

Countryside Calendar – July



Tufted Ducks nest & eggs © Lorne Gill SNH

Livestock

Bulls will be put out with cow herds until late summer – they can be unpredictable and dangerous so take care near their fields. Watch out for fields with livestock and young animals– look for different routes where possible, avoid taking dogs into fields with young animals and pay attention to any local advice and information. Make sure that your dog does not chase or worry livestock by keeping it under close control or on a lead.

Sheep shearing will be taking place in most upland areas and the flocks will be gathered together to bring them to one place. On the hill it takes time to keep all the sheep and lambs together, so keep a sensible distance from the animals, to avoid dispersing them over the land.

The stag stalking season (1 July to 20 October) is an important time for deer management. Take time to find out where stalking is taking place and use the Hillphones service where one is available. Stalking doesn't normally take place on Sundays.

Deer control can take place within forests all year round, often around dawn and dusk. You can help to minimise disturbance by taking extra care at these times and by following any signs or notices.

Crops

Farm vehicles will be working on the land, to harvest autumn-sown crops eg wheat, barley and oilseed rape, along with fruit and vegetable crops like strawberries and potatoes. Hay making may also be under way throughout the country (depending on the weather!), and some silage cuts will still be taking place.

The blight-spraying programme starts on potato crops, involving a follow-up spraying every four to six weeks.

Silage is harvested in late growing areas & those fields in conservation schemes. Second cut silage starts.

Harvesting involves a range of equipment that is used together, for example combine, tractors and trailers. The number of trips to and from farm buildings will increase and farm tracks will be busy. Keep a safe distance from farm machinery.

In fields of crops avoid damaging the crop by using any paths or tracks, the field margin, unsown ground or look for another route. Remember that the chemicals used in spraying can be dangerous to your health – so please follow any advice asking you to avoid particular routes or areas at these times.

Conservation

The months of June and July often see an increase in salmon fishing as the grilse (juveniles from last year) return to breeding waters.

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.

July falls within 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.