

**Regulation 11 - Personal Data**

While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance an exception under Regulation 11, personal data, has been applied to some of the information requested.

Information has been redacted under Regulation 11 (Personal Data), as it contains personal information and disclosing it would contravene the data protection principles in Article 5(1) of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and in Section 34(1) of the Data Protection Act 2018.

This exception is not subject to the 'public interest test'.

**Regulation 10(4)(e) - Internal communication**

While our aim is to provide information whenever possible, in this instance an exception under Regulation 10(4)(e), internal communication, has been applied to some of the information requested.

This exception is subject to the 'public interest test'. Therefore, taking account of all the circumstances of this case, we have considered if the public interest in disclosing the information outweighs the public interest in applying the exception.

We have found that, on balance, the public interest lies in favour of upholding the exception. We recognise that there is some public interest in releasing the information as part of an open, transparent and accountable government. However, this is outweighed by the greater public interest in allowing Scottish Government officials and ministers a private space to share free and frank views for the purpose of deliberation of any given policy.

### Question 1

Gull Summit Statement – 01 October 2025  
Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

#### Introduction

- The issue of urban gulls is one that resonates deeply with many of us in this Chamber. It's a concern that has been raised repeatedly by constituents, councils, and communities across Scotland. That's why, last Tuesday in Inverness, I convened the Scottish Government's Gull Summit—bringing together key stakeholders from across the country to address this growing challenge.
- The summit was a direct response to the increasing public concern about the impact of gull populations in our towns and cities, and a commitment I gave to Fergus Ewing and Douglas Ross when I met them earlier this year, that not only was I taking their concerns seriously, but I was determined to act and find solutions to the very real concerns that they had raised on behalf of their constituents.
- It was for that reason I worked with NatureScot to address the immediate dangers and issues being faced in Elgin and Inverness areas, where it was clear an area licence was required to deal with the immediate past nesting season.
- Those concerns had equally been raised by a number of other members so it was equally clear to me that there was a need for us to take a look nationally at the next steps, and the first of those was the summit I convened last week.
- The primary purpose of the meeting was to listen, to learn, and to begin shaping a coordinated national approach at pace.

#### Context

- Let me begin by acknowledging the strength of feeling on this issue. From Eyemouth to Inverness, Dumfries to Aberdeen, we've heard from residents, businesses, and local authorities about the disruption caused by gulls—particularly during the nesting season.
- The complaints are familiar: persistent noise, aggressive defending behaviour, damage to property, and risks to public health. These concerns are real, and I want to assure the Chamber that they are being taken seriously and this government will take targeted action where necessary.  
But we must also recognise that gulls are protected species for a very valid reason. Many, including the Herring Gull and the Great Black-backed Gull, are in significant decline. The Herring Gull population in particular has halved since the 1980s. These birds face threats from climate change, overfishing, habitat loss, and the devastation of avian flu.

#### Summit Outcomes

- The summit brought together key stakeholders: local authorities, housing associations, representatives of business, waste experts, community groups, scientists, and NatureScot. It was a constructive forum for sharing practical solutions, identifying knowledge gaps, and laying the groundwork for a coordinated response

- It is the first step in our work on gulls, but I was very pleased with the progress that was made at the summit and will outline momentarily the work we will be taking forward over the coming months.
- But first, it is essential I clarify a point. There has been unnecessary criticism of my approach to the attendee list, in particular because no politicians, other than myself or local councillors who were invited from affected areas, were present.
- So let me be clear. I was determined that this summit was to be about finding solutions to the real and recognised problems, not to allow political grandstanding which is what has happened up to now.
- There are no politicians invited to the multitude of other working groups or roundtable discussions that I host, because it is those affected and those who are experts in the solutions that it is important to have in there, not politicians, their job has been done by making sure their constituents have a voice and that voice is heard.
- I chair those meetings, but it is the other practical knowledgeable voices who give the help advice guidance and solutions that are vital to making progress.

### Licensing

- Before I talk about the summit outcomes so far I want to touch on licensing.
- During the summit, we also discussed the licensing regime administered by NatureScot. I recognise the frustrations voiced by communities and elected members about its complexity and inconsistency. I've raised these concerns directly with NatureScot, and I expect to see improvements in clarity, responsiveness, and practical guidance.
- Licences for gull control will be issued where there is a demonstrable risk to public health and safety, where they can be issued within the legislation and with a practicality that we expect from a public body working on behalf of the government and ultimately our constituents,
- NatureScot will be working to support licence applications earlier in the year with a focus on licensing in the areas where health and safety need are highest.

### Next Steps

- We must now shift our focus from reactive control to **preventative management**— and we must do so urgently, ahead of next year's nesting season.
- This means tackling the root causes: the availability of food and nesting sites in urban areas. While that may sound straightforward, it will require a coordinated effort across government, local authorities, health boards, housing associations, and individual households.
- It's clear that while many are working hard to mitigate gull impacts, efforts are fragmented and often ineffective. We need to align our approach.
- Over the coming months, we will focus on four key areas:
  1. **Local Engagement**  
NatureScot will lead a series of regional roundtable events in areas most affected by gull-related issues. These will bring together local stakeholders to agree on collaborative actions ahead of the next breeding season. Let me make it very clear NatureScot is going to do better – at listening and working with local people.
  2. **Best Practice and Support**  
Last week I announced an additional £100,000 from NatureScot to support local authorities to develop proactive and collaborative management of gulls.

NatureScot will work with local authorities to develop coordinated gull management plans.

This will sit alongside work on the Highland Council Project – Highland Council and NatureScot jointly commit to the development and delivery of pilot gull management for the City of Inverness. We'll then draw on successful examples, such as the work in Inverness, to inform national best practice.

The summit also highlighted a significant gap in our understanding of gull behaviour and ecology. We will work to fill these gaps through research and data collection, ensuring our interventions are informed and effective.

### 3. **Urban Planning**

Alongside short-term deterrents, we must consider long-term design solutions. Making our buildings less attractive to gulls—through thoughtful planning, restoration, and retrofitting—will be key.

There are good pieces of work we can look to, from roof structures on new builds and refurbishments to minimise their attraction to nesting gulls to planning conditions for commercial businesses and food outlets which require effective waste management.

### 4. **Public Awareness**

Access to food is one of the biggest drivers of gull presence in urban areas. We heard at the summit about successful efforts in Inverness to remove commercial bins from the streets which was effective in both reducing food sources and improving the city centre experience.

We will work with local authorities to develop public awareness campaigns that encourage responsible waste disposal and discourage feeding of gulls.

We also heard at the summit about the ways in which we can deter gulls from swooping, from creative but effective methods of putting them off takeaway boxes to building confidence in the public when out and about, we'll be working with local communities to raise awareness of this too.

## Conclusion

- This issue has, regrettably, become politicised in recent weeks. But what matters now is that we move forward constructively and at pace—with a shared commitment to finding solutions.
- I want to thank everyone who participated in the summit, and I invite members across this Chamber to engage with the work ahead in a similar collaborative way. A summary of the summit's findings and next steps will be published shortly, and I will welcome input from all parties that are constructive and forward looking.
- In closing, let me say this: gulls are part of Scotland's natural heritage but I know just how serious the issues people are facing are. While gulls are, increasingly, part of our urban landscape we must manage their presence responsibly and effectively.
- We must work together to find solutions which recognise the complexities around gull populations, and those solutions must work for the people who are living with the negative effects of gulls every day.
- With collaboration, evidence, and community support, I believe we can do just that.

1400 words @ 140 words per min = approx. 10 mins

**Question 2**

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>What</b>                 | Statement providing an update on the Urban Gulls Summit  |
| <b>Where</b>                | Debating chamber, Scottish Parliament  |
| <b>When</b>                 | Wednesday 01 October<br>14:50 – 15:20  |
| <b>Key message(s)</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I'm aware, there have been increasing concerns regarding the impact of urban gull populations being felt in some of our towns and cities, especially in the North-East of Scotland.</li><li>• We are taking forward actions from the gull summit and will be engaging further with affected communities.</li></ul> |
| <b>Supporting officials</b> | [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]<br>Mob: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  |
| <b>Briefing contents</b>    | <b>Annex A:</b> Q&A<br><b>Annex B:</b> Summit readout<br><b>Annex C:</b> Background and top lines<br><b>Annex D:</b> Recent correspondence (attached separately)<br><b>Annex E:</b> Speaking note (attached separately)  |

**Annex A**

**Q&A**

**Where are the regional/local roundtable discussions going to be held and when?**

We will hold these across Scotland, in all areas where gulls are posing a problem to local communities. That will include places like Eyemouth, Aberdeen, Nairn.

It is my intention that these roundtable discussions begin within weeks, I expect the first to be held later this month. My officials are working on arrangements for these at the moment, there was a great deal of discussions at the summit about the importance of engaging communities at a regional scale and at pace and that's what we will be looking to do.

**Who will be invited? Will residents associations/local councilors/MSPs/health boards be invited?**

We will ensure that representatives of the whole community are invited. That might not mean opening the discussion up to everyone, but it will certainly include representatives of local councils, local authorities, residents associations, health boards, businesses and others.

If there is someone specific you think should be invited, I will be happy to hear from you and take that into consideration.

**Why weren't politicians/local residents/the general public invited to the summit?**

It was imperative to me that the summit focused on sharing practical solutions, learning from real-world examples and identifying gaps in current policies to develop a coordinated approach.

We decided not to invite media, MSPs and members of the public for the following reasons:

- All stakeholders were fully represented by organisations who were chosen to reflect the concerns of those they represent.
- To ensure a focused discussion which prioritised finding solutions from experts and those with knowledge of gull management and the issues being faced.
- To provide space for a constructive and open discussion where those with first-hand experience of living with gulls can be heard.
- To ensure that all participants got a chance to contribute effectively.
- To use the time effectively and avoid repetitive themes/discussions.
- **[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]**

I have been clear that the Summit was the first step into his work, but I am of the view it was the right decision to limit attendance to those with experience of trying to manage the negative impact of gulls and those with specialist knowledge or experience.

As I have outlined today, we will now be hosting a series of roundtables across Scotland, bringing in more voices.

**£100k is not enough to solve this issue, why aren't you funding gull management nationally? / How will you support local authorities to develop proactive plans to manage gulls?**

Through £100k that has been immediately made available assist local authorities to develop an area wide gull management approach. This area wide approach will:

- better understand gull populations and their movements at a local level,
- will identify the range of measures that could be practically applied,
- identify high impact areas,
- develop a strategic view as to where and how gulls can be moved on from areas of high impact
- provide a locally coordinated area based licensing approach.

This is the beginning of a process, and this funding will support that work to get underway. I've outlined some of the other actions we will be taking following the gull summit, and we will continue to consider any other support that is required.

**Can you give some examples of any results achieved from the funding provided for disruptive seagull populations?**

Historically support has been provided to local authorities and local communities through advice and facilitation. For example, with Highland Council we are helping to develop their area based gull management plan and have made available funds to implement surveys of gull breeding populations, gull behaviour and human activity.

This is expressed through the Joint Statement between Highland Council and NatureScot. Other specific local authority advice was provided to Aberdeenshire Council environmental team, Border Council, Eyemouth community and St. Andrews Community Council. This provided advice and direction as to the management

measures that could be implemented, ranging from litter design and management, signage, physical preventative measures where practical and licensed removal of nests and eggs.

**Gulls are taking over our towns and cities, how can you say they are in decline? / Why are gulls increasing in urban areas?**

All of the evidence available to us shows that all five species of gull commonly found in Scotland are in significant decline. Common gull, great black-backed gull and herring gull are now all red-listed species of conservation concern in the UK. Lesser black-backed and black-headed gulls are amber listed.

Scotland holds almost half of the British and Irish population of great black-backed gull, for example, but in the Seabird Count 2023 the population was found to be down 63% to 5,400 pairs. Of the five species commonly found in Scotland, this is the smallest population, and it is likely that species has suffered further decline since the census was undertaken as a result of avian flu.

Undoubtedly we are seeing increasing populations of gulls in our urban areas, for some species that increase is significant, and we think that is largely down to a combination of factors. Firstly, that our towns and cities offer a safe space for gulls to nest. They are relatively free from predators, in comparison with our coasts, and our buildings offer warm spots that are appealing to nest in. Secondly, that food is easy to come by, and typically easy for gulls to source within an easy distance from their nesting sites.

It is in this context of overall species decline but increasing urban densities that we need to find solutions, and that is why much of the focus of what I have said today is about how we work together to do that.

**You mentioned urban planning in your statement, what will that look like? Who will shoulder the cost of it?**

We know there are various examples of how gull mitigation can be considered as part of the planning process. That could be things like requiring new commercial businesses to operate a litter collection zone around their premises, we know that this is being done in some areas already when it comes to fast food restaurants. Urban planning considerations could also be considering what mitigation tools can be built in to buildings from the outset or be installed as part of retrofitting or restoration work, for example roof structures which decrease the appeal to nesting gulls. Some of that may simply be design choice, ie avoiding flat roofs, but we will also look at whether there are other preventative measures that can be installed and how effective these are, for example sprung wire. By asking those undertaking building development to do this as early in the process as possible, these costs can be planned for.

NatureScot will be taking forward work to look at best practice guidance for managing gulls and it is our intention that will include this issue. So while this is in the early stages, we intend to move at pace on developing this guidance and working with those concerned.

**Can you set out the circumstances in which NatureScot can issue a control licence and what those thresholds would look like?**

All applications are assessed on their own merits.

All licences issued need to meet the following licensing criteria as stated in Wildlife and Countryside Act legislation:

1. For the purpose of preserving public health and safety (there are other purposes in legislation, but this is the principle one for gulls in urban areas) – identify the hazard, who is being harmed and what are the mitigation measures
2. There are no other satisfactory solutions to the licenced control i.e. other relevant non licensable solutions have been tried, or discounted (examples might include - netting, spikes, management of food waste etc).

NatureScot then consider as a matter of policy the impact of issuing a licence on the conservation status of the species involved in accordance with Scotland's commitments in relation to other conservation legislation and international agreements.

**You mentioned a project in Inverness to remove commercial bins – how did that work? Who lead it? Who paid for it?**

The Highland Council worked with local businesses and business representatives. This was predominately work to move large commercial bins off the street. Businesses were asked to remove them to locations where they would be less accessible to gulls, such as in appropriate indoor areas. This was very effective in reducing access to food and improving the area for locals.

**The summit was supposed to allow sharing of practical solutions and identify gaps in current policy. Can you share any of the learning/solutions that were discussed and identified at the summit?**

There were discussions around the use of alternatives such as netting, spikes, predator eyes, food waste management and hawking. There was recognition that each locations circumstances are unique, albeit there are common themes.

There is no one size fits all solution and multiple tools and techniques will be required. A collaborative approach between NatureScot, Local Authorities, Business Improvement Districts and wider community groups is needed. Other local forums will take place to include organisations not represented on the day.

A national awareness campaign encouraging people not to feed gulls is also central. There was agreement for the development of area based management and a commitment from NatureScot to provide funding that enabled local actions to be progressed.

**What analysis has been undertaken to establish the scale of this issue?**

Despite urban gulls being a common occurrence across Scotland, there are a limited number of areas where the issue has been escalated to an acute issue. NatureScot will continue to assess and issue licences as applications come forward. The development of an area based approach, with support from all stakeholders, is central to addressing the issues whether real or perceived.

**Have you looked at international comparisons, how do other countries with urban gull populations deal with the issues that result?**

While no formal review has been undertaken, actions across Europe indicate wide variance. Some countries such as Sweden allow general control of gulls through to strict control such as in the Netherlands and England.

## **SUMMIT READOUT**

### Morning session

- **10:00 – 10:15 – Welcome and introductions**  
Introductory speech from Jim Fairlie, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
- **10:15 – 11:00 - People and gulls – Understanding our collective experience**  
A chance for people to share their experiences including how they have effectively managed these issues.  
Presentations from Lucy Harding - Nairn BID, Alan Yates – the Highland Council, Kevin Newell – Humane Wildlife Solutions

#### **Notes:**

Lucy Harding – reflections on Nairn BID's experience of applying for licences, changes to the licensing system and the basis on which licences could be granted. Desire for a nationally funded area-based programme of gull management and for NatureScot to not be responsible for gull licensing since they are responsible also for gull conservation. [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)] Desire for improved public comms, especially around not feeding gulls. Call for an open gull forum, noting that there were people they felt were missing from the room.

Alan Yates – Shared examples of work that the Highland Council have found effective, especially around waste management and working with businesses to dispose of waste in a collective manner that reduces food sources for gulls. Similar to Lucy, Alan reflected on a desire to see improved comms on gulls. Highland Council has done work in Inverness on this, such as stickers on bins etc about not feeding gulls.

Kevin Newell – Licensing culling is not an effective means of control. Humane Wildlife Solutions has done work on egg removal where the eggs have been sent to sanctuaries, reared and rehabilitated into the wild. Importance of taking action in the winter months, by the time the nesting season starts in March it is too late to do anything meaningful.

- **11:05 – 11:40 – State of Gulls – Understanding Gull Decline**  
Species experts to discuss population, Data on specific species, any differentials between cliff breeding, urban, inland non-urban colonies. How these are used in modelling. Plans for further work/surveys.  
Presentations from Lucy Quinn – NatureScot, Nina O'Hanlon, British Trust of Ornithology.

#### **Notes-**

Lucy Quinn – Tracking from birds is very valuable. Complexity of the gull lifestyle, problem birds are not necessarily the ones nesting nearby. Desire to build public confidence in what to do if a gull looks like it is going to approach – educating people over what to do. Understanding behaviour is important in raising awareness of – changing perception of gulls as being evil etc.

Nina O'Hanlon – Licensed activities are adding to significant decline. Need to find a way to achieve a stable population, but not on rooftops or where they are coming into

direct conflict with humans. Shared BTO data on gull populations, what we know about breeding populations.

- **11:40 – 12:00 – Reflections**

Nick Halfhide, NatureScot and Jim Fairlie, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

Afternoon session

- **13:00 – 14:00 – Panel session and Q&A**

Key questions

- Case study from Bishops Court Residence Association – being negatively affected by work to stop gulls nesting in Inverness. The gulls are displaced from the city centre and have moved into their car park, they've been paying pest controllers for years but it's not working. Keen to reinforce the need for a wider area/regional based approach.
- Need for wider engagement, involvement of other stakeholders/people
- Will there be increased funding for local authorities/others to support gull management, if not how can we expect folks to do collaborative gull management without funding
- Falconry and use of hawks – not very effective, question over falconry guidance

- **14:00 – 15:15 – Breakout sessions – Development of collaborative gull management**

The summit split into four groups to consider the following topics: tools available and their effectiveness, development of best practice, and working towards area based management.

**Notes:**

Tools available and their effectiveness

- Lots of the tools available can work, but only in the right circumstances. At the moment lots of people are doing things, at great cost, but this is piecemeal and many of those things are not effective.
- Work to reduce littering, litter enforcement and waste management can be super effective but there is no coordinated action on this. Some discussion about Keep Scotland Beautiful and needing to have stronger leadership on comms.
- Building standards/planning – example from Inverness of a planning condition for a new McDonalds which required them to undertake litter management within 100m – this is too small a radius but is a good example of how planning can support. Also best practice around gull proofing buildings, either at development or when doing restoration/retrofitting.
- Finding alternative nesting sites for gulls should be a priority – i.e. if we are making city centres unappealing, we need to make sure surrounding areas are not then filled with gulls and identify places that gulls can go.

Development of best practice

- Huge knowledge gaps around gulls – no research on climate impact, winter mortality, no formal evidence on how egg removal impacts populations
- Dissatisfaction over lack of leadership/state involvement just now - needs to be national leadership to set direction and get things moving on best practice
- Need clear guidance on licensing

- Need to do some PR work around gulls, educating people on what and why this matters

#### Towards area based management

- Need pilot projects to look at how regional/area based gull management collaboration can be effective
- Needs some sort of forum, either nationally with regional able to feed in or some ability for folks to feed in to local levels
- Shouldn't be just local authority based, but based more on regional impacts
- Importance of every issue being heard but not necessary needing every person to be represented

## **BACKGROUND & TOP LINES**

### **Gull impacts**

- I recognise the significant impact of urban gull populations being felt in as some of our towns and cities.
- We must increase our efforts to prevent these negative impacts from being felt.
- That means making towns and cities less appealing to gulls, and limiting their opportunities to nest.
- I know that this is not an easy piece of work, but that is why I called for a Summit to take place to see where we can reduce the issues urban gulls can cause.
- This summit provided an opportunity to bring together those negatively affected by gulls and key stakeholders — from local government, public health bodies, housing associations, waste management, and community groups — along with NatureScot and representatives from areas where effective and lawful measures have already been introduced.
- The summit was very constructive, and we are focused now on action ahead of the next nesting season.

### **Licences for control of gulls**

- I appreciate the frustration felt by those who have had licence applications refused. NatureScot can, and do, issue licences to protect public health and safety.
- The legislation requires that there is a licensable purpose such as health and safety (noting that nuisance is not a licensable purpose), and that alternative measures have been considered and implemented where possible taking account for the individual circumstances.
- Where there are public health and safety issues NatureScot has always and will always continue to issue licences for control. Hospitals, care homes and nurseries are known to cater to many of our more vulnerable groups and licences are issued accordingly to protect them.
- NatureScot will be working with licence applicants to ensure they get licence applications in early, and that they are supported to provide the required information.
- Alongside this, NatureScot will be working with local authorities and others to support area based licences wherever possible.
- NatureScot have had several cases where elderly or unwell individuals have called asking for help with their application. One such case was of an elderly woman in Moray who had recently had her hip replaced and needed to exercise. But couldn't get out of her house because of a nesting pair gull on her roof. One of their licensing officers spoke to her on the phone and filled in the application for her, and the licence was issued immediately. Other cases where the health and safety issue is less clear will be asked to provide evidence.

### **Mitigation Measures**

- Local authorities, businesses and members of the public can play their part in reducing the impact of gulls in urban areas by taking actions to secure waste and remove other food sources, and put in place measures to reduce nesting opportunities.

- The majority of local authorities in Scotland currently publish guidance on dealing with gull problems on their websites, as well as undertaking gull management measures themselves.
- Local authorities can increase street/pavement cleaning at key times of the day, and install gull-proof bins in problem areas near schools and town centres and gull-proofing buildings using spikes and nets.
- Householders can also deter gulls nesting on their properties by installing netting and spikes, and removing old nesting material outwith the nesting season.
- The investments made by individuals, businesses and local authorities on measures to prevent gulls nesting (netting, spikes, use of kites and hawking) has been significant.
- There has been an increase in investment in measures to remove access to food and to remove food waste such as provision of secure bins and 'Do not feed the gulls' campaigns to prevent gulls easily accessing food in areas.
- We need to work together as we move forward to ensure all of this effort is having maximum impact.

## **Background**

### Gull populations and their decline

- The most recent seabird count, published in 2023, implemented a new method for surveying and producing breeding estimates for urban-nesting (roof-nesting) Herring and Lesser Black-backed Gulls. These improvements gave the most comprehensive estimates for these species, suggesting 176,000–195,000 Herring Gull pairs and 242,000–304,000 Lesser Black-backed Gull pairs now breed in urban areas in Britain, Ireland, Isle of Man and the Channel Islands.
- Unfortunately, due to the large changes in methods, comparisons with the last census (Seabird 2000) are not possible. However, comparing total population estimates (urban nesters plus those using natural sites) with those from the first census (Operation Seafarer, when very few HG or LBBG's were urban nesters) will give reasonably accurate indications of overall trends in these species. Considering the populations in 1969–1970 suggests mixed fortunes, with Herring Gull likely declining in numbers whereas Lesser Black-backed Gull numbers have possibly increased significantly.

Here's some more detail broken down by region:

### Lesser Black-backed Gull – natural

- In their natural-nesting habitats, Lesser Black-backed Gulls have experienced dramatic declines between Seabirds Count and Seabird 2000. Across Britain and Ireland breeding numbers at natural sites have fallen by 43%. This is a contrast from the general increases seen in these habitats between the late 1960s and early 2000s. Causes of decline include predation of nests and chicks by mammalian predators, food shortages during or outside of the breeding season, disease, and more frequent flooding of nests along low-lying coasts due to sea-level rise.
- In Scotland the population of natural-nesting Lesser Black-backed Gulls overall has declined by 48%, driven by decreases at coastal sites. The two Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated for the species, both of which are coastal,

Ailsa Craig and the Forth Islands saw declines of 53% and 31% respectively. Conversely, inland nesting Lesser Black-backed Gulls in Scotland increased between Seabirds Count and Seabird 2000 from 1,293 AON to 3,166 AON.

#### Lesser Black-backed Gull – urban

- Inland nesting in Lesser Black-backed Gulls across Britain and Ireland has increased and is well supported by the breeding estimates of urban-nesting pairs. Between 108,000 and 156,000 AON, or approximately 48%, of urban-nesting Lesser Black-backed Gulls are found more than 5 km from the coast. Overall, 242,000 – 304,000 pairs of Lesser Black-backed Gulls are estimated to be breeding in urban spaces across Britain and Ireland, approximately 81% of the total population.
- Scotland hosts approximately 32,000 – 47,000 pairs of urban-nesting Lesser Black-backed Gulls. The distribution of these is likely more coastal, around 60%. It is evident that our urban areas are now a particularly important nesting area for the species in Scotland, with approximately 78% of the population estimated to be urban-nesting.
- In Wales, it is estimated between 9,200 and 13,000 Lesser Black-backed Gull pairs nest in urban habitats. These are distributed relatively evenly between inland and coastal areas. This is somewhat different to the natural nesters, which are much more coastal in their distribution in Wales.

#### Herring Gull – natural

- Seabirds Count estimated that Britain and Ireland lost over 51,000 Herring Gull AON at natural-nesting sites, or 41% of the population. Inland nesting numbers are still negligible (2% of natural-nesting population), therefore much of the decline seen has been along our coasts.
- Scotland holds half of Britain and Ireland's natural-nesting Herring Gull population, 37,349 AON. The largest concentrations are found on the east coast at sites like the East Caithness Coast and Forth Islands SPAs. The largest declines have been along the west coast. Argyll and Bute had the highest population of all Scottish administrative areas in Seabird 2000, 15,916 AON. It now only holds 3,113 AON.

#### Herring Gull – urban

- There are estimated to be between 176,000 and 195,000 pairs of Herring Gulls breeding in urban habitats in Britain and Ireland. The majority of these are distributed along our coasts, with only around 5% estimated to be breeding inland. These estimates suggest that approximately 70 – 72% of the breeding Herring Gull population is nesting in urban habitats.
- Scotland hosts approximately 57,000 – 68,000 pairs of urban-nesting Herring Gulls. The distribution of these is very much coastal, around 99%. These estimates suggest around 61-65% of the Scottish Herring gull breeding population is now found in urban environments. A comparison of Scotland's Seabirds Count Herring Gull population estimate of 100,161 AON (95% CLs: 95,328–105,287 AON) with Operation Seafarer's 159,237 AON clearly suggests a decline rather than a redistribution.

| Species                            | Scotland from Seabirds Count (2015-2021) | Scotland change since 2000 (%) |
|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| Black-headed Gull                  | 10,785                                   | -75                            |
| Common Gull                        | 22,755                                   | -53                            |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull - natural | 11,001                                   | -48                            |
| Lesser Black-backed Gull - urban   | 38,661                                   |                                |
| Herring Gull - natural             | 37,349                                   | -44                            |
| Herring Gull - urban               | 62,812                                   |                                |
| Great Black-backed Gull            | 5,404                                    | -63                            |
| <b>Total</b>                       | <b>188,767</b>                           |                                |

### Useful Stats - licences:

| Year  | Number of applications received | Number of licences issued | Number of licences refused |
|-------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2023  | 2633                            | 2018                      | 66                         |
| 2024  | 1601                            | 488                       | 636                        |
| 2025* | 522                             | 285                       | 153                        |

\*data for 2025 and is up until 16<sup>th</sup> June 2025

It does not include amendments so shows what people applied for and were given only.

### 2023 – nests and eggs

| Species                  | Number of nests permitted | Number of nests destroyed | Number of eggs destroyed (with nest, prick, oil, or dummy) |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Black-headed gull        | 1570                      | 255                       | 524  |
| Common gull              | 16990                     | 3584                      | 7025   |
| Herring gull             | 55200                     | 15833                     | 30802  |
| Lesser black-backed gull | 17980                     | 3273                      | 7457   |
| Great black-backed gull  | 4140                      | 614                       | 1096   |
| <b>Totals</b>            | <b>95880</b>              | <b>23559</b>              | <b>46904</b>   |

### 2024 – nests and eggs

| Species                  | Number of nests permitted | Number of nests destroyed | Number of eggs destroyed (with nest, prick, oil, or dummy) |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|
| Black-headed gull        | 290                       | 49                        | 108  |
| Common gull              | 4790                      | 843                       | 1569   |
| Herring gull             | 14820                     | 2748                      | 5742   |
| Lesser black-backed gull | 1810                      | 273                       | 596  |

|                         |              |             |             |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Great black-backed gull | 210          | 49          | 87          |
| <b>Totals</b>           | <b>21920</b> | <b>3962</b> | <b>8102</b> |

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**Annex D**

**Question 3**

**From:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 18 July 2025 09:13  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Re: For URGENT clearance please - ITV's Good Morning Britain - Seagull Summit

content , can I get a readout of the reporting this morning from the program please

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> on behalf of Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Friday, July 18, 2025 9:11:04 AM  
**To:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: For URGENT clearance please - ITV's Good Morning Britain - Seagull Summit

Content with lines?

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)  
**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**  
**The Scottish Government**  
 St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**  
 T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 18 July 2025 08:55  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;



---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 17 July 2025 22:38

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Cc:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;

Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <[REDACTED: REGULATION

11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION

11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION

11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION

11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION

11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Kate Higgins

<[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;

Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>

**Subject:** For URGENT clearance please - ITV's Good Morning Britain - Seagull Summit

Good evening PO,

With apologies for the delay, officials have come back with a more detailed response. Grateful for confirmation ASAP that Mr Fairlie is happy to clear and I can issue to Good Morning Britain (it's likely they'll be running in their early bulletins tomorrow).

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

“Recognising the significant impact of urban gull populations in some of our towns and cities, and the fact more action is required to mitigate this, we will host a gull summit in Inverness this Autumn, bringing together those affected with NatureScot and representatives of areas where effective and lawful measures have already been introduced.

“NatureScot can issue licences to control gulls to protect public safety. Licences were issued in Eyemouth this year, and NatureScot has also worked in Inverness, Nairn and Moray to address issues.

“The aim of the summit is practical - to share best practice, learn from real-world examples, identify policy gaps, and agree a collective way forward.”

### **Background**

NatureScot has not, at any point, advised people to use dogs on roofs to deter gulls. Its guidance clearly states use of dogs would only be appropriate at ground level. In the case that Rachael Hamilton is referencing, dog use was considered inappropriate for the circumstances.

When a licence is refused it sets out alternatives which have been considered and/or ruled out.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Senior Media Manager | News



We've had a late query from ITV who will be having Rachel Hamilton MSP on GMTV tomorrow to speak about the seagull summit. We've been asked for a response to this.

Comms will reissue our current response to this – below for awareness – which has been agreed with officials at 7pm this evening unless we hear back from you before then.

Many thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

### **SUGGESTED RESPONSE**

Background

Logistics, including the date and those who will be invited, for the Gull Summit are still being finalised.

--

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | Communications: News (Net Zero and Energy)**

Senior Media Manager  
Scottish Government

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Pronouns: She/Her

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Thank you for taking my call just now.

As mentioned, on tomorrow's programme we are speaking to Rachael Hamilton MSP about her calls for 'seagull summit' due to more cases of people being attacked and struggling to control them in their area.

Here is an article that summarises her lines:

<https://www.rachaelhamilton.co.uk/news/borders-msp-urges-scottish-government-host-seagull-summit-eyemouth>

I wanted to see if this was something you wanted to respond to?

The deadline is 9pm this evening if possible. If not, anytime before 5am ahead of the broadcast.

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**

**E-mail: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@itv.com**

**Producer: ITV Breakfast**

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This email does not conclude a binding agreement. The views or opinions presented in this email do not necessarily represent those of ITV.

---

**From:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 17 July 2025 19:40  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Re: MINISTER AWARENESS PLEASE ITV's Good Morning Britain - Seagulls

[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> on behalf of Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 17, 2025 7:36:01 PM  
**To:** Jim Fairlie <Jim.Fairlie@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Re: MINISTER AWARENESS PLEASE ITV's Good Morning Britain - Seagulls

Previous agreed lines were:

"Logistics, including the date and those who will be invited, for the Gull Summit are still being finalised."

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
Deputy Private Secretary  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

---

**From:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 17, 2025 7:33:29 PM  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Re: MINISTER AWARENESS PLEASE ITV's Good Morning Britain - Seagulls

Where are the lines and are we being given the opportunity to give a response other than a statement?

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> on behalf of Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 17, 2025 7:08:38 PM  
**To:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Fw: MINISTER AWARENESS PLEASE ITV's Good Morning Britain - Seagulls

For your awareness

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Deputy Private Secretary  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 01 October 2025 14:05

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Cleared version attached.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie  
MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 01 October 2025 12:13

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

We will send you a copy once it has been cleared.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 01 October 2025 12:12

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

All,

I understand there were further discussions between CabSec and the Minister last night regarding a change to the statement. Can I check if there has been any changes and if so request a clean copy please?

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
News | Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh  
Mobile: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | Portfolio Media inquiries: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
[www.gov.scot/news](http://www.gov.scot/news)



---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 30 September 2025 16:51  
**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Please find Q&A and lines below included.

Thanks  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 30 September 2025 15:40  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Perfect thank you.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

News | Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

Mobile: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | Portfolio Media inquiries: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[www.gov.scot/news](http://www.gov.scot/news)



---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 15:36

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

I would expect the lines to be added to the separate Q&A doc that officials are preparing.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 15:28

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Victims and Community Safety 2024 <MinisterforVCS@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Re: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Thanks [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)].

PO can these lines be added to the pack for the Minister please.

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** Tuesday, September 30, 2025 2:56:52 PM

**To:** Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Robyn Chapman <Robyn.Chapman@gov.scot>; Minister for Victims and Community Safety 2024 <MinisterforVCS@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

We decided not to invite media, MSPs and members of the public rather than this being a NatureScot call. The reasons are set out below:

- All stakeholders were fully represented by organisations who were chosen to reflect the concerns of those they represent.
- To ensure a focused discussion which prioritised finding solutions from experts and those with knowledge of gull management and the issues being faced.

- To provide space for a constructive and open discussion where those with first-hand experience of living with gulls can be heard.
- To ensure that all participants got a chance to contribute effectively.
- To use the time effectively and avoid repetitive themes/discussions.
- **[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]**

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 13:24

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Victims and Community Safety 2024 <MinisterforVCS@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Copying Minister who has topical and opposition debate on wildfires and SFRS. Please keep her copied in

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 12:48

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

All,

I expect the Minister to be further pressed on how the invitee list was compiled and why. I appreciate he answered this in media interviews by saying 'those who needed to be there were, we need to hear from those who understand the science etc.' but can we clarify this with NatureScot and get strong reactive lines from them on why we/they reached the decision to exclude elected representatives from affected areas and members of the public please. As well as being raised by media, it was also raised in the room on the day.

I have taken the list provided earlier by NatureScot and removed NatureScot employees who were not participating in the event but rather acting as chaperones as well as SG employees who were also there to work but not as summit participants – table below.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
 News | Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh  
 Mobile: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | Portfolio Media inquiries: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[www.gov.scot/news](http://www.gov.scot/news)



|  |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| SASA   | [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] |
| Scottish Seabird Centre                      | Emily Burton                 |
| Rentokil                                     | [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] |
| Crown and City - Inverness Community Council | Mike Smith                   |
| St Andrews - Community Council               | Sandy Mitchell               |
| Inverness City Centre Bids                   | Lorraine Bremner McBride     |
| Nairn Connects                               | Lucy Harding                 |
| SRUC and Scottish Animal Welfare Chair       | Mike Radford                 |
| Ornithologist                                | Prof Roy Armstrong           |
| BTO  | Nina O'Hanlon                |
| Natural England                              | Emma How                     |
| RSPB   | [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] |
| Humane Wildlife Solutions                    | Kevin Newell                 |
| British Pest Controllers Association         | Niall Gallagher              |
| Moray Council                                | Edward Thomas                |
| The Highland Council                         | Alan Yates                   |
| The Highland Council                         | Nicole Wallace               |
| The Highland Council                         | Tom Murdison                 |
| The Highland Council                         | Eleanor Hood                 |
| East Lothian Council                         | Scott Hood                   |
| Dundee City Council                          | Gregory Colgan               |
| Aberdeen City Council                        | Nick Glover                  |
| Perth and Kinross Council                    | Kirsty Steven                |
| Nairn River - Community Council              | Hamish bain                  |
| Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity    | Jim Fairlie                  |

|   |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Policy Manager - Wildlife Management Team Scottish Government | [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] |
| Chair – NatureScot  | Colin Galbraith              |
| Chief Executive - NatureScot                                  | Nick Halfhide                |
| Head Wildlife Management - NatureScot                         | Donald Fraser                |
| Licensing Manager - NatureScot                                | [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] |
| Marine Ecosystems Manager - NatureScot                        | Lucy Quinn                   |
| Bishop’s Court Residents’ Association                         | [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] |
| Bishop’s Court Residents’ Association                         | Alasdair Laing               |

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 10:06

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] isn't in today but I've picked this up.

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 09:32

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Could we have a separate briefing doc that includes answers to these questions as well?

- The summit was supposed to allow sharing of practical solutions and identify gaps in current policy. Can you share any of the learning/solutions that were discussed and identified at the summit?
- Can you set out the circumstances in which naturescot can issue a control licence and what those thresholds would look like?
- Can you give some examples of any results achieved from the funding provided for disruptive seagull populations?
- Have you looked at international comparisons, how do other countries with urban gull populations deal with the issues that result?
- How will you support local authorities to develop proactive plans to manage gulls?
- What analysis has been undertaken to establish the scale of this issue?

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 29 September 2025 09:46

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson

<[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Good morning

Please see attached updated clean version incorporating Ms Gougeon's changes.

NatureScot have also suggested a change to the placement of the section on licensing, to incorporate this alongside the next steps [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**

(she/her)

Policy manager | Wildlife management

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 28 September 2025 17:08

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <Ian.Muirhead@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Emily Mackintosh <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

**Importance:** High

Good afternoon,

Ms Gougeon has made some changes to the statement attached.

Could colleagues please review and if content return to PO for Mr Fairlie's clearance as soon as possible on Monday morning.

Many thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** | Deputy Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Transport – Fiona Hyslop MSP | Scottish Government | **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** | [cabsecfortransport@gov.scot](mailto:cabsecfortransport@gov.scot)

---

**From:** **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>

**Sent:** 26 September 2025 12:04

**To:** **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Jeanette Campbell <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Spads Admin <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Donald Henderson <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Emily Mackintosh <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Michael Berry <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Widening copylist to include additional SpAds.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**  
News | Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs

The Scottish Government, St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

Mobile: **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** | Portfolio Media inquiries: **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**

[www.gov.scot/news](http://www.gov.scot/news)



---

**From:** **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>

**Sent:** 26 September 2025 11:50

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Jeanette Campbell <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Spads Admin <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>; Donald Henderson <**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot**>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi **[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**

Clean speaking note attached with Mr Fairlie's changes accepted, and a copy of draft briefing (just finalising compiling recent correspondence you requested, so will get that up separately but asap also).

Also attached is final attendance list from NatureScot, those in red were not in attendance, those in yellow were NatureScot staff providing support on the day but not actually participating in the summit.

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**

(she/her)

Policy manager | Wildlife management

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 25 September 2025 18:18

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi folks,

Edits by Mr Fairlie as attached. Grateful if you can review, confirm you're content and provide a clean copy that we can send to Ms Gougeon for Cab Sec clearance tomorrow lunchtime please.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 25 September 2025 14:53

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

The Minister won't take interventions during the 10 minutes statement time, are there additional points that can be added to bring it closer to the 10-minute mark?

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 25 September 2025 14:49

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Updated draft speaking note attached, with amendments off back of Ian's comments. Have left two comments in with response as it might be of interest to Mr F also.

Will get briefing up shortly.

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**

(she/her)

Policy manager | Wildlife management

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 25 September 2025 10:28

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Adding comms colleagues.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 24 September 2025 14:52

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi,

Further to the below, I have spoken to the First Minister's office – he will have a window on Monday afternoon to consider the statement so I would like to get this sent to his PO no later than 12:00 on Monday 29 September, after it has been cleared by officials, SpAds, Mr Fairlie and then Ms Gougeon.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

**E: MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

**T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 11:35

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi folks,

Please see below commission from Mr Dey's office for the ministerial statement on the gulls summit. Mr Fairlie will undertake on Wednesday 1 October. The Minister will have **10** minutes for the statement (without interventions) then **20** minutes for questions.

With apologies for the tight deadlines, could I request the draft statement and briefing pack to be with Private Office **after SpAd clearance** no later than **12:00 on Thursday 25 September**. Once cleared by Mr Fairlie, the intention is to send to Ms Gougeon for Cab Sec clearance on Friday/over the weekend and then get to the First Minister for clearance on Monday 29 September to ensure everyone has sufficient time for consideration.

Can you advise if there will be any documents published to accompany the statement as soon as possible? We need to let MfPB know (even a nil return) by Thursday 25 September at 10:00.

In terms of the briefing pack for the statement, this should include:

- Q&A-style format
- Readout from the gulls summit
- Context and top lines
- Correspondence from MSPs and key stakeholders, as well as responses sent by Mr Fairlie (this can be sent separately rather than integrated into the main pack but happy to discuss).

Can you also advise names of supporting officials who can come to Parliament on the Wednesday to support Mr Fairlie?

Grateful for confirmation this has been picked up, particularly noting the deadlines and timescales.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie  
MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot > **On Behalf Of** Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024

**Sent:** 23 September 2025 10:46

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;

Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister

<[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION

11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business 2024 <MinisterPB@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi all,

Please see below details of a Ministerial Statement scheduled for **Wednesday, 1 October**.

**1450-1520 Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit**

Your Minister will have **10** minutes to deliver their statement (without interventions) followed by **20** minutes for questions.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]

- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)].
- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]
- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]
- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]
- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]

- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]
- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]
- [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**Deputy Private Secretary to Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans – Graeme Dey MSP**

**T:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | **M:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | **E:**

MinisterPB@gov.scot

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH, EH1 3DG

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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 01 October 2025 16:02

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

**Importance:** High

Tiny change on 6<sup>th</sup> paragraph.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

**E: MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

**T:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | **M:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 01 October 2025 15:44

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans <MinisterPBV@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

**Importance:** High

Hi,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]

I have updated in the attached version.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 01 October 2025 12:06

**To:** Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans <MinisterPBV@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;

Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Please see attached a revised statement for this afternoon. This has been cleared by Mr Fairlie, Ms Gougeon and officials with input from SpAds last night as well.

I understand the First Minister is still content for this to go on Cab Sec clearance.

Grateful for Mr Dey's consideration please.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)  
**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot > **On Behalf Of** Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 13:02

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;

Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister

<[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION

11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans <MinisterPBV@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Thanks for the attached final statement.

As a result of discussion at Bureau today, this statement is now scheduled for the later time of **1710-1740** tomorrow. We will issue a revised whip in due course.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**Deputy Private Secretary to Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans – Graeme Dey MSP**

**M:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] **Email:** MinisterPBV@gov.scot

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH EH1 3DG

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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 30 September 2025 12:05

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Minister for Parliamentary Business and Veterans <MinisterPBV@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>;

Jeanette Campbell <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Colin McAllister

<[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: Ministerial Statement: Seagulls Summit 011025

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Please see attached statement – cleared by Mr Fairlie and Ms Gougeon. The First Minister has advised he is content for it to go on Cab Sec clearance.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

**E: MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

**T: 0131 244 5337 | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**



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**From:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 03 July 2025 13:20  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Re: Due 09/07 - 202500470604 - Rachael Hamilton - Seagull Summit

## Content

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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> on behalf of Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 3, 2025 1:17:19 PM  
**To:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** Due 09/07 - 202500470604 - Rachael Hamilton - Seagull Summit

Please see attached correspondence and response below. Content to clear?

Thank you for your letter of 11 June 2025 which you formally request that a similar Seagull Summit takes place in Eyemouth.

As you are aware, I announced in the Chamber last week during the members debate on gulls that I would chair a gull summit in Inverness. which would give people who are being seriously impacted by gulls, not just in the Morayshire area, but across Scotland, an opportunity to share their concerns.

The summit will also bring together key stakeholders who are responsible in some way for managing gulls from local authorities and public health bodies to waste management officials and BiD teams, along with NatureScot and representatives from areas where effective measures are already in place.

The aim of the summit will be practical: to share best practice, learn from real-world examples, identify policy gaps, and agree a collective way forward.

Given that the summit will be open to all of those affected in Scotland, I do not see any requirement to hold a similar summit in Eyemouth.

---

[OUT OF SCOPE]

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Rachael Hamilton MSP  
Member for Ettrick, Roxburgh &  
Berwickshire

11<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Dear Minister Fairlie,

I am writing to follow up on your recent commitment, made in response to concerns raised by my colleague Douglas Ross MSP, to convene a Seagull Summit with key partners to explore preventative measures and discuss options for managing aggressive gull behaviour.

In light of this, I would like to formally request that a similar Seagull Summit takes place in Eyemouth, and that key stakeholders from the local community will be invited to participate in the summit.

The town has been significantly affected by the growing problem of aggressive seagulls, which has raised serious health and safety concerns, particularly for children and vulnerable residents.

As the local MSP, I have been working closely with residents, businesses, and relevant stakeholders to address this issue. Key actions taken to date include:

- Organising a site visit with NatureScot, local residents, and businesses to tour the worst affected areas and discuss practical management strategies, such as gull-proof bins and improved signage.
- Holding multiple meetings with NatureScot to explore the licensing process and potential interventions.
- Securing NatureScot's endorsement for signage in Eyemouth aimed at discouraging the public from feeding gulls.
- Convening a meeting with local businesses, residents, and Scottish Borders Council to discuss the development of a comprehensive seagull management plan.
- Raising the issue directly with the Scottish Government through parliamentary questions

I also understand that Scottish Borders Council are currently preparing a draft Gull Management Plan, which will be presented at a public meeting on 26th June. However, immediate action is urgently needed.

I look forward to your speedy response on this

issue. Best wishes,

Rachael Hamilton MSP  
Ettrick, Roxburgh & Berwickshire

---

**From:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 18 September 2025 17:39  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit -Opinion Article

Content

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
**Sent:** 18 September 2025 15:23  
**To:** Jim Fairlie <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: TO CLEAR: Gull summit -Opinion Article

To clear.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)  
Temporarily covering Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP  
E: MinisterforAC@gov.scot

Deputy Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice – Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP  
E: CabSecforSJ@gov.scot | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Sent:** 18 September 2025 15:18  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero,

Energy and Rural Affairs <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** TO CLEAR: Gull summit -Opinion Article

Good afternoon [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Please could the Minister consider the draft of the article, agreed with spads.

\*\*\*\*\*

While it may be true that the number of seagulls in their natural habitat are in decline, for many communities it does not feel that way.

That is why the Scottish Government and NatureScot are holding a summit in Inverness this week to listen to the people, businesses, communities and council representatives who have been affected

The plan is to bring them together with experts in pest control and scientific advisors to look at the practical steps that can be taken to reduce the damage that gulls can do.

In the worst cases, NatureScot can issue licences to control gulls to protect public safety. Licences were issued in Eyemouth this year, and NatureScot has also worked in Inverness, Nairn and Moray to address issues.

But it is important to recognise that some of the most effective methods to reduce the disruption from gulls is to change human behaviour.

We know the role that litter plays as a source of food, and if we can learn to better manage that we can find easier, better solutions than relying on licences to cull the gulls.

This summit is to provide practical help – to share best practice, learn from real-world examples, identify policy gaps, and crucially agree a collective way forward.

This has proved to be an emotive issue and I fully understand why. We are determined to work with local people and businesses to find solutions.

Spaces at the summit are limited – priority has been given to representatives from affected businesses and communities rather than local politicians.

The concerns and experiences of local MSPs have been taken into account and will weigh heavily in the deliberations on how we find solutions and protect people from harm.

I am determined to listen, to find workable solutions and implement them at pace.

**Jim Fairlie**  
**Minister for Agriculture**

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 18 September 2025 11:25

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Hi all,

Grateful for an update on the op-ed please.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

Temporarily covering Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP

E: MinisterforAC@gov.scot

Deputy Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice – Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

E: CabSecforSJ@gov.scot | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 16 September 2025 14:31

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024  
<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs  
<[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

As discussed there isn't another Parliamentary debate from the one that occurred over the summer as far as I am aware.

Changed the below to reflect this.

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 16 September 2025 14:16

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
<MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024  
<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs  
<[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Thanks, in the first instance for responding to the BBC query on the back of the original Inverness Courier query.

When is the seagull debate due? Grateful for your views on offering the following:

Agriculture Minister Jim Fairlie said:

“With limited places available we have prioritised the local authority, community councillors, business representatives, pest controllers, BID teams and scientific advisers to look at the challenges people are experiencing, the scale of the impact and what measures have proven to be successful and how they can be rolled out further.

“This is a focused opportunity for those on the ground, experiencing the damage being done by urban gull populations to share their views freely. I will be more than happy to engage on the subject further with parliamentary colleagues in Parliament.”

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 16 September 2025 14:07

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Coming back on your original question on the guestlist. We didn't invite MSPs the public or the media to ensure the Summit is focused on finding solutions to the issues [REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)] We have invited local authorities, business representatives, pest controllers, community council members, BID teams as well as scientific advisors to ensure all views are represented.

Nearly 60 people have been invited in total.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 10(4)(e)]

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 16 September 2025 13:59

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian

Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Hi [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

We are currently working on alternative lines on this as the BBC has asked for them as well as the Minister.

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 16 September 2025 13:51

**To:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024

<CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <CommunicationsNetZero&RuralAffairs@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Hi all,

Can I just check where we are with this – the Minister is keen to see lines as soon as possible today on this.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)

Temporarily covering Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP

E: MinisterforAC@gov.scot

Deputy Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice – Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP

E: CabSecforSJ@gov.scot | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 16 September 2025 12:08

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Leia Fitzgerald <Leia.Fitzgerald@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Donald Henderson <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Adding policy colleagues,

I will pick up the comment piece request and share a draft with spads.

We have had further enquiry from BBC about the reporting in the Inverness Courier of MSPs and journalists not being able to attend the summit. I have referred the BBC to NatureScot as hosts of the summit.

Please could policy send me some lines on the thinking behind the guest list, as I think we need a stronger position on this to include in the lines we intended to prepare to share with colleagues on duty this weekend.

Thanks

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 15 September 2025 16:25

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Thanks for sight [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], I'll defer to the news team to pick this up.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 15 September 2025 16:07

**To:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <CommunicationsNetZero&RuralAffairs@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** RE: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Adding [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] to the chain.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]**

**Private Secretary to Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands - Mairi Gougeon MSP**

2nd Floor | St Andrews House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG  
| cabsecforRALRI@gov.scot | **M:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

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**From:** Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Sent:** 15 September 2025 16:03

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands 2024 <CabSecforRALRI@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot; Communications Net Zero, Energy and Rural Affairs <CommunicationsNetZero&RuralAffairs@gov.scot>; Sean McGivern <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ross Ingebrigtsen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Further to discussions re Gull summit comms, agreed with comms Spads the following suggested approach:

Comms approach Inverness courier and P&J for an op-ed – lines worked up which focus on what the summit is meant to achieve, that we are listening, looking to find solutions and take effective action etc. Once we have that comms spad colleagues will input additional lines if required.

Thanks.

**Ian Muirhead**

Special Adviser to the First Minister  
Rural Affairs, Land Reform & Islands.  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot > **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 14 September 2025 08:20

**To:** Ross Ingebriksen <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; Spads Admin <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; Ian Muirhead <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Fw: TO CLEAR: Gull summit - Inverness Courier

Hi Ross,

Please see below from Mr Fairlie regarding the lines on the gull summit.

The Minister would welcome your consideration of his comments below.

Thanks,

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
Deputy Private Secretary  
Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands

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The full enquiry is below. There is political comment from Douglas Ross MSP & Fergus Ewing MSP.

NatureScot will provide the following comment:

*“We appreciate and understand that there are strong views about urban gull impacts among members of the public and their representatives. NatureScot is assisting the Scottish Government in making preparations for the Minister’s summit, the purpose of which is to bring together representatives of those most directly involved in managing gulls on the ground to share views from all sides of the debate, discuss those concerns and work together to find practical shared solutions to the issue.”*

Grateful if suggested SG response below could be put to Minister for consideration – SpAds and officials are content.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

### **Scot Gov response**

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"We have always said we will involve all representatives from those communities affected in our summit in Inverness, and that remains the case.

“We fully recognise the significant impact of urban gull populations in some of our towns and cities, and the fact more action is required to mitigate this.

“The summit will see people affected taking part in discussions with NatureScot and representatives of areas where effective and lawful measures have already been introduced.

“The aim of the summit is practical - to share best practice, learn from real-world examples, identify policy gaps, and agree a collective way forward.”

### **BACKGROUND**

NatureScot can issue licences to control gulls to protect public safety. Licences were issued in Eyemouth this year, and NatureScot has also worked in Inverness, Nairn and Moray to address issues.

### **FULL ENQUIRY**

Can I get a response to the following? Deadline: Midday, Monday 15 September. Please also reply to the newsdesk email CC'd in this email ([newsdesk@hnmedia.co.uk](mailto:newsdesk@hnmedia.co.uk)).

- The Gull Summit organised by the Scottish Government and NatureScot has deliberately excluded local residents, local media and local representatives
- The exclusion of those individuals and groups from the summit raises serious questions about the integrity of the process that has been adopted
- That NatureScot and Scottish Ministers are perpetrating a serious “a stitch-up and a sham” over a closed door gull summit

- Finally, that it undermines claims by NatureScot of wishing to establish a fresh start, with more openness.

MSP Douglas Ross:

"The whole thing reeks of a stitch-up and a sham. Invitations are being sent out at the last minute to a heavily restricted number of people and the whole agenda is designed to support the Minister and Nature Scot. They are more interested in protecting these birds rather than the people being attacked by them or the businesses affected by the Gulls aggressive behaviour."

MSP Fergus Ewing:

"A clear pattern is emerging that Scottish Government Ministers are now scared to appear before the public in the Highlands. They failed to show at the Renewables Convention at Kingsmills on 12th August, and now they have refused to hold the Seagull Summit before the public. Scottish Ministers are now afraid to put their case to the people in the Highlands - they are running scared."

ENDS

--

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

News | Communications Team Leader

Constitution, External Affairs and Culture

The Scottish Government | St Andrew's House, Edinburgh

Mobile: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | Portfolio Media inquiries: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

gov.scot/news



---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 30 April 2025 09:00

**To:** Central Correspondence Unit <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: Gull Summit Location Request

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Hello,

For Diary please, fast-tracked.

Officials, sending on for your awareness.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)  
**Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**



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---

**From:** Lorraine Bremner McBride <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@invernessbid.co.uk>

**Sent:** 29 April 2025 17:46

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Jim.Fairlie.msp@parliament.scot; Lucy Harding [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@nairnconnects.com>; Adrian Watson [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@aberdeeninspired.com>

**Subject:** Gull Summit Location Request

Dear Minister Fairlie

### **National Gull Management Summit**

I am writing on behalf of the North BIDs Working Group, which includes Inverness City Centre BID, Nairn Connects, and Aberdeen Inspired.

We would like to express our thanks for your recent announcement confirming that a **National Gull Management Summit** will be held later this year which you will Chair.

Your commitment to this issue is greatly appreciated, particularly given the significant time, resources, and adverse impacts that unmanaged urban gull populations are having on our communities and local economies.

Given that many of the most acute challenges are concentrated in the North of Scotland, we would be grateful if you could confirm whether you would be amenable to Inverness being selected as the summit's location. Hosting the event in Inverness would support full participation from our group, acknowledge that NatureScot's headquarters are based here, and represent a welcome departure from the usual Central Belt focus.

Selecting Inverness would also recognise the substantial operational and strategic efforts our group has undertaken on this issue, and reflect the strong, sustained, and

representative advocacy by local MSPs on behalf of the many stakeholders affected across the region.

We thank you for considering this request and look forward to your response.

Kind Regards

Lorraine

**Lorraine Bremner McBride**  
**BID Director**  
**Inverness Business Improvement District (BID)**  
**First Floor**  
**17 Queensgate**  
**Inverness**  
**IV1 1DF**

**Office:** 01463 714550

**Mobile:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



Company Number - SC339914

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---

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear airson Àiteachas agus Comas-ceangail  
Jim Fairlie MSP/BPA

T : 0300 244 4000

E : [scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)

Lorraine Bremner McBride  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@invernessbid.co.uk

Our Reference: 202500464010

Your Reference: Gull Summit

2 June 2025

Dear Lorraine Bremner McBride ,

Thank you for your email of 29 April 2025 suggesting Inverness as the gull summit's location.

I will ask my officials to contact you shortly to discuss arrangements including possible venues and dates.

Yours sincerely,

**JIM FAIRLIE**

---

04/06/2025

Mr Jim Fairlie MSP  
Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

Dear Minister,

**Seagull Summit**

I have recently been contacted by a constituent who has raised concerns about seagulls nesting above their home. My constituent lives in sheltered accommodation with a number of other elderly people and has said that the seagulls are becoming a safety issue for the residents.

He saw your answer in the chamber last week in which you stated that the Scottish Government would be holding a summit to discuss the issue of seagulls and was interested in gathering some more information about this.

I understand that you will be limited on what information you can provide at this time, but I would be grateful for any that you can give me to pass on to my constituent.

Yours sincerely,

Siobhian Brown MSP

---

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear airson Àiteachas agus Comas-ceangail  
Jim Fairlie MSP/BPA

T : 0300 244 4000  
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Siobhian Brown MSP  
Siobhian.Brown.msp@parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202500469336  
Your Reference: Case Ref: SB5866

27 June 2025

Dear Siobhian,

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 June 2025, raising the concerns of your constituent regarding urban gull populations and their impact on local communities.

As you may be aware, I recently met with NatureScot to discuss how we might increase support in areas worst affected by gull populations. To deal with the immediate issue in those areas, including in Inverness and Nairn, NatureScot has been engaging with licence applicants and carried out site visits to assess first-hand the impacts being caused by gulls. This has supported NatureScot's licencing decision and area-wide licences have now been issued in both Inverness and Nairn BiD areas for this year.

I would like to make it clear that killing large numbers of gulls year on year cannot be the answer. Gull populations are in decline and it is not the case that communities are unanimously in support of this approach. While gulls can have a negative impact, they are also an important part of our ecosystem. I know that there are significant concerns from people in areas like Inverness and Nairn about the decision to issue area wide licences this year.

There is a vital role for local authorities, working with building owners and businesses to reduce the appeal of urban areas as nest site or feeding zones. The majority of local authorities in Scotland currently publish guidance on dealing with gull problems on their websites, as well as undertaking gull management measures themselves. They can

increase street/pavement cleaning at key times of the day, and install gull-proof bins in problem areas near schools and town centres and gull-proofing buildings using spikes and nets. Householders can also deter gulls nesting on their properties by installing netting and spikes, and removing old nesting material outwith the nesting season.

In the longer term we must increase our work to prevent these negative impacts from being felt. That means making towns and cities less appealing to gulls, and limiting their opportunities to nest.

The gull summit, which I am due to host later this year, will provide an opportunity to bring together those negatively affected by gulls, as well as key stakeholders from local government, public health bodies, housing associations, waste management, and community groups, along with NatureScot and representatives from areas where effective and lawful measures have already been introduced. The aim of the summit will be practical: to share best practice, learn from real-world examples, identify policy gaps, and agree a collective way forward.

I hope this reassures the concerns of both you and your constituent. Yours sincerely,

**JIM FAIRLIE**

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 11 June 2025 14:18

**To:** Central Correspondence Unit <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: Seagull Summit

MR please.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie  
MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**

T: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (Scotland)  
**Sent:** 11 June 2025 10:12  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
**Subject:** Seagull Summit

Good morning,

During a recent Rural PQ session, there was mention of a possible 'seagull summit'. BASC would be willing to be involved when this happens.

Kind regards,  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
Public Affairs Manager  
British Association for Shooting and Conservation  
Trochry  
Dunkeld  
Perthshire  
PH8 0DY

Telephone: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
Mobile: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
Membership Hotline: 01244 573030

Email address: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@basc.org.uk  
Website: <http://www.basc.org.uk>



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Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear airson Àiteachas agus Comas-ceangail  
Jim Fairlie MSP/BPA

T : 0300 244 4000  
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@basc.org.uk

Our Reference: 202500470565  
Your Reference: E-mail to Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

25 June 2025

Dear [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Thank you for your email of 11 June 2025 requesting that BASC be involved in the seagull summit.

As you mention in your email, I recently announced that I would chair a summit following numerous representations received from local authorities, housing associations, residents, and community groups, regarding public health and safety concerns being caused by gulls located in urban areas. As you are aware, NatureScot can issue licences under Section 16(1)(i) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to preserve public health and public safety.

The gull summit which I am due to host later this year will provide an opportunity to bring together those negatively affected by urban gulls and key stakeholders along with NatureScot and representatives from areas where effective and lawful measures have already been introduced. The aim of the summit will be practical: to share best practice, learn from real-world examples, identify policy gaps, and agree a collective way forward.

The summit will only focus on the impact of gulls in towns, city centres, and surrounding areas. As such, I do not think it will be necessary for BASC to be involved in the summit at this time.

Yours sincerely,

## JIM FAIRLIE

---



Rachael Hamilton MSP  
Member for Ettrick, Roxburgh &  
Berwickshire

11<sup>th</sup> June 2025

Dear Minister Fairlie,

I am writing to follow up on your recent commitment, made in response to concerns raised by my colleague Douglas Ross MSP, to convene a Seagull Summit with key partners to explore preventative measures and discuss options for managing aggressive gull behaviour.

In light of this, I would like to formally request that a similar Seagull Summit takes place in Eyemouth, and that key stakeholders from the local community will be invited to participate in the summit.

The town has been significantly affected by the growing problem of aggressive seagulls, which has raised serious health and safety concerns, particularly for children and vulnerable residents.

As the local MSP, I have been working closely with residents, businesses, and relevant stakeholders to address this issue. Key actions taken to date include:

- Organising a site visit with NatureScot, local residents, and businesses to tour the worst affected areas and discuss practical management strategies, such as gull-proof bins and improved signage.
- Holding multiple meetings with NatureScot to explore the licensing process and potential interventions.
- Securing NatureScot's endorsement for signage in Eyemouth aimed at discouraging the public from feeding gulls.
- Convening a meeting with local businesses, residents, and Scottish Borders Council to discuss the development of a comprehensive seagull management plan.
- Raising the issue directly with the Scottish Government through parliamentary questions

I also understand that Scottish Borders Council are currently preparing a draft Gull Management Plan, which will be presented at a public meeting on 26th June. However, immediate action is urgently needed.

I look forward to your speedy response on this issue. Best wishes,

Rachael Hamilton MSP  
Ettrick, Roxburgh & Berwickshire

---

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear airson Àiteachas agus Comas-ceangail  
Jim Fairlie MSP/BPA

T : 0300 244 4000  
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Rachael Hamilton  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@Parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202500470604  
Your Reference: Seagull Summit

3 July 2025

Dear Rachael,

Thank you for your letter of 11 June 2025 which you formally request that a similar Seagull Summit takes place in Eyemouth.

As you are aware, I announced in the Chamber last week during the members debate on gulls that I would chair a gull summit in Inverness. which would give people who are being seriously impacted by gulls, not just in the Morayshire area, but across Scotland, an opportunity to share their concerns.

The summit will also bring together key stakeholders who are responsible in some way for managing gulls from local authorities and public health bodies to waste management officials and BiD teams, along with NatureScot and representatives from areas where effective measures are already in place.

The aim of the summit will be practical: to share best practice, learn from real-world examples, identify policy gaps, and agree a collective way forward.

Given that the summit will be open to all of those affected in Scotland, I do not see any requirement to hold a similar summit in Eyemouth.

Yours sincerely,

**JIM FAIRLIE**

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 04 July 2025 15:20

**To:** Central Correspondence Unit <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: Gull Summit

Hello,

For MR please.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]** (she/her)

**Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**



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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] **On Behalf Of** Ewing F (Fergus), MSP

**Sent:** 04 July 2025 14:49

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Subject:** Gull Summit

Jim Fairlie MSP

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

Dear Jim,

## **Gull Summit**

I refer to my previous letter setting out the content of the proposed summit.

I am of course pleased you are holding this. It is a sensible and timely initiative that you have taken and I support you for it.

However, if it is to be of any use, then I have set out that the content must include contributions from those affected and in my speech to Parliament on the debate initiated by my colleague Douglas Ross MSP I alluded to other ways that the summit should be organised in order to make it successful - and to avoid criticism that it has been rigged by NatureScot or Scottish Government.

So, I am writing to make further suggestions and hope that they will be agreed to. In doing so I have the support of the BIDs in Inverness and Nairn and of Douglas Ross MSP.

First, the event must be held in public. Since Inverness is the venue proposed, I would suggest the Eden Court be used and their one touch arena is suitable.

Indeed it was there that the Inverness Courier held the A9 Summit. This would allow members of the public to attend. I expect that there will be a considerable appetite and therefore the venue must be large enough for that. I doubt any other venue would be suitable.

Second the event must be open to the public, otherwise it would (with respect) be seen as a charade. It is the concerns of the public that are driving this, not the views of MSPs. It is the concerns of the public about attacks, their health, nuisance (which apparently is irrelevant) disease, cost, bureaucracy, that is why there is any need for this event to be held. Without the public being able to attend, the event would be a non-event.

Third, it would be in my view important for the event to be chaired by someone who is not of Scottish Government nor Nature Scot. My constituent, [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)], has offered to chair the event.

From my work with [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] over the years, and his lifelong experience of chairing of meetings, I believe that were you to agree to this proposal, it would demonstrate your good faith in seeking to achieve the best from this event, and to avoid it being seen or perceived as a vehicle for NatureScot or Scottish Government to justify its actions and policies.

Finally, I would suggest that the event needs to be held with fair notice to people who may wish to attend, and not so late as to prevent the implementation of positive actions to improve upon the current system, which came under such sustained attack from speakers from all parties but one in the members debate last week.

I very much hope that these suggestions find favour, and am happy to speak with you about them, as indeed is [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Kind regards,

Yours sincerely

Fergus Ewing  
Independent MSP  
**Inverness and Nairn**

\*\*\*\*\*

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\*\*\*\*\*

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Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear airson Àiteachas agus Comas-ceangail  
Jim Fairlie MSP/BPA

T : 0300 244 4000  
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Fergus Ewing MSP  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202500474714  
Your Reference: Gull Summit

19 August 2025

Dear Fergus,

Thank you for your correspondence of 4 July 2025 regarding the upcoming gull summit.

As I set out in the Scottish Parliament during the debate on gulls which was held on 26 June, the gull summit will be in Inverness. NatureScot will host this in Great Glen House. I will be chairing the event and my officials are working closely with NatureScot on the agenda for the session, and the focus will be on bringing together those who are managing gulls effectively with those who are facing the most negative impacts of gulls to address the question of how we can mitigate the negative impacts going forward and the actions we need to take ahead of next year.

I am grateful to you and other MSPs who have done their job in representing the views of constituents. The system has worked well and I am content that the issue needs to be addressed with practical solutions from those across the country who are dealing with the effects of gull presence in urban environments, including NatureScot, Local Authorities and BiD teams.

I hope this proves helpful.

Yours sincerely

**JIM FAIRLIE**

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 08 July 2025 13:04

**To:** Central Correspondence Unit <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: Elgin Community Council – Seagull Summit (Case Ref: RL40658)

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Hello,

For MR please.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)

**Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**

**The Scottish Government**

St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**



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**From:** Richard Lochhead MSP <richard.lochhead.msp@parliament.scot>

**Sent:** 08 July 2025 10:31

**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Central Correspondence Unit <scottish.ministers@gov.scot>

**Subject:** Elgin Community Council – Seagull Summit (Case Ref: RL40658)

Dear Jim

**Re: Elgin Community Council – Seagull Summit**

I just wanted to bring to your attention the letter you've received from [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] of Elgin Community Council in regards to the proposed seagull summit and their request to be invited to this summit.

Elgin Community Council have undertaken important work to address the issues with seagulls in recent years and I was impressed with their goal of working collaboratively with Moray Council and NatureScot when I met with them in late 2024.

I would be delighted if a representative from Elgin Community Council was to be invited to your summit, in light of the knowledge and experience of this issue they could contribute.

Thank you for your attention and I look forward to hearing from you.

With my best wishes,

Yours sincerely,

Richard

**Richard Lochhead MSP for Moray**

Moray Constituency Office | 80 South Street | Elgin | Moray | IV30 1JG

**T:** 01343 545077 | **E:** Richard.Lochhead.msp@parliament.scot

**X:** @RichardLochhead | **Facebook:** @RichardLochheadMSP



*The City and Royal  
Burgh of Elgin  
Community Council*

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

[\[REDACTED: REGULATION 11\(2\)\]@gmail.com](mailto:[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gmail.com)

Mr Jim Fairlie MSP

**GULL SUMMIT**

My colleagues and I at Elgin Community Council have been pursuing the issue of 'urban gulls' for a number of years and it has been a constant agenda item for equally

as long. We have tried with no luck to persuade Naturescot to change the way they issue licenses for the removal of nests at the onset of the breeding season with no response. When our local Councillors wrote the reply received was that people should carry umbrellas to fend off attacking gulls, hardly a great response from a public body.

With the recent demise of Elgin BID, there have been even more requests to Elgin Community Council from the public asking us to do something about the seagulls and the detrimental affect they are having on their daily lives.

When we heard that you had announced that there would be a Gull Summit, we welcomed such a proposal with a view that perhaps something will finally be done about what is becoming a greater challenge each year. We would like to formally request a place at that summit so that we can put forward our views on this issue and would be very appreciative if you could favourably consider our request.

Regards

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

Acting Secretary  
Elgin Community Council

---

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear airson Àiteachas agus Comas-ceangail  
Jim Fairlie MSP/BPA

T : 0300 244 4000  
E : scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Richard Lochhead MSP  
richard.lochhead.msp@parliament.scot

Our Reference: 202500475106  
Your Reference: (Case Ref: RL40658)

22 August 2025

Dear Richard,

Thank you for your correspondence of 8 July 2025 regarding the upcoming gull summit and the letter of 6 July which I have received from [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] asking for Elgin Community Council to be represented at the event. As I set out in the Scottish Parliament during the debate on gulls which was held on 26 June, the gull summit will be in Inverness. NatureScot will host this in Great Glen House on 23 September. I will be chairing the event and my officials are working closely with NatureScot on the agenda for the session, and the focus will be on bringing together those who are managing gulls effectively with those who are facing the most negative

impacts of gulls to address the question of how we can mitigate the negative impacts going forward and the actions we need to take ahead of next year.

I am grateful to you and other MSPs who have done their job in representing the views of constituents. The system has worked well and I am content that the issue needs to be addressed with practical solutions from those across the country who are dealing with the effects of gull presence in urban environments, including NatureScot, Local Authorities and BiD teams. I understand that NatureScot will contact [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] of Elgin Community Council accordingly.

Yours sincerely,

**JIM FAIRLIE**

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Tha Ministearanna h-Alba, an luchd-comhairleachaidh sònraichte agus Rùnaire Maireannach fo chumhachan Achd Coiteachaidh (Alba) 2016. Faicibh [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)  
St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG  
[www.gov.scot](http://www.gov.scot)

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot > **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
**Sent:** 18 September 2025 16:44  
**To:** Central Correspondence Unit <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>  
**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>; [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: Urgent: National Gull Summit

Hello,

For MR please, fast track. For [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] in copy.

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)  
Temporarily covering Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP  
E: MinisterforAC@gov.scot

Deputy Private Secretary to the Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice – Shirley-Anne Somerville MSP  
E: CabSecforSJ@gov.scot | M: [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] Scottish Government | St Andrews House, Regent Road, EDINBURGH, EH1 3DG |



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Scottish Ministers, Special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)

---

**From:** Lorraine Bremner McBride  
**Sent:** 18 September 2025 14:52  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity ; Colin Galbraith  
**Cc:** Fairlie J (Jim), MSP ; Lucy Harding  
**Subject:** Urgent: National Gull Summit

Dear Mr Fairlie and Mr Galbraith

**Gull Summit – 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025**

Please find attached our further representations in respect to the above, duly submitted on behalf of Inverness and Nairn Connects Business Improvement Districts.

We thank you in advance for your prompt attention and response.

Kind Regards

Lorraine

**Lorraine Bremner McBride**  
**Inverness Business Improvement District (BID)**  
**First Floor**  
**17 Queensgate**  
**Inverness**  
**IV1 1DF**

**Office:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
**Mobile:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]



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**Delivered by Email**

18<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear Minister Mr Fairlie (cc Nature Scot Chair, Mr Galbraith)

Gull Summit 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

In the last few months, we have applied our best endeavours to support the Gull Summit, including to help ensure that it fulfilled its potential as a forum to explore and work towards agreeing workable solutions which reduces the impact on people and businesses affected in our urban areas whilst not impacting on the conservation of the species.

Please see the summary at the end of this correspondence, which highlights some of our efforts in this regard.

Regrettably, most of our suggestions were not agreed to and given the increasingly closed and restricted nature of the current proposed arrangements, we write to record our serious concerns and also to highlight that we strongly support that the Gull Summit now being postponed and rescheduled.

Hosting a forum at a later date which is more open, balanced, and inclusive would be imminently more sensible rather than proceeding with a Gull Summit where the room is potentially half empty at the same time that our local and national elected members, key stakeholders as well as businesses and the general public and the press are excluded and will not have their valuable contributions heard.

As you will be aware, the changes to the guidance as were published in February 2024, have been hugely impactful on operational delivery partners and the stakeholders we represent.

A key concern remains what can be described as a continual 'changing of the goal posts' which included for example, the offer to work towards 'trusted partner status' and 'group/area licence arrangements' which we had been working on collaboratively for a period of 6+ months last year, before this was unilaterally taken off the table as an option in December 2024 by Nature Scot without, in our view, any reasonable explanation or fair right of review.

Just prior to the 2025 nesting season, in addition to the further 'tests/criteria' as were introduced into the licence decision-making process in 2024, the wording was again reworded to be more restrictive in practice.

Some of these changes have been confirmed as being Nature Scot 'policy' rather than a legislative or statutory requirement, and we highlight that the legal advice underpinning these changes has, to date, not been shared or disclosed, in full or part, despite our recent FOI request.

As a result, at the time of writing, we cannot be assured that the guidance is being applied fully intra vires.

That said, the application of area-wide licences in Inverness and Nairn, which we are grateful you directed to be implemented this year as an interim measure, following the representations of our elected members was a balanced intervention and in practice, worked well.

It is requested and recommended therefore that the same arrangements now be agreed also for 2026.

We highlight the significant financial implications of the current position and that it is unfair, unsustainable and unduly burdensome that local taxpayers via local authorities, businesses, and households must alone continue to bear the resultant increasing costs of operational Gull Management activities and measures in urban areas.

Given that this is a national issue, we respectfully submit that national funding should be made available as a matter of urgency to help us all better protect our communities as well as our wildlife not least to prevent there being a postcode lottery or an ad hoc application in practice.

The Gull Summit, in its current planned form, is not the event we had hoped and envisaged would take place, nor is the approach the one we have consistently sought to support.

The delegate list, format, and agenda are not in our view sufficiently open, inclusive, or balanced, which risks creating (at best) an unrepresentative closed

discussion and, at worst, largely an ineffective echo chamber.

We are concerned also that at least to some extent, outcomes appear to have been already predetermined, given that unfunded and unsupported, 'coexistence' ultimately will, it seems be presented as the foregone conclusion.

Whilst we ordinarily would have welcomed the opportunity to present our experiences to date and to outline the issues as we see them as well as proposed solutions, if the audience at the Summit is to be comprised largely of those opposed to prioritising the protection of people over gulls, and as no wider participation has been permitted, we must question the value and purpose of our involvement given our ability to achieve positive change will be greatly diminished.

In closing we record for clarity that we make no criticism of the Nature Scot staff who have been tasked with organising the Summit but rather, our concerns pertain to the restrictive arrangements they have been directed to put in place.

We trust that the seriousness of these matters will be duly recognised, and we reiterate that taking more time to get it right would be at this juncture, a more prudent course of action to take and one that we would fully support.

We thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Yours Sincerely

Lorraine Bremner  
McBride Inverness BID  
Director

Lucy Harding  
Nairn Connects BID Manager

### Gull Summit - Summary

On the **29<sup>th</sup> April 2025**, we wrote to you to thank you for agreeing to host the Summit '...particularly given the significant time, resources, and adverse impacts that unmanaged urban gull populations are having on our communities and local economies...'. We requested that the event take place in Inverness to allow affected stakeholders and their representatives to participate.

On the **4<sup>th</sup> July 2025**, we wrote to thank you for your confirmation that Inverness had been selected and we advised that we '...would be pleased to work with your Team... to help develop an *inclusive* programme.'

On the **16<sup>th</sup> July 2025**, we met with Mr Galbraith and a Nature Scot Colleague, and it was stated by Mr Galbraith that the Gull Summit would be 'co-designed' and 'co-delivered' which we fully supported. We confirmed also that we 'remained committed to working collaboratively and with partners to find effective and proportionate solutions.'

On the **1<sup>st</sup> August 2025** we wrote to Nature Scot to put forward our recommendations to ensure that the event ‘...is as accessible, inclusive and impactful as possible...’ including in respect to:

**Venue:** We noted that Great Glen House was not central or accessible, which could reduce participation in addition to the limit on delegate numbers. We advised that restricting numbers in this way would reduce ‘...valuable input from the wider public, media, businesses...’.

**Attendance:** We proposed that the event be live streamed to extend inclusion and participation. Later we were advised that Great Glen House had to be the venue as the IT Team would be able to support a live stream option.

**Timely Invitations:** We requested that formal invites be issued as soon as possible and note these were instead sent on **11<sup>th</sup> September 2025**.

**Delegates:** We requested that ‘...a fully inclusive approach to delegate selection...’ be taken to ‘...reflect the diversity of stakeholders affected by gull-related issues...’. We suggested that these should include: the general public, local authorities, elected members (local and national), business representative groups, conservation organisations...’ and later proposed also surveyors and operational pest controllers.

**Agenda:** We petitioned that a balanced and inclusive Agenda should include a wider panel discussion as breakout sessions/workshops are ‘not practical’ and added that our proposals in context, may help to ensure that ‘a successful and productive summit’ could be held.

In closing we confirmed that we remained ‘committed to supporting the process however we can...’ and that ensuring ‘...balance, fairness and the opportunity for constructive dialogue and practical solution sharing...’ remains important as does ensuring that ‘funding’ (national) is a ‘key consideration’.

On the **15<sup>th</sup> August 2025**, we wrote to Nature Scot further to a meeting of the same date to confirm in writing:

*‘...Our concerns, as outlined, include that the proposed format appears overly contained and restrictive which may represent a missed opportunity. The event plan, as currently described (and we appreciate it is still a work in progress) does not align with our earlier understanding of its purpose.*

*For example, limiting participation to a select group of invitees, who will take part in small workshop table activities, risks oversimplifying what should be a serious and productive high-level national discussion.*

*It’s disappointing that the opportunity for stakeholders to co-design the format (which was committed to by the Nature Scot Chair last month) has now been removed so we hope that our feedback this week can be given material consideration as we do support collaborative approaches.*

*In addition, as discussed, our view is that excluding MSPs or most local councillors, whether due to the Minister's preference to avoid wider political debate or because of space restrictions, is a further missed opportunity.*

*Elected representatives, are uniquely placed and have a mandate to reflect the views and concerns of the wider public, whereas our role is to represent the business community specifically, so to exclude them risks leaving the general public without a sufficient voice in the discussion.*

*Moreover, the 23 Councillors that make up the Inverness Area Committee act as guardians of the Inverness Common Good Fund, which invests in funding our Gull Management programme activities, so to exclude most of them from being able to attend (should they wish to do so) would in our view, and respectfully, be difficult to justify.*

**On Monday 15th September 2025**, we were informed that the previously agreed opportunity for the public, businesses, and other stakeholders to dial in to the live stream had also been withdrawn.

---

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear airson Àiteachas agus Comas-ceangail  
Jim Fairlie MSP/BPA

T : 0300 244 4000

E : [scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)

Lorraine Bremner McBride  
[lorraine.mcbride@invernessbid.co.uk](mailto:lorraine.mcbride@invernessbid.co.uk)

Our Reference: 202500485212  
Your Reference: Urgent: National Gull Summit

22 September 2025

Dear Lorraine,

Thank you for your letter of 18 September 2025 raising your concerns about the Gull Summit which is being held on Tuesday 23 September in Great Glen House, Inverness.

I fully appreciate your concerns but I would like to assure you that this summit is the start of an ongoing collaboration on gulls and we want to keep the session focused on

solutions. There will be an opportunity for open discussion on the issues and impacts presenting within communities, which will help shape future approaches to gull management in Scotland.

As you may know, during the debate in the Scottish Parliament on 26 June 2025 on Motion S6M-17969: Action to Address the Impact of Gulls in Scotland, I announced as part of my response that I would chair this summit and that the aim would be to focus on bringing together those who are managing gulls effectively with those who are facing the most negative impacts of gulls to address the question of how we can mitigate the negative impacts going forward and the actions we need to take ahead of next year.

Limiting the invitations to certain organisations, such as local authorities, local BID teams, including yourselves at Inverness BID, community councils, local community groups, pest controllers, and ornithologists, better enables us to focus on the issues and find solutions.

Undoubtedly there are strong views from the public, and from my fellow Member's of the Scottish Parliament. At this time, in order to ensure the conversation can remain focused on practical action in good time ahead of next year's nesting season I have no intention of postponing the summit.

I would like to take this opportunity to convey my gratitude to you for your support and input into organising the summit so far, and I hope sincerely that Inverness BID will be represented at the summit. I know the value and knowledge the BID team will bring to the event.

Yours sincerely,

**JIM FAIRLIE**

---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot> **On Behalf Of** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity

**Sent:** 18 September 2025 12:22

**To:** Central Correspondence Unit <[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@gov.scot>

**Cc:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>

**Subject:** FW: Inverness Gull Summit

Hello,

For OR.

**[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] (she/her)**  
**Assistant Private Secretary to the Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity – Jim Fairlie MSP**  
**The Scottish Government**  
St Andrew's House | Regent Road | Edinburgh | EH1 3DG

E: **MinisterforAC@gov.scot**



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---

**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@aol.co.uk>  
**Sent:** 18 September 2025 10:31  
**To:** Fairlie J (Jim), MSP <Jim.Fairlie.MSP@Parliament.scot>  
**Subject:** Inverness Gull Summit

**CAUTION:** *This e-mail originated from outside of The Scottish Parliament. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.*

Hello

Where are the invites for the public, press and Highland MSPs and councillors ?

Sincerely

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]

\*\*\*\*\*

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DIRECTORATE FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTRY  
ENFOR : Nature

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@aol.co.uk

Our Reference: 202500485445  
Your Reference: Inverness Gull Summit

16 October 2025

Dear [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)],

Thank you for your correspondence of 18 September to Jim Fairlie, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity, regarding the Gull Summit which took place in Inverness on 23 September 2025. I have been asked to respond.

Regarding the concerns which you have raised about the summit which took place in Inverness not being inclusive, I can assure that the Minister's officials worked closely with NatureScot on the agenda for the session; and the focus was on bringing together those who are managing gulls effectively with those who are facing the most negative impacts of gulls to address the question of how we can mitigate the negative impacts going forward and the actions we need to take ahead of next year.

The Minister is grateful to MSPs who have done their job in representing the views of constituents. The system has worked well and the Scottish Government is content that the issue needs to be addressed with practical solutions from those across the country who are dealing with the effects of gull presence in urban environments, including NatureScot, Local Authorities and BiD teams.

One of the bespoke things that we are looking at is £100,000 being immediately made available to assist local authorities to develop area-wide gull-management approaches. The area-wide approach will give a better understanding of gull populations and their movements at a local level. It will identify the range of measures that could be practically applied in a local area. It will identify high-impact areas and develop a strategic view as to where and how gulls can be moved on from areas of high impact, and it will provide locally co-ordinated, area-based licensing approaches. That is the beginning of a process, and the funding will help to support that work and get it under way. The Minister has outlined other actions that we will take following the gull summit, and he will continue to consider any other support that is required thereafter.

I hope this proves helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
ND : Wildlife Management Unit

---



Bishop's Court Residents' Association (BCRA)  
Bishop's Court  
Inverness  
IV3 5SZ  
contact.bcra@gmail.com  
info@nesstates.co.uk

Jim Fairlie MSP  
Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Scottish Government  
St Andrew's House  
Regent Road  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

17<sup>th</sup> September 2025

**RE: Scottish Government Seagull Summit**

Dear Jim,

It is with great concern that the Bishop's Court Residents' Committee (BCRA) writes to you today, [following reports in the Inverness Courier yesterday](#) that the upcoming Scottish Government/NatureScot Seagull Summit will be held behind closed doors, with neither MSPs/MPs nor Councillors present.

As you will be aware from discussions and debates concerning this matter in Parliament and local media, gulls continue to be a blight in urban areas, specifically Inverness City Centre and the Riverside area. The tightening of licensing rules by NatureScot in 2024-25 has led to a severe curtailment in services designed to remove and control urban gull populations in the Inverness area. Last year, the Highland Council only received licenses for around 50% of the applications made. We also understand that Rentokil has struggled to get any additional licenses in 2025 in the local area; this has led to an explosion in the gull population, which is now a year-round issue.

Specifically, here in Bishop's Court, we have gulls nesting and breeding almost year-round. This issue has been ongoing for a decade, and efforts to lessen this have proven futile, following Rentokil's inability to secure the licenses needed to control the gull population. On several instances, individuals have been attacked by gulls, with noise issues and constant defecation issues year-round, historically leading to the need for owners to spend over £5,000 annually on Rentokil services, with no positive impact. The nesting birds are also causing damage to the Automatic Smoke Vents and the structure of our roofing across the development, which is now estimated to cost several thousand pounds to repair. Residents, some vulnerable individuals, are also increasingly unable to use the limited external garden area we have, which is impacting their quality of life.

Due to a lack of support from the Highland Council, in early 2025, we took it upon ourselves to set up a local gull committee including UHI, Highland Hospice, Inverness Bowling Club, Inverness Squash Club and our local Councillors. A key part of our

discussions was the understanding that the Scottish Government and NatureScot would be holding this summit, with the expectation that we would be able to attend to voice our concerns. Given the severity of the issues experienced here at Bishop's Court and across the wider Inverness area, we actively request that you take heed of these concerns and account for the impacts this situation has on ordinary people's lives, not just here but across Scotland.

While remaining steadfast in our support of animal welfare, the Scottish Government and NatureScot must take a more nuanced approach to this situation and accept that, while birds have a right to exist, humans also have a right to exist in peace without year-round fear of attack and expensive damage to their properties due to what has now become an out-of-control problem.

In support of local democratic principles, we would appreciate it if individuals could attend the summit on behalf of the BCRA and the local gull committee.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter, and we look forward to your response. Le

dùrachdan | Best regards,

[REDACTED:  
REGULATION 11(2)]  
Chair  
**Bishop's Court Residents' Association Committee**

---

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear an Àiteachais agus Ceangal  
Jim Fairlie MSP  
Jim Fairlie BPA



T: 0300 244 4000  
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]  
Chair  
Bishop's Court Residents' Association (BCRA)  
Bishop's Court  
Inverness  
IV3 5SZ

contact.bcra@gmail.com

---

September 2025

Thank you for your letter of 17 September 2025 raising your concerns on behalf of Bishop's Court Resident's Association (BCRA) about the Gull Summit which is due to be held in Inverness on 23 September, and on gull management issues in general.

As you are aware, there have been increasing concerns regarding the impact of urban gull populations being felt in some of our towns and cities, especially in the North-East of Scotland.

During my response at the debate on 26 June 2025 to Motion S6M-17969: Action to Address the Impact of Gulls in Scotland, I announced that I would chair a summit in Inverness this year which aims to focus on bringing together those who are managing gulls effectively with those who are facing the most negative impacts of gulls to address the question of how we can mitigate the negative impacts going forward and the actions we need to take ahead of next year.

I would like to respond to the specific points you have raised in your letter. Firstly, you claim that the summit will be held behind closed doors. Due to the size of the chosen venue, the number of those organisations etc invited was limited to 60 people. Unfortunately, we are therefore unable to accommodate everyone who wished to attend. The targeted invitations will enable us to focus on the issues and find solutions.

I applaud your Committee's effort to take a partnership approach to gull management. On this basis, I would like to invite you and one other representative of the BCRA along to the summit which is due to take place between 9:30am and 15:30 on Tuesday 23 September 2025 in Great Glen House, Leachkin Road, Inverness, IV3 8NW. Details of the agenda etc can be found in the attached Annex A to this letter.

You also raised your concerns over the 'tightening of licensing rules by NatureScot in 2024-25 has led to a severe curtailment in services designed to remove and control urban gull populations in the Inverness area.'

As you are probably aware, all birds are afforded protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. NatureScot can, and do, issue licences to undertake actions to manage gulls for the purpose of protecting public health and safety under Section 16(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The Scottish Government has, however, made it clear that killing large numbers of gulls year on year cannot be the answer. Gull populations are in decline and it is not the case that communities are unanimously in support of this approach. While gulls can have a negative impact, they are also an important part of our ecosystem.

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Although some species have been removed, authorised persons will still be able to apply to NatureScot for a specific licence to control them and this can be explored relative to any specific case/area of concern. Since removing gulls from the General Licence in 2019 NatureScot have been monitoring gull licencing and have made a number of changes to their approach over the last 4 years including providing an online application service.

In 2023, following the publication of the seabird census it became more apparent of the declines in the populations of these species. In previous years NatureScot have seen a large number of applications come forward for public nuisance issues which is not a licensable purpose under Section 16(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Applicants may apply for a licence for public health and safety reasons and NatureScot will continue to issue licences under this purpose.

As a result of the above points, for 2024, NatureScot have clarified in their guidance the differences between gull behaviours which result in impacts on public health and safety and nuisance behaviour; and provided further advice in relation to other alternatives to licenced control.

There is also a vital role for local authorities, working with building owners and businesses to reduce the appeal of urban areas as nest site or feeding zones. The majority of local authorities in Scotland currently publish guidance on dealing with gull problems on their websites, as well as undertaking gull management measures themselves. They can increase street/pavement cleaning at key times of the day, and install gull-proof bins in problem areas near schools and town centres and gull-proofing buildings using spikes and nets.

Householders can also deter gulls nesting on their properties by installing netting and spikes, and removing old nesting material outwith the nesting season.

I hope this clarifies the position and hope you can attend the summit next week.

**Jim Fairlie**

**ANNEX A**

The agenda will be as follows:

| <b>Time</b>            | <b>Presentation</b>  | <b>Who</b>   |
|------------------------|--|--|
| 9:30                   | Doors Open   |  |
| 1000-1010              | Introduction   | Mr. Fairlie  |
| 1010-1100              | People and Gulls – Understanding our Collective Experience | Bids/local Authority                                   |
| 1100-1135              | State of Gulls - Understanding Gull Decline                | Internal/externals                                     |
| 1135-1150              | Managing Wildlife and People                               | Nick Halfhide  |
| 1150-1200              | Reflections  | Mr. Fairlie  |
| <b>1200-1330 Lunch</b> |  |  |
| 1330 - 1345            | Intro to Afternoon Session                                 | Colin Galbraith  |
| 1345-1515              | Breakout Sessions - Development of Best Practice           | Facilitators within NatureScot (not relating to gulls) |
| 1515-1530              | Moving Forward and Living with Gulls                       | Colin Galbraith  |
| 15:45                  | Summit Closes  |  |

Further details of including directions and details about registration etc will be provided nearer the time and lunch will be provided.

I would be grateful if you could confirm your attendance, and any dietary requirements, by contacting [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)] at NatureScot, at [\[REDACTED: REGULATION 11\(2\)\]@nature.scot](mailto:[REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@nature.scot) by close of play Monday 22 September 2025.

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**Graham Leadbitter MP**

Member of Parliament for Moray West, Nairn & Strathspey

Jim Fairlie MSP  
Minister for Agriculture and  
Connectivity Scottish Government,  
St Andrew's House Regent Road,  
Edinburgh  
EH1 3DG

**SENT VIA EMAIL**

Date: 18<sup>th</sup> September  
2025

**RE: Scottish Government Seagull Summit**

Dear Minister,

I write to you to raise my concern following reports in the Inverness Courier and wider media that the upcoming Scottish Government/NatureScot Seagull Summit will be held with neither MSPs/MPs nor Councillors present, and will not be open to public comment.

As you will be aware from discussions and debates concerning this matter in Parliament and local media, gulls continue to be a blight in urban areas, in areas including Elgin City Centre and wider Moray. My understanding of the issue is that the tightening of licensing rules by NatureScot in 2024-25 has led to a severe curtailment in services designed to remove and control urban gull populations in the Inverness area. It has come to my attention that local pest control services have struggled to get any additional licenses in 2025 in the local area, which has led to an explosion in the gull population - now a year-round issue.

I have had community BID groups, community councils and individual constituents in touch with me highlighting the issues they face in dealing with the increased urban gull population. Many note the mess and damage caused by defecation on buildings and vehicles, as well as damage caused to private and public buildings – such as water ingress, fire vent damage and roofing damage. Perhaps of even greater concern is the impact on those individuals, some vulnerable adults, who have been attacked by gulls in their own properties and in our towns and villages. While commercial methods have been sought to curb the issue, at great cost over the years, it is felt that the problem is now at a stage where greater intervention is required.

While remaining steadfast in my support of animal welfare, the Scottish Government and NatureScot must take a more nuanced, proactive approach to this situation and accept that, while gulls undoubtedly have a right to exist, humans also have a right to exist in peace without year-round fear of attack and expensive damage to their properties.

I would appreciate your response on this matter, as well as the opportunity to attend the summit to represent my constituents' views on this matter and to contribute to the debate on the day.

I look forward to hearing

from you. Kind regards,

Graham Leadbitter MP

[graham.leadbitter.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:graham.leadbitter.mp@parliament.uk)

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Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear an Àiteachais agus Ceangal  
Jim Fairlie MSP  
Jim Fairlie BPA



T: 0300 244 4000  
E: [scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)

Graham Leadbitter MP

[graham.leadbitter.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:graham.leadbitter.mp@parliament.uk)

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September 2025

Thank you for your letter of 17 September 2025 raising your concerns about the Gull Summit which is due to be held in Inverness on 23 September, and on gull management issues in general.

As you raise in your letter, there have been increasing concerns regarding the impact of urban gull populations being felt in some of our towns and cities, especially in the North and North-East of Scotland.

During my response at the debate on 26 June 2025 to Motion S6M-17969: Action to Address the Impact of Gulls in Scotland, I announced that I would chair a summit in Inverness this year which aims to focus on bringing together those who are managing gulls effectively with those who are facing the most negative impacts of gulls to address the question of how we can mitigate the negative impacts going forward and the actions we need to take ahead of next year.

I would like to respond to the specific points you have raised in your letter. Firstly, that the summit will be held without the presence of MPS, MSPS and councillors.

Undoubtedly there are strong views from the public, and from my fellow Member's of the Scottish Parliament. Limiting the invitations to certain organisations, such as local authorities, local BID teams, community councils, local community groups, pest controllers, and ornithologists, better enables us to focus on the issues and find solutions while balancing the need to ensure those views are heard.

I want to reiterate that this summit is the start of ongoing collaboration on gulls and we want to keep the session focused on solutions, I would like to assure you that there will be opportunity for open discussion on the issues and impacts presenting within communities and the outcomes will help shape future approaches to gull management in Scotland.

You also raised your concerns over the 'tightening of licensing rules by NatureScot in 2024-25 has led to a severe curtailment in services designed to remove and control urban gull populations in the Inverness area.'

As you are probably aware, all birds are afforded protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004. NatureScot can, and do, issue licences to undertake actions to manage gulls for the purpose of protecting public health and safety under Section 16(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The Scottish Government has, however, made it clear that killing large numbers of gulls year on year cannot be the answer. Gull populations are in decline and it is not the case that communities are unanimously in support of this approach. While gulls can have a negative impact, they are also an important part of our ecosystem.

NatureScot held a consultation on General Licences between August and October 2019. Following this consultation, they removed several species, including gulls, from the 2020 General Licences either on the basis that there was insufficient evidence of the damage they caused, there are other alternative solutions, or there are conservation concerns over their population status.

Although some species have been removed, authorised persons will still be able to apply to NatureScot for a specific licence to control them and this can be explored relative to any specific case/area of concern. Since removing gulls from the General Licence in 2019 NatureScot have been monitoring gull licencing and have made a number of changes to their approach over the last 4 years including providing an online application service.

I have met with NatureScot to discuss how we might increase support in areas worst affected by gull populations. To deal with the immediate issue in areas worst affected, NatureScot has been engaging with licence applicants and carried out site visits to assess first hand the impacts being caused by gulls. This has supported NatureScot's licencing decision and area-wide licences have now been issued in both Inverness and Nairn for this year. I understand that NatureScot are continuing to work with Moray Council to develop a similar plan based approach as they have with Inverness.

In 2023, following the publication of the seabird census it became more apparent of the declines in the populations of these species. In previous years NatureScot have seen a large number of applications come forward for public nuisance issues which is not a licensable purpose under Section 16(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Applicants may apply for a licence for public health and safety reasons and NatureScot will continue to issue licences under this purpose.

As a result of the above points, for 2024, NatureScot have clarified in their guidance the differences between gull behaviours which result in impacts on public health and safety and nuisance behaviour; and provided further advice in relation to other alternatives to licenced control.

There is also a vital role for local authorities, working with building owners and businesses to reduce the appeal of urban areas as nest site or feeding zones. The majority of local authorities in Scotland currently publish guidance on dealing with gull problems on their websites, as well as undertaking gull management measures themselves. They can increase street/pavement cleaning at key times of the day, and install gull-proof bins in problem areas near schools and town centres and gull-proofing buildings using spikes and nets.

Householders can also deter gulls nesting on their properties by installing netting and spikes, and removing old nesting material outwith the nesting season.

I hope this clarifies the position.

**Jim Fairlie**

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**From:** [REDACTED: REGULATION 11(2)]@Parliament.scot> **On Behalf Of** Fairlie J (Jim), MSP  
**Sent:** 22 September 2025 10:18  
**To:** Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity <MinisterforAC@gov.scot>  
**Subject:** FW: Gull Summit – Urgent Call for Postponement and Reconsideration of Approach

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**From:** Isabelle MacKenzie (Councillor) <Isabelle.MacKenzie.cllr@highland.gov.uk>  
**Sent:** 19 September 2025 22:04  
**To:** Fairlie J (Jim), MSP <Jim.Fairlie.MSP@Parliament.scot>  
**Cc:** CHAIR@nature.scot; Ewing F (Fergus), MSP <Fergus.Ewing.msp@parliament.scot>; Ross D (Douglas), MSP <Douglas.Ross.MSP@Parliament.scot>  
**Subject:** Gull Summit – Urgent Call for Postponement and Reconsideration of Approach

**CAUTION:** This e-mail originated from outside of The Scottish Parliament. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognise the sender and know the content is safe.

**Councillor Isabelle MacKenzie**

Highland Council  
Millburn Ward, Inverness

**Date:** 19 September 2025

**To:**

Mr Jim Fairlie MSP  
Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Scottish Government

**Cc:**

Mr. Galbraith, Chair, NatureScot  
Mr Fergus Ewing MSP, Mr Douglas Ross MSP

---

**Subject: Gull Summit – Urgent Call for Postponement and Reconsideration of Approach**

Dear Minister Fairlie,

I write to express serious concern and deep disappointment regarding the upcoming Gull Summit. Despite months of constructive engagement, the current arrangements are restrictive, unbalanced, and exclude key voices, including elected members, businesses, and the public.

Residents and businesses in Inverness feel increasingly ignored, with urban gulls seemingly afforded more protection than people. The withdrawal of collaborative licence options, shifting guidance, and lack of transparency from NatureScot have undermined trust and operational delivery.

While it was welcomed your support for area-wide licences in 2025, it is essential they be extended into 2026. The financial and practical burden on local communities is growing, and national funding is urgently needed to avoid a postcode lottery.

The Summit, as planned, risks becoming an echo chamber with predetermined outcomes. I strongly support postponing and rescheduling it to allow for a more inclusive and effective forum.

I make no criticism of NatureScot staff, but the process they've been directed to follow is flawed. I along with others are deeply concerned here, and ask that you act now to restore fairness and ensure meaningful dialogue.

Minister, I urge you to recognise the seriousness of this matter. The wellbeing of our communities must not be secondary to policy rigidity. Taking more time to get this right is not a delay, it is a necessary correction.

I await your prompt response and hope you will act decisively to restore confidence and fairness in this process.

Yours sincerely,

**Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie**

Inverness Millburn Ward, Highland Council  
Highland Older People's Champion

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Mura h-eil na beachdan a tha air an cur an cèill sa phost-d seo a' buntainn ri gnothachas Chomhairle na Gàidhealtachd, 's ann leis an neach fhèin a chuir air falbh e a tha iad, is chan eil iad an-còmhnaidh a' riochdachadh beachdan na Comhairle, no buidhnean buntainneach, agus chan eil am post-d seo na phàirt de chunnradh sam bith mura h-eil sin air innse.

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Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Ministear an Àiteachais agus Ceangal  
Jim Fairlie MSP Jim Fairlie BPA

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Cllr Isabelle MacKenzie  
Inverness Millburn Ward,  
Highland Council

[Isabelle.MacKenzie.cllr@highland.gov.uk](mailto:Isabelle.MacKenzie.cllr@highland.gov.uk)

22 September 2025

Dear Cllr Isabelle McKenzie,

Thank you for your email of 19 September 2025 raising your concerns about the Gull Summit which is due to be held in Inverness on 23 September, and on gull management issues in general.

As you are aware, there have been increasing concerns regarding the impact of urban gull populations being felt in some of our towns and cities, especially in the North and North-East of Scotland.

During my response at the debate on 26 June 2025 to Motion S6M-17969: Action to Address the Impact of Gulls in Scotland, I announced that I would chair a summit in Inverness this year which aims to focus on bringing together those who are managing gulls effectively with those who are facing the most negative impacts of gulls to address the question of how we can mitigate the negative impacts going forward and the actions we need to take ahead of next year.

I would like to respond to the specific points you have raised in your letter. Firstly, that the summit will be held without the presence of MPS, MSPS and councillors. Undoubtedly there are strong views from the public, and from my fellow Member's of the Scottish Parliament. At this time, in order to ensure the conversation can remain focused on practical action in good time ahead of next year's nesting season I have no intention of postponing the summit.

Limiting the invitations to certain organisations, such as local authorities, local BID teams, community councils, local community groups, pest controllers, and ornithologists, better enables us to focus on the issues and find solutions while balancing the need to ensure those views are heard.

I want to reiterate that this summit is the start of ongoing collaboration on gulls and we want to keep the session focused on solutions, I would like to assure you that there will be

opportunity for open discussion on the issues and impacts presenting within communities and the outcomes will help shape future approaches to gull management in Scotland.

You also raised your concerns over NatureScot's licensing process, including the tightening of licensing rules by NatureScot in 2024-25 which has led to current arrangements severely curtailing services designed to remove and control urban gull populations in the Inverness area.

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Yours sincerely,

Jim Fairlie

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