

Countryside Calendar – September



Red Grouse resting in heather moorland © Lorne Gill SNH

Livestock

Autumn calving starts in some beef herds. Bear in mind that cows with calves are very defensive of their young, and can be particularly aggressive towards dogs. In some areas, dairy cows are taken in for the winter. If you see fields with cows and young calves present – look for different routes where possible, avoid taking dogs into fields with young animals and pay attention to any local signage.

Male sheep or rams (tups) may be in fields to prepare for mating. Along with the bulls running in fields with suckler cows, these rams can be dangerous and unpredictable.

Sheep dipping continues during September, so look out for sheep gathering - rounding up all the animals - and avoid the area if you can. On the hill it takes time to keep 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.

Deer in enclosed fields are most likely to turn aggressive during the rutting season in late September and early October.

Crops

Farm vehicles will be working on the land with the last cuts of silage taken in many areas. The cereal harvest is mainly finished in most areas, leaving many stubble fields ready for ploughing to prepare the ground for next year's crops.

Winter barley should be sown by the end of the month, and the main crop potato harvest will begin.

Conservation

Help to minimise disturbance by being alert to possible shooting on grouse moors and take account of advice on alternative routes. The grouse shooting season continues until 10 December. Wildfowl shooting commences on 1 September and takes place close to water during the autumn and winter usually around dawn and dusk. Avoid crossing land where a shoot is under way until it is safe to do so.

Some agri-environment schemes encourage whole flood plains to flood naturally at times of high water level creating a mosaic of wash lands, dry lands and wetlands. There will be more natural flooding where the watercourse meanders through a relatively flat area and barriers to flooding have been removed. These areas are sensitive and prone to damage – follow any agreed local information.