



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

Interim Gamebird Release Licence in England

Consultation Document

February 2021



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Introduction

This consultation seeks your views on the proposed interim licensing regime for the release of common pheasants and red-legged partridges on Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)¹ and within a 500m buffer zone around them in England. All of these SACs and SPAs are also Sites of Special Scientific Interest but are subject to additional protections. In England, these sites are protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

In response to a legal challenge, Defra commissioned a review to consider the legislative arrangements around the release of the common pheasant and red-legged partridge on and around SPAs and SACs and whether there are ways in which their effectiveness could be improved. As part of that review, an independent report² - "Ecological Consequences of Gamebird Releasing and Management on Lowland Shoots in England" - was considered. The report took the form of a rapid evidence assessment and was jointly commissioned by Natural England and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation and published on August 20, 2020. The report summarises the impacts of gamebird release on habitats and species and identifies a number of key issues that influence the impacts (notably overall number of birds, the density at which they are released, and siting of their release pens), as well as a number of evidence gaps.

Based on the key findings of the report, Natural England issued advice³ to Defra as follows:

- i. The negative effects from gamebird pre-release and release that are supported by the strongest evidence relate to eutrophication (nutrient enrichment) of soil and the depletion of vegetation immediately within and around release pens and feeding stations. These effects are density dependent. The available evidence indicates that smaller releases (≤ 1000 birds/hectare) in line with existing 'good practice guidelines' (i.e. the 'Guidelines for sustainable gamebird releasing published by Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust) have little or no discernible eutrophication or vegetation depletion effects beyond a relatively limited distance (up to 15m) from release pens and feeding stations.
- ii. Negative effects tend to be localised and studies indicate minimal or no effects beyond 500m (on a precautionary basis) from the point of release. Most studies tend to be within 300m of the point of release or within pens thus there is no direct evidence of the effects at or beyond this distance. However, Natural

¹ SACs and SPAs are sites that fall within the definition of European site in Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

² <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5078605686374400>

³ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/931396/defra-witness-statement-gamebird-release-exhibit3.pdf

England concluded⁴ that negative effects beyond 500m are likely to be minimal because studies also show that dispersal of birds tends to be less than 500m from the release sites and the negative effects in consideration are linked to the presence of birds.

- iii. There is strong evidence of associated benefits for biodiversity from general woodland management associated with shooting but a limited evidence base on the positive effects of general habitat management associated with gamebird management which may benefit native biodiversity.

To manage any potential impacts while the current evidence gaps are addressed, the Secretary of State has decided to put in place an interim licensing regime for 2021 to regulate the releases of common pheasant and red legged partridge within SACs and SPAs and within a 500m buffer zone around the sites. This will be accompanied by additional measures, aimed at improving the evidence base about the impact of release of these species on individual sites. To do this, a Statutory Instrument (SI) will need to add the common pheasant and red legged partridge to the list of non-native species in Schedule 9 Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA 1981). This is because section 14 WCA 1981 makes it an offence to release any of the species that are listed on Schedule 9 Part 1 unless it is done in accordance with the terms of a licence granted under section 16 of the WCA 1981. The purpose of these provisions is to prevent the release into the wild of non-native animals which may cause ecological, environmental, or socio-economic harm. By adding the red-legged partridge and common pheasant to the list of non-native animals in Part 1, Schedule 9, it would mean a licence would be required to release them into the wild. However, unlike other non-native species listed in this provision, Defra is proposing there should be a geographic limitation to the prohibition on releases of the red-legged partridge and common pheasant, focused on SACs and SPAs and a 500m buffer zone around these sites. The protected site would be subject to any relevant SSSI consenting regime as well as the new licensing regime itself.

Defra's aim is to develop an interim licensing regime that is effective, practical and proportionate. The proposed interim licensing regime would require a general licence for the release of common pheasants and red-legged partridges on SACs and SPAs and within a 500m buffer zone of these sites. The general licence will be applicable to all relevant users without the need for a specific application provided the conditions included within it are met. The detail of the potential proposed conditions is explored within this consultation.

Defra proposes that eighty-seven of the relevant sites are excluded from the licensing regime. These sites are either marine or estuarine sites wholly below the mean high-water mark or terrestrial sites with designated features considered not to be sensitive to non-native gamebird releases.

Defra is further proposing an individual licence will be required for any releases on two specific sites that are already subject to enforcement action by Natural England due to adverse impacts of gamebird releasing. An individual licence will also be required for any

⁴https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/93139/6/defra-witness-statement-gamebird-release-exhibit3.pdf

releases which cannot comply with the above stated conditions. Individual licenses will be issued by Natural England.

The duration of the interim licensing regime will be determined by the time taken to ensure a sufficiently robust means of understanding and managing the impact of gamebird releases on or around SACs or SPAs in light of the latest evidence. This is likely to be achieved through a combination of developments including a review of existing consents against the latest evidence for this activity by Natural England. The information collated from this consultation will inform longer term policy recommendations. The consultation includes a proposal for the statutory instrument to expire after three years.

Anyone relying on the general licence to release gamebirds on an SAC or SPA must still comply with any existing requirements. For example, where relevant activities are listed as an operation likely to damage on the SSSI notification, they must have a SSSI consent from Natural England prior to undertaking or permitting the releasing of common pheasants and/or red-legged partridge and any related activities (including, for example, erection and maintenance of releasing structures, supplementary feeding, vehicle use, shooting) and must comply with the terms and conditions of that consent. They must also register their releases with the Animal Plant and Health Agency.

How and why we're consulting

In accordance with the requirements of section 26(4) of WCA 1981, the Secretary of State is seeking any objections or representations of any local authority affected and any other person affected by the proposal to add the common pheasant and red-legged partridge to Schedule 9 to Part I of the WCA 1981 in respect of releases on the relevant sites⁵ and a 500m buffer zone only.

The consultation also sets out the proposed gamebird general licence conditions and seeks views on whether they would be effective and proportionate in ensuring that releases do not cause deterioration or significant disturbance of protected features of SACs and SPAs. We are also asking for views on whether there are any alternative measures which would ensure that releases do not cause deterioration or significant disturbance of protected features of SACs or SPAs that could be implemented prior to the 2021 shooting season and the details of these.

The findings of the consultation will help us shape the interim 2021 gamebird release licensing regime. There will be further engagement to inform longer-term policy measures.

⁵ Relevant sites are all sites that fall within the definition of European sites in Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

How to respond

If you require a copy of this consultation, please address your request to:

Consultation Coordinator, Defra
2nd Floor, Foss House,
Kings Pool,
1-2 Peasholme Green,
York,
YO1 7PX

Or email: consultation.coordinator@defra.gov.uk

Please submit your consultation response using the online survey provided on Citizen Space (Citizen Space is an online consultation tool).

Alternatively, please email your response to:

GLteam@defra.gov.uk

or post your response to:
Consultation Coordinator, Defra
2nd Floor, Foss House,
Kings Pool,
1-2 Peasholme Green,
York,
YO1 7PX

Responses should be received by **15 March 2021**. This is a three-week consultation.

Consultation

Confidentiality Question

1. Would you like your response to be confidential?

- Yes
- No

If you answered Yes to this question, please give your reason.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

1. A summary of responses to this consultation will be published on the Government website at: www.gov.uk/defra. An annex to the consultation summary will list all organisations that responded but will not include personal names, addresses or other contact details.

1.1 Defra may publish the content of your response to this consultation to make it available to the public without your personal name and private contact details (e.g. home address, email address, etc.).

1.2 If you click on 'Yes' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, you are asked to state clearly what information you would like to be kept as confidential and explain your reasons for confidentiality. The reason for this is that information in responses to this consultation may be subject to release to the public or other parties in accordance with the access to information law (these are primarily the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs), the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 2018 (DPA)). We have obligations, mainly under the EIRs, FOIA and DPA, to disclose information to particular recipients or to the public in certain circumstances. In view of this, your explanation of your reasons for requesting confidentiality for all or part of your response would help us balance these obligations for disclosure against any obligation of confidentiality. If we receive a request for the information that you have provided in your response to this consultation, we will take full account of your reasons for requesting confidentiality of your response, but we cannot guarantee that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances.

1.3 If you click on 'No' in response to the question asking if you would like anything in your response to be kept confidential, we will be able to release the content of your response to the public, but we won't make your personal name and private contact details publicly available.

1.4 There may be occasions when Defra will share the information you provide in response to the consultation, including any personal data with external analysts. This is for the purposes of consultation response analysis and provision of a report of the summary of responses only.

1.5 This consultation is being conducted in line with the Cabinet Office "Consultation Principles" and be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/consultation-principles-guidance>.

1.6 If you have any comments or complaints about the consultation process, please address them to:

Consultation Coordinator, Defra 2nd Floor, Foss House,
Kings Pool,
1-2 Peasholme Green, York,
YO1 7PX

Or email

About you

We are asking you to provide your contact details so that we can contact you if we have any queries about your response or if we wish to ask you to provide further information to add to the response that you have given. **You must complete this section in order that we can consider the views and information submitted.**

1.1. What is your name? (Required)

1.2. What is your contact email or postal address? (Required)

1.3 In what capacity are you responding to this consultation? (Required)

- Gamekeeper/Shoot
- Conservationist
- Organisation
- Public Body
- Member of public
- Other.

If other, please specify _____

Part A – Proposed Interim Licensing Regime

Scope of General Licence

Sites that are out of scope for the proposed General Licence

What are we proposing?

We do not propose to subject all SACs and SPAs to conditions under the general licence. We propose that there are two groups of sites where the general licence conditions will not apply:

Group 1: Sites requiring individual licences: The general licence will not apply to any gamebird releases on the following named sites that are already subject to enforcement action by Natural England due to adverse impacts of gamebird releasing. Any releases on these sites will instead require an individual licence from Natural England.

- a. Lathkill Dale SSSI (within the Peak District Dales SAC)
- b. Minsmere – Walberswick Heaths and Marshes SAC

Why are we proposing this?

This policy will ensure that there is no further deterioration on those sites known to have been significantly harmed as a result of gamebird releasing.

Group 2: Sites that will be excluded from the licencing regime: We propose that the following sites are excluded from the licencing regime. The list is made up of marine sites, estuarine sites below the mean high-water mark and terrestrial sites where the designated features are considered not to be sensitive to non-native gamebird releases.

No	Site
1.	Alde, Ore and Butley Estuaries SAC
2.	Alde–Ore Estuary SPA/Ramsar
3.	Baston Fen SAC
4.	Benacre Lagoons SAC
5.	Benfleet and Southend Marshes SPA/Ramsar
6.	Berwickshire and North Northumberland Coast SAC
7.	Blackstone Point SAC
8.	Blackwater Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 4) SPA/Ramsar
9.	Breydon Water SPA/Ramsar
10.	Bristol Channel Approaches SAC
11.	Chesil and the Fleet SAC
12.	Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA/Ramsar

13.	Colne Estuary (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 2) SPA/Ramsar
14.	Coquet Island SPA
15.	Crouch and Roach Estuaries (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 3) SPA/Ramsar
16.	Deben Estuary SPA/Ramsar
17.	Dee Estuary/ Aber Dyfrdwy SAC
18.	Dengie (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 1) SPA/Ramsar
19.	Dungeness SAC
20.	Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SPA/Ramsar
21.	Essex Estuaries SAC
22.	Exe Estuary SPA
23.	Fal and Helford SAC
24.	Falmouth Bay to St Austell Bay SPA
25.	Farne Islands SPA
26.	Flamborough and Filey Coast SPA
27.	Flamborough Head SAC
28.	Foulness (Mid-Essex Coast Phase 5) SPA/Ramsar
29.	Gibraltar Point SPA/Ramsar
30.	Haisborough, Hammond and Winterton SAC
31.	Hamford Water Ramsar
32.	Hestercombe House SAC
33.	Humber Estuary SAC
34.	Humber Estuary SPA/Ramsar
35.	Inner Dowsing, Race Bank and North Ridge SAC
36.	Isles of Scilly Complex SAC
37.	Isles of Scilly SPA and Ramsar site
38.	Lands' End and Cape Bank SAC
39.	Lindisfarne SPA/Ramsar
40.	Liverpool Bay/ Bae Lerpwl SPA
41.	Lizard Point SAC
42.	Lundy SAC
43.	Lyme Bay and Torbay SAC
44.	Margate and Long Sands SAC
45.	Medway Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar
46.	Mersey Estuary SPA/Ramsar
47.	Mersey Narrows and North Wirral Foreshore SPA/Ramsar
48.	Morecambe Bay & Duddon Estuary SPA/Ramsar
49.	Morecambe Bay SAC
50.	Nene Washes SAC
51.	North Norfolk Coast SPA/Ramsar
52.	Northumberland Marine SPA
53.	Northumbria Coast SPA/Ramsar
54.	Orfordness – Shingle Street SAC
55.	Ouse Washes SAC
56.	Outer Thames Estuary SPA

57.	Pagham Harbour SPA/Ramsar
58.	Paston Great Barn SAC
59.	Plymouth Sound and Estuaries SAC
60.	Poole Harbour SPA/Ramsar
61.	Portsmouth Harbour SPA/Ramsar
62.	Ribble and Alt Estuaries SPA/Ramsar
63.	Severn Estuary SPA/Ramsar
64.	Severn Estuary/ Môr Hafren SAC
65.	Shell Flat and Lune Deep SAC
66.	Solent and Dorset Coast SPA
67.	Solent and Isle of Wight Lagoons SAC
68.	Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar
69.	Solent Maritime SAC
70.	Solway Firth SAC
71.	South Wight Maritime SAC
72.	Southern North Sea SAC
73.	Start Point to Plymouth Sound and Eddystone SAC
74.	Stour and Orwell Estuaries SPA/Ramsar
75.	Studland to Portland SAC
76.	Tamar Estuaries Complex SPA
77.	Teesmouth and Cleveland Coast SPA/Ramsar
78.	Thames Estuary and Marshes SPA/Ramsar
79.	Thanet Coast and Sandwich Bay SPA
80.	Thanet Coast SAC
81.	The Dee Estuary SPA/Ramsar
82.	The Swale SPA/Ramsar
83.	The Wash and North Norfolk Coast SAC
84.	The Wash SPA/Ramsar
85.	Tweed Estuary SAC
86.	Upper Solway Flats and Marshes SPA/Ramsar
87.	Wye Valley and Forest of Dean bat sites SAC

Why are we proposing this?

Marine sites and estuarine sites below the mean high-water mark are unlikely to be impacted by the release of gamebirds. The designated features of the terrestrial sites are considered not to be sensitive to non-native gamebird releases.

A1. Do you agree that requiring an individual licence for the sites in Group 1 and excluding the sites from list in Group 2 from the scope of the general licence will help minimise negative impacts on the relevant protected sites in an effective and proportionate manner?

- Yes
- No

If you do not agree, do you have an alternative approach? (Please limit your response to 250 words).

500m Buffer Zone

What are we proposing?

We are proposing to introduce a general licence for gamebird releases on SACs and SPAs and within a 500m buffer zone to ensure that releases do not cause deterioration or significant disturbance of protected features of the sites. The buffer zone would apply to all SACs and SPAs, except those that we propose to exclude from the licensing regime in Group 2 above.

Why are we proposing this?

Most studies into the negative impacts of releasing gamebirds took place within 300m of the release pens. These studies showed that the negative impact decreased as the distance from the point of release increased. Evidence also indicates that the majority of gamebirds do not tend to disperse further than 500m from their point of release. Taking these points together, our precautionary approach is ensuring that releases do not cause deterioration or significant disturbance of protected features of SACs and SPAs whilst remaining proportionate.

A2. Do you agree that a 500m buffer zone around SACs and SPAs will ensure that releases do not cause deterioration or significant disturbance of protected features of the sites?

- Yes
- No

If no, why not? Do you have an alternative approach? (Please limit your response to 250 words).

A3. Do you agree that introducing a 500m buffer zone around SACs and SPAs is feasible?

- Yes

- No

If no, why not? (Please limit your response to 250 words).

General Licence Conditions

Bird stocking density

What are we proposing?

To minimise the negative impacts of higher density releases on and around sites, we are proposing to include conditions in the general licence limiting the stocking density within release pens. The proposed general licence will outline the maximum density of releases for pheasants and red legged partridges:

Common pheasants: no more than 1,000 birds per hectare of release pen within the 500m buffer zone and either no more than 700 birds per hectare of pen or the release density stipulated by a SSSI consent (whichever is the lower) within an SAC or SPA.

Red legged partridges: the density of red legged partridges released into a pen within an SAC or SPA and the 500m buffer must not exceed 3 birds per square metre of pen or the release density stipulated by a SSSI consent (whichever is the lower).

Seasonal Limit: Single and trickle releases of the common pheasant must not exceed these limits during the entirety of one season cycle and gamebirds must not be released to replenish or replace any that have already been released and shot or otherwise killed in that season, except within the limits as stated.

Why are we proposing this?

The negative effects from gamebird pre-release and release that are supported by the strongest evidence relate to eutrophication of soil and the depletion of vegetation immediately within and around release pens and feeding stations. These effects are stocking density dependent. The available evidence indicates that smaller releases (≤ 1000 birds/hectare) in line with existing 'good practice guidelines' (i.e. the 'Guidelines for sustainable gamebird releasing published by the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust) have little or no discernible eutrophication or vegetation depletion effects beyond a relatively limited distance (up to 15m) from release pens and feeding stations.

The vast majority of sites have been designated to comprise inherently sensitive habitats and therefore Natural England advise a lower maximum density benchmark of 700

common pheasants per hectare of pen as a more appropriate starting point for assessing the releasing of birds into SACs and SPAs. This would be compatible with the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust guidelines for sensitive woods.

The red-legged partridge density has been determined by Natural England as an equivalent number accounting for the difference between the two bird species. This figure considers the available information on standard release pen sizes, typical stocking densities, body weight and biomass of individual birds

A4. Do you agree with the density limits chosen in order to minimise negative impacts of gamebird release on SACs and SPAs?

- Yes
- No

If no, why? Do you have an alternative approach? (Please limit your response to 250 words).

Data Collection

What are we proposing?

We propose including a condition on collecting data on the numbers (overall number) and densities (birds/ha) of the common pheasant and red-legged partridge releases and locations of release pens (grid reference) within SACs and SPAs and the 500m buffer zones, in addition to details of the SSSI consent under which the release activity is operating.

Why are we proposing this?

This proposal would enhance our current understanding of gamebird release activity and locations which will be key to moving beyond the interim licensing regime in future.

In order to have enough confidence that the release of gamebirds do not have an unacceptable impact on SACs and SPAs without a general licensing regime being in place, it will be important for Defra and Natural England to have accurate, up to date information about where the current releases are taking place and the nature of them.

Users are able to operate under a general licence without any form of registration or individual assessment. Unless we apply a data collection condition we will not know the scale or scope of activity taking place under a general licence. Acquiring this information

will enable Natural England to ensure that people releasing gamebirds can have the appropriate consents in place in future which both conform to the best available evidence and have any necessary controls or conditions in place to protect the sites.

A5. Do you agree that users of the general licence should be required to supply information on the location and number of birds being released under it, along with information on their SSSI consent for releases on SACs and SPAs?

- Yes
- No

If you do not agree, why not? Do you have an alternative approach? (Please limit your response to 250 words).

Additional Conditions

Releases on SACs and SPAs

What are we proposing?

We are not proposing any additional conditions for releases on SACs or SPAs.

Why are we proposing this?

The negative impacts of gamebird release on protected sites are known to be density dependent and location specific. Any more site-specific measures to protect designated features within a site boundary, such as the siting of pens, is best considered on an individual basis and as part of the current SSSI consenting regime (e.g. erection and maintenance of releasing structures, supplementary feeding, vehicle use).

A6. Are there any other conditions that you would like to see in the general licence for releases on SACs or SPAs?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please state what and why (Please limit your response to 250 words).

500m Buffer Zone

What are we proposing?

We are proposing the inclusion of the following condition in the general licence for the 500m buffer zones.

- Activity in the buffer zone, including the siting of pens and feeding of birds, must not encourage the released birds towards, or over, the boundary of the adjacent Special Area of Conservation or Special Protection Area.

Why are we proposing this?

This condition would enhance the level of protection for SACs and SPAs as the buffer zone is not necessarily covered by the existing SSSI consenting regime.

A7. Please highlight any views you may have on the condition above, or additional suggestions for conditions. (Please limit your response to 250 words).

General Licence Recommendations

What are we proposing?

We are proposing the inclusion of the following recommendation in the general licence for the buffer zone. Recommendations are not compulsory but advised.

- Any pens and feeding stations located within the buffer zone must be placed on level ground and should not be placed within 50 metres of a watercourse flowing towards an SAC or SPA designated for its river or wetland habitat

Why are we proposing this?

This recommendation would enhance the level of protection for SACs and SPAs but is more prescriptive and site-specific than is ideal for a mandatory general licence condition.

The location of pens on slopes or areas prone to erosion may run the risk of run-off of nutrient-rich water or sediment into the adjacent site.

A8. Please highlight any views you may have on the recommendation above, or additional suggestions for recommendations. (Please limit your response to 250 words).

Part 1 Schedule 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

What are we proposing?

We are proposing adding the common pheasant and red legged partridge to the list set out in Part 1 of Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981, in relation to the relevant sites⁶ in England, and a 500m zone around such sites. This list contains non-native animals which are established in the wild and prohibited from release without a licence.

Why are we proposing this?

This is the legal mechanism required to enable the introduction of an interim licensing regime.

A9. Do you have any objections and representations with respect to the addition of the red-legged partridge and common pheasant to Part 1, Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please set out what these are and why (Please limit your response to 250 words)

⁶ Relevant sites are all protected sites that fall within the definition of European sites in Regulation 8 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

Interim regime

What are we proposing?

We propose reinforcing the interim nature of the proposed licensing regime by including a sunset clause in the statutory instrument to repeal it after three years. In addition, we propose to include a provision which will confer a duty on the Secretary of State to carry out a review after two years of the need for these statutory restrictions on gamebird releases on SACs and SPAs and in a 500m buffer zone around those sites.

Why are we proposing this?

This would demonstrate the clear intention for this to be an interim licensing regime. This also provides flexibility on the timeframe as to when we can be confident that the release of gamebirds on and around SACs and SPAs is not causing significant disturbance to or deterioration of these sites.

A10. Do you agree with the proposed inclusion in the statutory instrument of the sunset clause and a requirement on the Secretary of State to carry out a review after two years of the need for these statutory restrictions on gamebird releases on SACs and SPAs and in a 500m buffer zone around them?

- Yes
- No

If no, please state why (Please limit your response to 250 words)

Part B – Economic Impacts

This section seeks to inform our understanding of the likely impacts of the proposed interim licensing regime on users and wider interested parties. ***It is only relevant for those respondents who will require a licence to release gamebirds.***

B1. Do you release common pheasant and/or the red-legged Partridge within an SAC or SPA or within a 500m buffer zone of an SAC or SPA?

- Yes
- No

If you answered yes to B1 please continue answering B2 to B7.

If you answered no to B1, please continue to Part C.

B2. Please indicate the size of your shoot, using the following definition:

- Large shoot (more than 10,000 birds released per year)
- Medium shoot (between 3,000 and 10,000 birds released per year)
- Small shoot (fewer than 3,000 birds released per year)

B3. Please indicate whether your business meets the definition for a micro or small business:

- Micro business (fewer than 10 full time employees)
- Small business (10-49 full time employees)
- Not applicable or more than 49 employees

B4. Using the table below, please indicate whether the licence conditions and recommendation will impact on your operations and what changes will you need to make to meet the proposed licence conditions.

Licence Condition	Will you need to amend how your shoot operates to comply with this condition?	What would you need to change and how much would this cost?	Would you be unable to adapt your operations to meet this condition? Why?
The density of pheasants released must not exceed 700 birds per hectare of pen area within a protected site			

The density of game birds released must not exceed 1,000 birds per hectare of pen area within the 500m buffer zone			
Single and trickle releases of pheasant must not exceed these limits during the entirety of one season cycle (including replenishing/replacing) within both the protected sites and 500m buffer zone			
The density of red legged partridges must not exceed 3 birds per square metre of pen area within both the protected sites and the 500m buffer zone			
Activity in the buffer zone , including the siting of pens and feeding of birds, must not encourage the released birds towards, or over, the boundary of the adjacent SAC or SPA			
Licence Recommendation	Will you need to amend how your shoot operates to comply with this condition?	What would you need to change and how much would this cost?	Would you be unable to adapt your operations to meet this condition? Why?
Any pens and feeding stations located within the buffer zone must be placed on level ground and should not be placed within 50 metres of a watercourse flowing towards an SAC or SPA designated for its river or wetland habitat			

B5. If you believe that you cannot amend your operations to meet one or more the conditions outlined in question B4, would you apply to Natural England for an individual licence?

- Yes
- No

If yes, what activities would you be applying to undertake (e.g. release 2,000 pheasants per hectare)? (Please limit your response to 250 words)

B6. If you are unable to amend your operation to comply with the conditions and / or were refused an individual licence, what would you estimate the financial impact would be? We would welcome detailed information on impacts such as lost earnings, lost wages, cancelled orders from suppliers, etc. (Please limit your response to 250 words).

Part C – Alternatives to Proposed Licensing Regime

C1. Do you wish to set out any alternatives to the proposed licensing regime that can be implemented within the same timescales and can provide the equivalent level of protection for SACs or SPAs?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please state what and how it might be implemented in the relevant timescales (Please limit your response to 500 words)

Part D - Consultee Feedback on the Online Survey

Dear Consultee,

Thank you for taking your time to participate in this online survey. It would be appreciated, if you can provide us with an insight into how you view the tool and the area(s) you feel is in need of improvement, by completing our feedback questionnaire.

D1. Overall, how satisfied are you with our online consultation tool?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dis-satisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Don't know

D2. Please give us any comments you have on the tool, including suggestions on how we could improve it.