

Countryside Calendar – August



Fishermen fly fishing © Lorne Gill SNH

Livestock

Male sheep or rams (tups) may be in fields so that they can sire next year's early lambing flocks. Along with the bulls running in fields with suckler cows, these rams can be dangerous and unpredictable. Sheep are gathered off the hill so sheep dipping can begin.

It takes time to gather all the sheep and lambs together, so please keep a sensible distance from the animals, to avoid dispersing them over the land. Make sure that your dog does not chase or worry livestock by keeping it under close control or on a lead.

The grouse shooting season begins on 12 August (until 10 December). Help to minimise disturbance by being alert to possible shooting on grouse moors and take account of advice on different routes. Avoid crossing land where a shoot is under way until it is safe to do so.

If you're planning to be out and about in the Scottish hills and mountains between 1 July and 20 October, find out where stag stalking will be taking place by looking at the [Heading for the Scottish Hills](#) pages of the [Scottish Outdoor Access Code](#) website.

Crops

Farm vehicles will be working on the land, with second, and, in some areas, third silage cuts still taking place. Harvesting of spring crops is in full swing – weather and the ripeness of the crop permitting. Look out for combine harvesters gathering the grain and dropping the straw behind them, for future baling. Modern combines are fast, large and noisy – the driver cannot hear anyone calling from the ground.

Cultivations and drilling for winter oilseed rape will begin. Seed potatoes will be burnt-off (desiccated) when the tubers are the right size—to help minimise damage at harvest. Remember that the chemicals used to prepare potatoes for harvest are dangerous to your health – so please follow any advice asking you to avoid using particular routes or areas at these times.

Hay making continues into August in crofting areas. Third cuts of silage are taken in early areas.

Soft fruit is harvested at this time of year and it is important to avoid contamination. Do not take your dog into fields of fruit unless you are on a clear path. In all other cases it is best to use neighbouring land.

Conservation

August is towards the end of the breeding season of many ground-nesting birds in woodlands, moorland, grassland, loch shores and the seashore. Take care to keep dogs on a short lead or under close control, stick to paths where asked to do so, and don't linger if you are disturbing birds.

Most green cover on set-aside has to be cut short or destroyed between 15 July and August.

Be aware that riverbanks are often a refuge for wildlife and may be used for fishing and related management. Show consideration for people fishing and keep a safe distance if an angler is casting a line. Rivers are often unfenced and you may find livestock and crops close to the bank side. Some water margins may be fenced off to encourage growth of vegetation along the riverbank. Keep to paths and tracks if there are any.

Coasts & Beaches

Marine litter can be harmful to human health, livestock and wildlife. Take all your litter away.