

MORAY FIRTH RENEWABLES ADVISORY GROUP – ORNITHOLOGY (MFRAG-O) MEETING AGENDA

Meeting	MFRAG-O	
Date	26 September 2019	
Location	Battleby Conference Centre, Redgorton, Perth PH1 3EW	
Attendees	Marine Scotland Science (MSS)	Jared Wilson (JW) [Chair], Tom Evans (TE), Janelle Braithwaite (JB)
	Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	Chris Eastham (CE), Kate Thompson (KT)
	Marine Scotland Licensing and Operations Team (MS-LOT)	Gayle Holland (GH)
	Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC)	Julie Black (JB)
	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)	Aly McCluskie (AM)
	BOWL	Joseph Deimel (JD), Andrew Jacobs (AJ) [minutes taken by both]
	Moray East	Caterina Rei (CR)
	Moray West	Sarah Edwards (SE)
	MacArthur Green	Mark Trinder (MT)
	Royal HaskoningDHV	Alexia Chapman (AC)
	Hi-Def Aerial Surveying Ltd	Ross McGregor (RM)
Apologies	Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)	Erica Knott (EK), Helen Wade (HW)
Actions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Group members to send any information they have on catching/tagging at sea to MT, to assess whether at-sea work may be safe/practical. 2. MT to draw up an action plan for gull tagging, to include initial data gathering on techniques, and a site reconnaissance by an appropriate team in the 2020 breeding season. 3. MT to circulate initial feasibility paper on gull tagging before 2020 breeding season reconnaissance site visit. Discussions to be held with BTO on tag attachment methods (prior to site visit). 4. BOWL to submit 2019 aerial survey report (when completed) for review at next MFRAG-O meeting. 5. SNH to review whether camera monitoring of puffin colony at East Caithness Cliffs would provide any useful information on any potential influences from BOWL. 6. JW to speak to Paul Thompson and Aude Benhemma–Le Gall for information on scope of Aude’s PhD studentship. 	

	7. MT to speak to CR on Moray East construction locations, to allow for in analysis of aerial survey data.
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1. Introductions, Meeting Objectives and discussion of Actions from previous meeting (05 June 2019)
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Actions from previous meeting on 05 June 2019:

1. MSS to collate a high-level summary of bird collision monitoring kit that has been deployed at offshore wind farm sites in UK/internationally - Action complete
2. MFRAG-O Secretariat (JD nominee) to consult Scottish Marine Energy Research (ScotMER) (Janelle Braithwaite) re requirement for research into new approaches to flight height measurement – Action ongoing: MSS will be commissioning more LIDAR work, looking for more results on flight height including whether this differs for operational sites or near to turbines. Secretariat to set up meeting with Janelle Braithwaite to discuss.
3. MFRAG-O members to discuss Terms of Reference (ToR) at next meeting - Update provided
4. MFRAG-O to ensure future actions are clear and explicit - Action complete
5. JD to speak to Mark Trinder at MacArthur Green re allowing for Moray East construction activities (including during summer 2020) in analysis of BOWL post-construction aerial survey results - Action complete
6. CE confirmed a piece of work being commissioned that will summarise this
7. GT to issue update to group on LBB tagging work carried out by BTO team - Carried forward.
8. JD to speak to Mark Trinder about review of ongoing research in puffin colony monitoring, leading to a short summary note - Action complete
9. JD to speak to Mark Trinder regarding producing potential scopes for gull tagging and puffin monitoring work, and to confirm willingness to do so on basis of MacArthur Green not Action complete

1. BOWL project update (JD)

Progressing well- work on pollution control and mitigation and emergency response provisions in place. Positive relationships with stakeholders and regulators

6 surveys completed in the summer, when weather allowed, data being collated and to be analysed by MT.

Decision needed on surveys for next summer, needed this year to allow procurement time etc.

RM - No restrictions in time on 2020 surveys, can be arranged as required.

MT - Does not feel that 5th Nov meeting is required. Better to delay meeting to allow time for data analysis and for results to be shared and reviewed with the group. Meeting date to be agreed in next two weeks, possibly mid-December. 5th Nov cancelled.

2. Moray East project update (CR)
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Piling progressed, past half way mark. Piling stopped at start of Sept to allow other operations. Restart piling end of next week, weather dependant.

1st Duct installed, 2nd effected be weather and delayed. 3rd due for installation end of Oct.

Continuing noise and marine mammal commitments as per PEMP.
3. Moray West project update (SE)
Not successful in securing Cfd, lots of work before next round of Cfd. Looking into possible survey requirements of post-construction monitoring.
4. BOWL gull tagging objectives and potential challenges
<p>KT - Suggested that group expertise and academia be utilised.</p> <p>MT - Need to have awareness that long-term research programme may not be possible.</p> <p>JB - Could novel approaches be tried (accepting this may be at the risk of failure)?</p> <p>MT- If another year of tagging shows no connectivity (i.e. repeat of 2014 results) there may not be benefit to continuing further.</p> <p>AM – We should prioritise the questions we are trying to answer.</p> <p>JD - SSE SHE team have advised they will require all paperwork, RAMS etc for review before any surveys can be approved.</p> <p>KT/JW – Mentioned that offshore windfarm companies have experience of carrying out a vast range of potentially risky and complex operations at sea.</p> <p>AJ - Supported JD that SSE will decide on safety implications of any methodology. If there are safety concerns, work won't be taken forward.</p> <p>MT - Need to have well qualified persons to carry out site reconnaissance to assess the possibilities for capturing birds.</p> <p>RM - Fit trapping method to H+S requirements, not other way round.</p> <p>JW – There is limited access to safe tags to use for GBG, needs assessed. BTO will only licence weak-link harnesses. Leg-loop harnesses may have less welfare impacts. Possible that a PhD student could be trained up to be a licenced tagger.</p> <p>MT - 2020 to be a reconnaissance year for planning and feasibility, with awareness of safety requirements. Earliest that tagging could be carried out would be 2021 breeding season.</p> <p>KT – need to ensure that sufficient time is allowed for tag ordering and manufacture.</p> <p>GH – MS-LOT will be led by MFRAG experts in deciding which tagging techniques to be used.</p> <p>ACTION 1 – group members to send any information they have on catching/tagging at sea to MT, to assess whether at-sea work may be safe/practical.</p> <p>ACTION 2 – MT to draw up an action plan, to include initial data gathering on techniques, and a site reconnaissance by an appropriate team in the 2020 breeding season.</p> <p>ACTION 3 – MT to circulate initial feasibility paper on gull tagging before 2020 breeding season reconnaissance site visit. Discussions to be held with BTO on tag attachment methods (prior to site visit).</p>
5. BOWL puffin monitoring
GH – puffin another named concern in original assessment, in terms of displacement impact.

KT – development of MSc thesis work could be useful; majority of puffins were found to be concentrated in one spot.

MT – initial puffin work could be analysis of 2019 aerial survey data to look at flight directions, possible displacement, rafting on the water (which occurs early in the breeding season); all can be derived from aerial survey data.

MT – will review aerial data results to see if these can be used to guide future directions for puffin monitoring.

GH – if puffin monitoring wouldn't be useful, could kittiwake monitoring be of value?

JD – working assumption that aerial surveys will be repeated in summer 2020.

ACTION 4 – BOWL to submit 2019 aerial survey report (when completed) for review at next MFRAG-O meeting.

ACTION 5 – SNH to review whether camera monitoring of puffin colony at East Caithness Cliffs would provide any useful information on any potential impacts associated with BOWL.

ACTION 6 – JW to speak to Paul Thompson and Aude Benhemma–Le Gall for information on scope of Aude's PhD studentship.

ACTION 7 – MT to speak to CR on Moray East construction locations, to allow for in analysis.

6. Discussion summary and confirmation of BOWL actions timeline

Covered in previous agenda items.