

AGENDA ITEM 9

APPENDIX 2b

2018/0063/DET

**REPRESENTATIONS
GENERAL**

Emma Wilson

CNPA

Via email: planning@cairngorms.co.uk

19 March 2018

Dear Emma,

2018/0063/DET: 2MW Run of River Hydroelectric Scheme and Associated Infrastructure, River Muick, Glen Muick, Birkhall, Ballater, Balmoral Estates, Ballater, Aberdeenshire.

RSPB Scotland would like to provide comments on the above planning application.

RSPB Scotland does not object to the proposal but has some concerns that the CNPA and developer should address before the application is permitted. We note that no black grouse leks were present within 500m of the proposed construction. However, as lek locations can move between years, if work is to be carried out during April/May we recommend that pre-construction checks for leks should be undertaken to locate and count birds. If an active lek is located within 500m of the development site, a 750 m buffer should be applied around it where no construction activity is carried out before 09:00 in April & May. We also recommend that any deer fencing used to protect areas of replanting is marked, to avoid mortality through collisions. Further management guidance on this can be found at: <http://scotland.forestry.gov.uk/images/corporate/pdf/fcs-action-blackgrouse.pdf>.

Pre-construction surveys of Schedule I raptors should be carried out by suitably experienced and licensed observers, if construction takes place during the breeding season. This may start as early as February for white-tailed eagles. RSPB will continue to monitor the white-tailed eagles, and will notify the developer of any activity. Likewise, we would appreciate sightings of this species made by ecologists carrying out breeding raptor surveys to be passed on to us. Finally, we recommend that applying exclusion zones for Schedule I raptor nests follows SNH guidance (see <http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/strategy/renewables/birdsd.pdf>).

Yours sincerely,

Amanda Biggins

Assistant Conservation Officer

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