

# Countryside Calendar – June



Potato Harvesting © Lorne Gill SNH

## Livestock

There will still be lambs and calves in many fields and hilly areas. Look out for sheep gathering i.e. rounding up all the animals. Bulls will be put in with cow herds until late summer - they can be unpredictable and dangerous. Summer calving starts in some suckler herds.

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 signage.

Pig farming is found mainly in north and east areas although you may see pigs on the islands with lower rainfall. Outdoor shelters are often used. Pigs can turn aggressive at any time. If there is a pig in the field go into a neighbouring field or onto land next to it.

## Crops

Farm vehicles are busy working on the land e.g. lifting the first early potatoes. Silage cutting continues in most of the country. Hay is cut in drier districts near the end of the month.

Other operations you might see include grass-re-seeding and spraying crops with herbicides, fungicides and insecticides where necessary. Remember that these chemicals can be dangerous to your health so please follow any advice asking you to avoid using particular routes or areas at these times.

In fields of crops, avoid damaging the crop by using any paths or tracks, the field margin or un-sown ground, or look for another route? When using field margins to avoid cropped areas, be aware that these are wildlife corridors and some may be managed to encourage game birds. Keep dogs on a lead and keep moving to minimise disturbance.

## **Conservation**

June 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, keep to paths where asked to do so and don't linger if you're disturbing birds. Machair is found in the north and west of Scotland and has been created by wind-blown sand fertilising the underlying peat. It's often unfenced and supports breeding wading birds and wildflowers in May and June. Follow any guidance aimed at reducing dune or machair erosion or at avoiding disturbance of nesting birds.