

Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform
Ailéan McLeod MSP



[REDACTED]

Dr Alasdair Allan MSP
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
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25 November 2015

Dear Alasdair,

Thank you for your letter of 3 November to Richard Lochhead, Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Food and the Environment. The control of invasive species falls within my remit.

The points raised by your constituent are very interesting and I therefore asked my officials to determine whether the National Museum of Scotland would be in a position to preserve some samples as he suggested.

I am pleased to say that the Museum is now in contact with the Project Officer in charge of the Shiant Isles Seabird Recovery Project and although, as you stated, the cull is already underway the contractors have agreed to secure some specimens to be preserved at the Museum.

The good weather in late September and October has meant that the contractors and volunteers have made good progress. Bait stations have been installed and baited on all the islands and initial indications are that the uptake of rodenticide bait has been high. Most rats that are killed by rodenticides die underground or out of sight, so carcasses are rarely found. However, snap traps are also being used to collect samples for DNA analysis and to test for resistance to rodenticide. The contractors have agreed to preserve some these specimens for the Museum, although they cannot guarantee how many they might catch from now on.

I hope that your constituent is pleased at this outcome, please thank him on my behalf for putting forward this suggestion.

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