From: Peter Wilkinson
To: Wildlife Consultation (NE);
Subject: General licence consultation
Date: 11 March 2009 16:06:58

I have read the proposals with interest and write to give my support specifically to item 7 and the proposed new licence to remove certain birds trapped within premises used for the storage, processing or sale of foodstuffs for human consumption. It seems to me that time is of the essence in such cases and that it cannot be in anyone's interest that public health should be endangered for longer than necessary, and certainly not by the time required in application for individual licences.

The only comment I have on the detail of the proposed licence is that I do not think there should be a required time before the trapping equipment can be used. In the case of BTO ringers, who are basically volunteers, there will inevitably be a delay before they can be deployed anyway. I do, of course, support a time requirement before the last resort of shooting can be undertaken, but am not in a position to suggest how long it should be.

Re Question 7.2, my basic instinct is to resist the imposition of reporting burdens such as this. You do not say in the consultation how many of the individual licences issued in previous years have resulted in the birds ultimately being shot rather than trapped and released alive. If the concern is that the new licence might lead to more being killed than previously, a possible solution might be to issue the new licence only for taking and releasing alive, thereby allowing the use of traps and/or mist nets much more quickly than before, but to require individual applications for shooting.

I write as a BTO ringer. Although I have no experience with birds in food premises, I do have experience of taking Sparrowhawks out of non-food commercial premises. These can be a real challenge to catch, and I imagine that the species for which the new licence is proposed might not always be easy either.

The other proposals in the consultation seem sensible to me, but I claim no special expertise to comment specifically on them.

Peter Wilkinson