scheme's management agreements selected randomly following standard SNH procedures.
- Each fortnight, for all Schemes except the Strathbeg Scheme, goose counters/marksmen will check that any goose scaring activity is compliant with the Scheme rules. For Strathbeg these checks are undertaken once in March and once in April by the contractors who count goose droppings.

SNH will monitor the outcomes and impacts of the Goose Schemes as follows:

- Fortnightly goose counts within the Scheme area will determine the goose distribution and goose use of the land entered into the Scheme. Except for Strathbeg where monthly dropping counts provide information about goose distribution and use of land.
- Changes in cropping practice will be monitored through the records submitted by land managers.
- Land managers' perceptions about geese and the schemes will be assessed by questionnaire.

For the Islay Scheme additional monitoring will include field measurements to estimate whether goose management (particularly changes in the size of the goose population) is affecting the amount of agricultural damage experienced. At South Walls signs of goose damage will be monitored regularly throughout the goose season

The associated costs are not included in the Scheme costs detailed in this State Aid application.

### **Outcomes from previous Goose Schemes**

To date, similar goose schemes have helped to maintain populations of all the managed species and at some sites, goose numbers have shown a marked increase in recent years. The exception is the Greenland White-fronted goose targeted by the Islay and Kintyre goose schemes. We believe factors at this species' breeding sites may be responsible for the recent decline in their number.

# Places where 2016-2020 goose schemes will operate



Scottish Natural Heritage  
Dualchas Nàdair na h-Alba

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