



Janet Finch-Saunders MS|AS

Aelod Senedd Cymru dros Aberconwy
Member of the Welsh Parliament for Aberconwy



Lesley Griffiths MS,
Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs,
Welsh Government.
Via email

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18/08/2020

Welsh Parliament,
Cardiff Bay,
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Re: Hen Harrier Protections

Janet.Finch-Saunders@Senedd.Wales

Dear Minister,

I am writing to highlight concerns regarding Welsh Government actions to protect the nation's Hen Harrier populations. Whilst the nation's hen harrier population had been slowly recovering since re-colonising in the late 1950s, I find it most concerning that figures from 2016 reveal that the number of pairs in Wales has fallen by more than a third over the previous six years, from 57 to 35. This is the lowest population seen in Wales for over a decade. As such, I write asking for urgent action from the Welsh Government to protect this priority species from opportunistic criminals. I also urge that your department compiles a Wales specific Action Plan to support population numbers, going forward.

My calls for action are not without precedent as this is an issue that is being taken most seriously by the UK Conservative Government. Indeed, for my Party this has been an area of concern for almost a decade. Through their 2011 document *Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services*, the UK Government set out explicit priority actions that were to be undertaken in time limited fashion. This included a commitment to undertake targeted action for the recovery of such priority species. Similarly, the UK Government has set up a sub-group of its *Upland Stakeholder Forum* to look specifically at the issues surrounding hen harrier populations in England. Their Action Plan sets out both a suite of actions which the sub-group agrees can contribute to the recovery of the hen harrier population in England, as well as stating the time period over which they expect to see positive outcomes delivered. You can find this Action Plan by [clicking here](#).

With this in mind, I would be grateful if you could write in response to this letter by providing:

- An outline of what steps the Welsh Government has taken/plans to take in order to bolster enforcement action against criminals who illegally kill hen harriers in Wales?
- An explicit commitment to compiling a Wales-specific Action Plan that is time limited and ensures that all the necessary stakeholders are included so as to support the nation's Hen Harrier population, going forward.

I look forward to your reply on this important issue.

Yours sincerely,

Janet Finch-Saunders MS/AS

Shadow Minister for Environment, Energy and Rural Affairs/
Gweinidog yr Wrthblaid dros Newid Hinsawdd, Ynni a Materion Gwledig

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