

DEFRA General Licences consultation response: December 2019

Submitted to **Wild Birds General Licence Survey**

A - Purpose 'to conserve wild birds and to conserve flora and fauna'

A.1 Which bird species do you consider need to be controlled under general licence for conservation purposes and why?

- Canada Goose - *Branta Canadensis*
- Carrion Crow - *Corvus corone*
- Egyptian Goose - *Alopochen aegyptiacus*
- Indian House Crow - *Corvus splendens*
- Jackdaw - *Corvus monedula*
- Jay - *Garrulus glandarius*
- Magpie - *Pica pica*
- Monk Parakeet - *Myiopsitta monachus*
- Ring-necked Parakeet - *Psittacula krameri*
- Rook - *Corvus frugilegus*
- Sacred Ibis - *Threskiornis aethiopicus*

Conserving wild birds

For Canada Goose, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Canada Geese are non-native species, that are able to expand their populations rapidly in the UK, and which could become invasive.

The Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated that a precautionary principle approach be adopted for non-native species, and therefore the Canada Goose should remain on the general licences.

The Non-Native Species Secretariat for Great Britain has demonstrated that there is clear agricultural damage caused by the species and that they are a threat to public health and safety through widespread defecation on public sites, as well as being potential vectors for disease such as avian flu.

For Carrion Crow, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

There is significant evidence of the effect of Carrion Crow predation on a myriad of upland and lowland bird species, as well as young lambs. In particular, they are one of the major predators of nest sites.

A 2018 study has demonstrated that the population of crows is higher in the UK than any other European country. In conjunction with foxes, Carrion Crows were shown to have significant impacts on populations of ground nesting birds.

Link to paper:

<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/brv.12426>

For Egyptian Goose, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Egyptian Goose is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

For Indian House Crow, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Indian House Crow is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

For Jackdaw, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Jackdaws, along with other generalist corvid predators, are well documented as nest predators, being particularly damaging to passerines - many of which are red or amber listed. A 2008 study published in Bird Journal showed a total decimation of spotted fly catcher nests.

The fact that Jackdaws live in large colonies means that wherever they occur they can be excessively damaging.

Link to paper: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00063650809461520>

For Jay, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Jays are prolific predators of open passerine nests. A 2009 study published in Ibis: Journal for Avian Science, showed that Jays were responsible for 29% of predation events on open nests in Europe. In addition to this, the UK population of Jays has risen by almost 50% since 1995, according the Breeding Birds Survey undertaken by the British Trust of Ornithology. Jays should therefore be included on the general licences.

Link to paper: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/j.1474-919X.2009.00907.x>

For Magpie, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Magpies are prolific predators of nests, of both songbirds and game birds. There is well documented evidence that their presence reduces bird abundance. A 1993 study demonstrated that just 5% of blackbird nests successfully fledged in urban environments that had a high density of magpies.

Link to paper:

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00063659309477129?needAccess=true>

For Monk Parakeet, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Monk Parakeet is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

They are known to compete for nesting sites with native birds and are a considerable agricultural pest in their native South America, affecting food crops and timber.

For Ring-necked Parakeet, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Ring-necked Parakeet is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

They are known to compete for nesting sites with native birds and are a considerable agricultural pest in their native South America, affecting food crops and timber.

For Rook, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

There is a broad consensus that Rooks predate nest sites. A 2018 study in Biological Reviews confirmed adverse effects on bird abundance due to corvid predation and considered Rooks as a significant factor in that. Because Rooks occur in high population densities their effect can be severe in localised settings.

Although the population of Rooks has fallen in the UK, they remain a green listed species and are very abundant. They should therefore be included on the general licences.

Link to paper: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/brv.12426>

For Sacred Ibis, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Sacred Ibis is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

A.2 Do you consider that any other bird species need to be controlled under general licence for conservation purposes?

Proposed Species 1:

Cormorant

Conserving Fauna (animals other than wild birds)

Why - please provide supporting evidence for your selection(s):

An adult Cormorant requires 1 lb of fish per day for survival. Since the 1980s the population of Cormorants has risen from 2000 to 62000 in the UK. This poses a significant threat to UK fisheries. There is currently an arbitrary cap of 3000 licences

available to cull cormorants. Given the scale of their population expansion and the threat they pose to threatened fish species such as the Atlantic Salmon, they should be included on the general licence.

More evidence can be found through the Angling Trusts research:

<https://www.anglingtrust.net/news.asp?section=29§ionTitle=Angling+Trust+News&itemid=5082>

B – Purpose ‘to preserve public health or public safety’

B.1 Which bird species do you consider need to be controlled under general licence for preserving public health and public safety purposes and why?

- Canada Goose - *Branta Canadensis*
- Carrion Crow - *Corvus corone*
- Feral Pigeon - *Columba livia*
- Jackdaw - *Corvus monedula*
- Magpie - *Pica pica*
- Monk Parakeet - *Myiopsitta monachus*
- Rook - *Corvus frugilegus*

For Canada Goose, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Canada Geese are non-native species, that are able to expand their populations rapidly in the UK, and which could become invasive.

The Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated that a precautionary principle approach be adopted for non-native species, and therefore the Canada Goose should remain on the general licences.

The Non-Native Species Secretariat for Great Britain has demonstrated that there is clear agricultural damage caused by the species and that they are a threat to public health and safety through widespread defecation on public sites, as well as being potential vectors for disease such as avian flu.

For Carrion Crow, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

For Feral Pigeon, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Feral Pigeons are a well-documented threat to public health and safety, resulting from their defecation in and around farm buildings used for food storage. Various

studies have showed that netting and other non-lethal methods are inadequate at preventing damage. A 2003 study showed that a test group of Feral Pigeons harboured 60 pathogens that could be transmitted to humans. The fact that they colonise areas with high human populations, scavenging human food waste, makes transmission more likely. They should therefore be included on the general licences.

Link to paper:

<https://s3.amazonaws.com/academia.edu.documents/48116599/j.jinf.2003.11.00120160817-6106-12n9j6n.pdf?response-content-disposition=inline%3B%20filename%3DHealth>

For Jackdaw, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

For Magpie, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

For Monk Parakeet, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Monk Parakeet is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

They are known to compete for nesting sites with native birds and are a considerable agricultural pest in their native South America, affecting food crops and timber.

For Rook, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

Theme C – Purpose ‘to prevent serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber, fisheries or inland waters’

C.1 Which bird species do you consider need to be controlled under general licence to prevent serious damage and why?

- Canada Goose - *Branta Canadensis*
- Carrion Crow - *Corvus corone*
- Egyptian Goose - *Alopochen aegyptiacus*
- Feral Pigeon - *Columba livia*
- Jackdaw - *Corvus monedula*
- Magpie - *Pica pica*
- Monk Parakeet - *Myiopsitta monachus*
- Ring-necked Parakeet - *Psittacula krameri*
- Rook - *Corvus frugilegus*
- Woodpigeon - *Columba palumbus*

For Canada Goose, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Canada Geese are non-native species, that are able to expand their populations rapidly in the UK, and which could become invasive.

The Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated that a precautionary principle approach be adopted for non-native species, and therefore the Canada Goose should remain on the general licences.

The Non-Native Species Secretariat for Great Britain has demonstrated that there is clear agricultural damage caused by the species and that they are a threat to public health and safety through widespread defecation on public sites, as well as being potential vectors for disease such as avian flu.

For Carrion Crow, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

For Egyptian Goose, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Egyptian Goose is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on

Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

For Feral Pigeon, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Feral pigeons occur in large numbers around grain stores and areas that store food stuffs for livestock. They scavenge this food at flock levels and can lead to severe loss of quantity and quality of food stuffs.

For Jackdaw, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

For Magpie, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

For Monk Parakeet, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Monk Parakeet is a non-native species, with the potential to become invasive.

While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

They are known to compete for nesting sites with native birds and are a considerable agricultural pest in their native South America, affecting food crops and timber.

For Ring-necked Parakeet, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

The Ring-necked Parakeet is a non-native species, with the potential to become

invasive. While there is little direct study on the effects of this species, the Convention on Biological Diversity has mandated a precautionary principle approach to non-native species, suggesting eradication where possible and practicable.

They are known to compete for nesting sites with native birds and are a considerable agricultural pest in their native South America, affecting food crops and timber.

For Rook, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Corvids travel wide distances and have long been considered as vectors for disease, in particular: avian flu and paratuberculosis.

Corvids have been demonstrated to spread diseases amongst animals and livestock in a 2001 paper published in The Journal of Clinical Microbiology. These diseases could cross over to humans and become increasingly difficult to control.

Link to paper:

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC87963/pdf/jm001517.pdf>

For Woodpigeon, please provide evidence for the combination(s) you have selected:

Wood pigeons are one of the most serious agricultural pests in the UK, each year doing £1-2 million worth of damage to cereal crops and in excess of £2 million worth of damage to brassicas, especially oil seed rape. In addition, it is estimated that the population has grown 134% between 1970 and 2011.

For these reasons it must be included on this general licence.

Link to paper: https://cereals.ahdb.org.uk/media/1191562/11-15_Woodpigeon_factsheet_web.pdf

C.2 Do you consider that other bird species need to be controlled under general licence to prevent serious damage?

Proposed Species 1:

Collared doves

Why - please provide supporting evidence for your selection(s):

Collared doves occur in large numbers around grain stores and areas that store food stuffs for livestock. They scavenge this food at flock levels and can lead to severe loss of quantity and quality of food stuffs.

They are green listed and widespread enough to warrant inclusion for this general licence.

We have received complaints from members who have applied for specific licences to control hundreds of collared doves in and around their farm buildings, who have only been granted a licence for the control of five, which has little, or any, effect on their activity or presence. Netting and other non-lethal methods, such as noise deterrents, have proved ineffective over the long term.