SCOTTISH POLICY GROUP

BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Understanding the Science-Policy Interface in Scotland

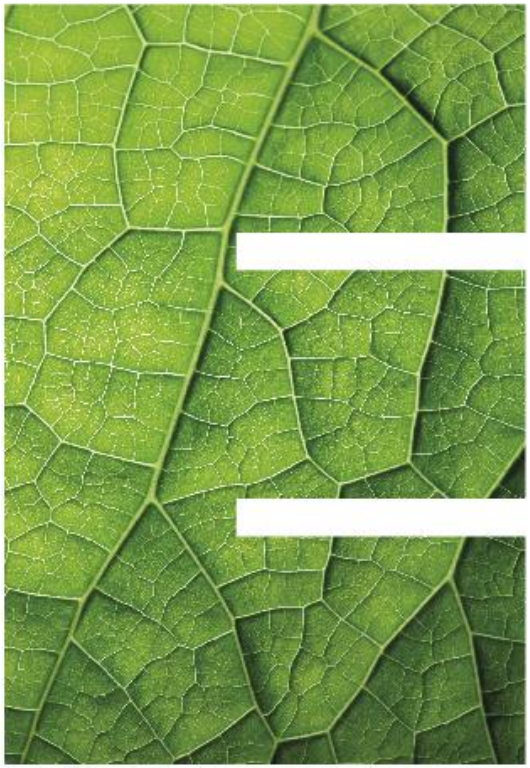
8 November 2016

#ScotBio16

Aim: To generate an understanding of the policy environment in Scotland and how scientific evidence can feed into policymaking

Schedule

10:00	**Introduction: Ben Connor and Rob Brooker**
10:15	**Introduction to policy in Scotland: Tom Edwards**
10:35	**An inside perspective to policy making: Sarah Boyack**
10:55	**Giving scientific advice to Government – an agency view: Debbie Bassett**
11:15	**Coffee Break**
11:30	**Influencing policy - getting your message across: Rea Cris**
12:00	**Panel Discussion**
12:30	**Lunch**
13.30	**Interactive workshop session**
16:00	**Sum-up / reflections**



BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Our vision:

a world inspired, informed and influenced by ecology

Our mission:

to generate, communicate and promote ecological knowledge and solutions

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Systematic site selection for multispecies monitoring networks

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EDITOR'S CHOICE

Issue 53:5

Farmland bird conservation: out with the new, in with the old

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- **Inform policy**
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Commons Select Committee

Managed rewilding and land management techniques examined by Committee

An introduction to the science / environment policy interface

Tom Edwards

Policy Specialist SWT & Director 3E Services Ltd.

What this talk will cover

- What is policy?
- Who makes policy?
- Policy cycle
- Examples: biodiversity; making a law in Scotland; inquiries

What is policy?

- a set of ideas or a plan of what to do in particular situations that has been agreed to officially by a group of people, and organization, a government, or a political party

Examples:

Manifestos

Government Programmes

Thematic policies – biodiversity; climate change; freshwater

Laws – Birds and Habitats Directives; WCA 1981; CC (S) A 2009

Funds – LIFE; Natural Care

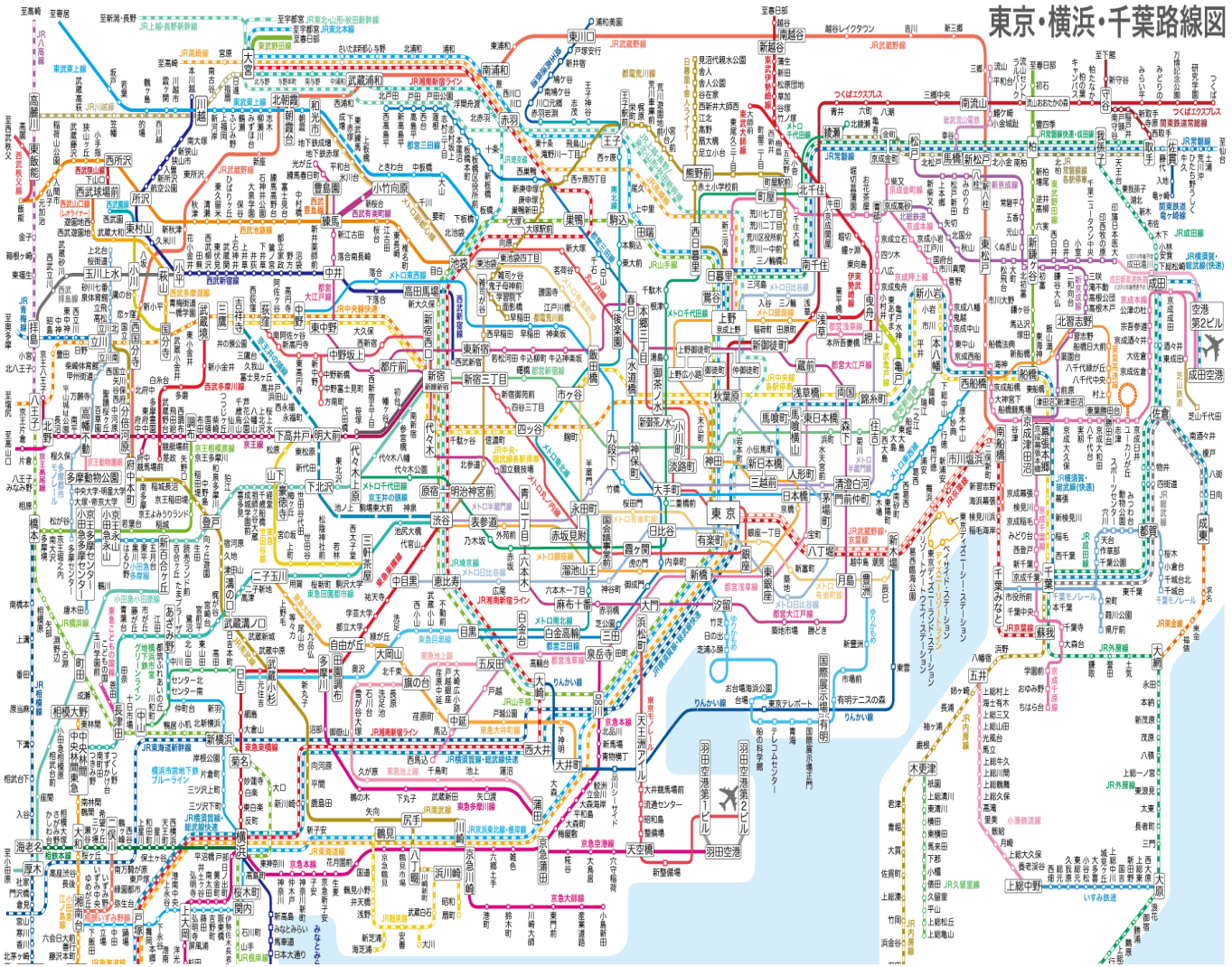
Position papers

Three legged stool of behavioural change

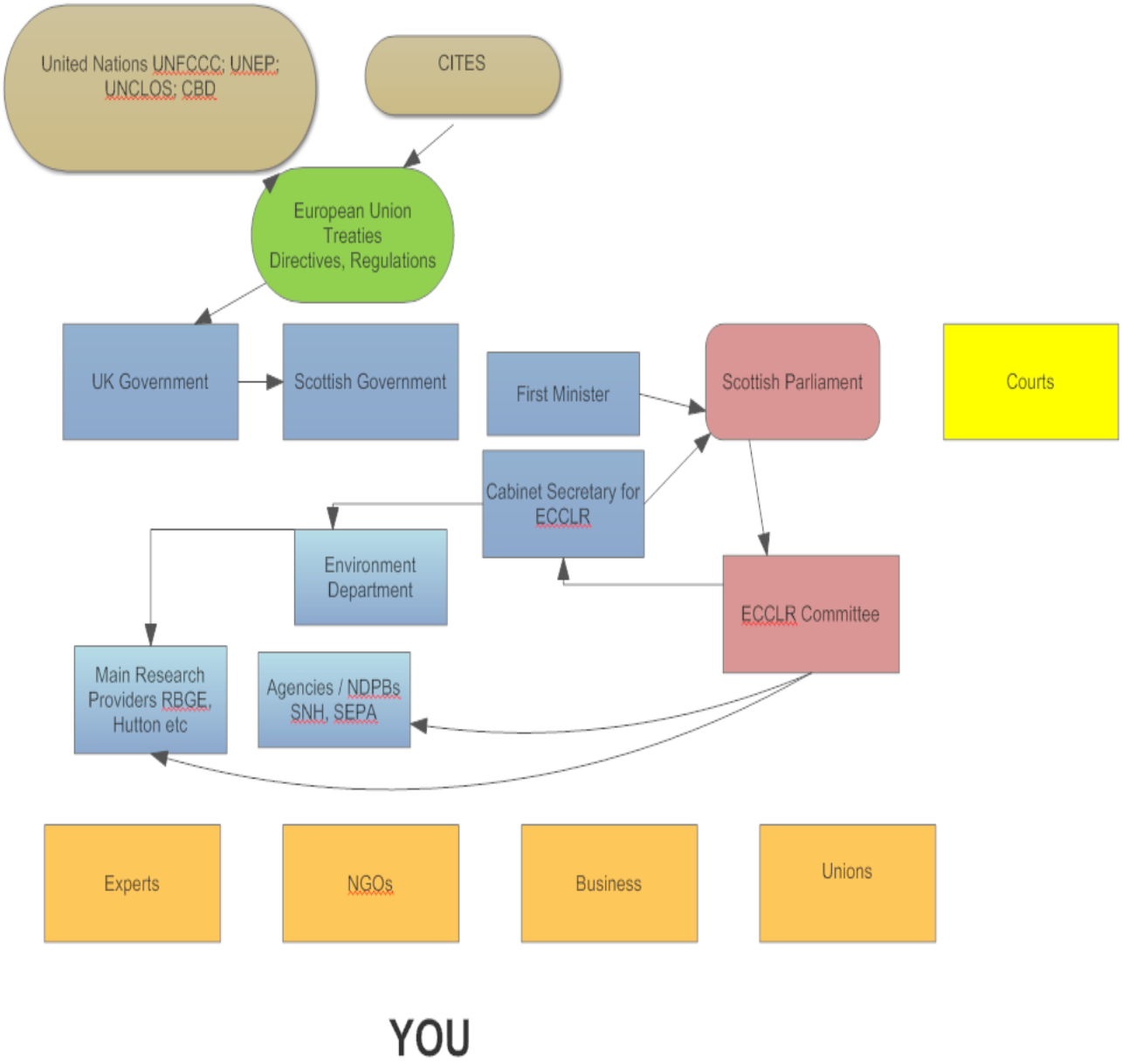
How does Government get the governed to do what it wants?

1. Encourage (set good example)
2. Bribe (budget)
3. Force (laws)

Who makes policy?



Who makes policy?



COUNCIL OF EUROPE

CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

European Treaty Series - No. 104

Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats *

Bern, 19.IX.1979

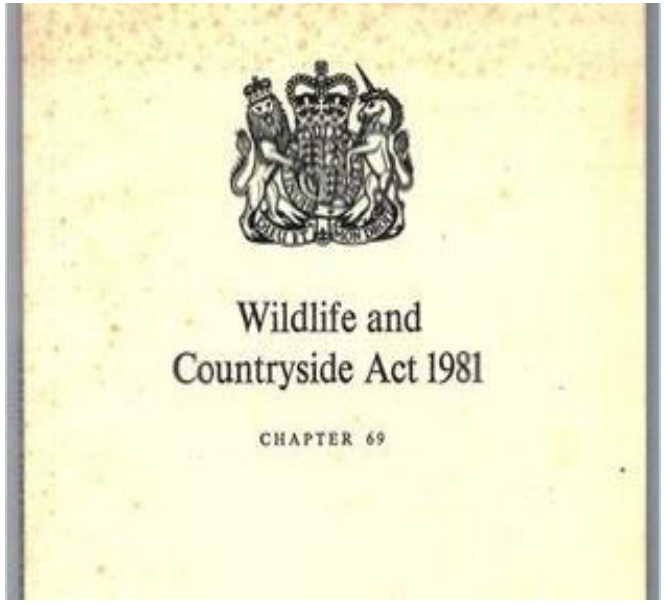
Preamble

The member States of the Council of Europe and the other signatories hereto,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members;

Considering the wish of the Council of Europe to co-operate with other States in the field of nature conservation;

Recognising that wild flora and fauna constitute a natural heritage of aesthetic, scientific, cultural, recreational, economic and intrinsic value that needs to be preserved and handed on to future generations;



Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

CHAPTER 69

II

(Acts whose publication is not obligatory)

COUNCIL

COUNCIL DIRECTIVE

of 2 April 1979

on the conservation of wild birds

(79/409/EEC)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission (1),

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament (2),

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (3),

Whereas the Council declaration of 22 November 1972 on the programme of action of the European Communities on the environment (4) calls for specific action to protect birds, supplemented by the resolution of the Council of the European Communities and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 17 May 1977 on the continuation and implementation of a European Community policy and action programme on the environment (5);

Whereas a large number of species of wild birds naturally occurring in the European territory of the Member States are declining in number, very rapidly in some cases; whereas this decline represents a serious threat to the conservation of the natural environment, particularly because of the biological balances threatened thereby;

Whereas the species of wild birds naturally occurring in the European territory of the Member States are mainly migratory species; whereas such species constitute a common heritage and whereas effective bird protection is typically a transfrontier environment problem entailing common responsibilities;

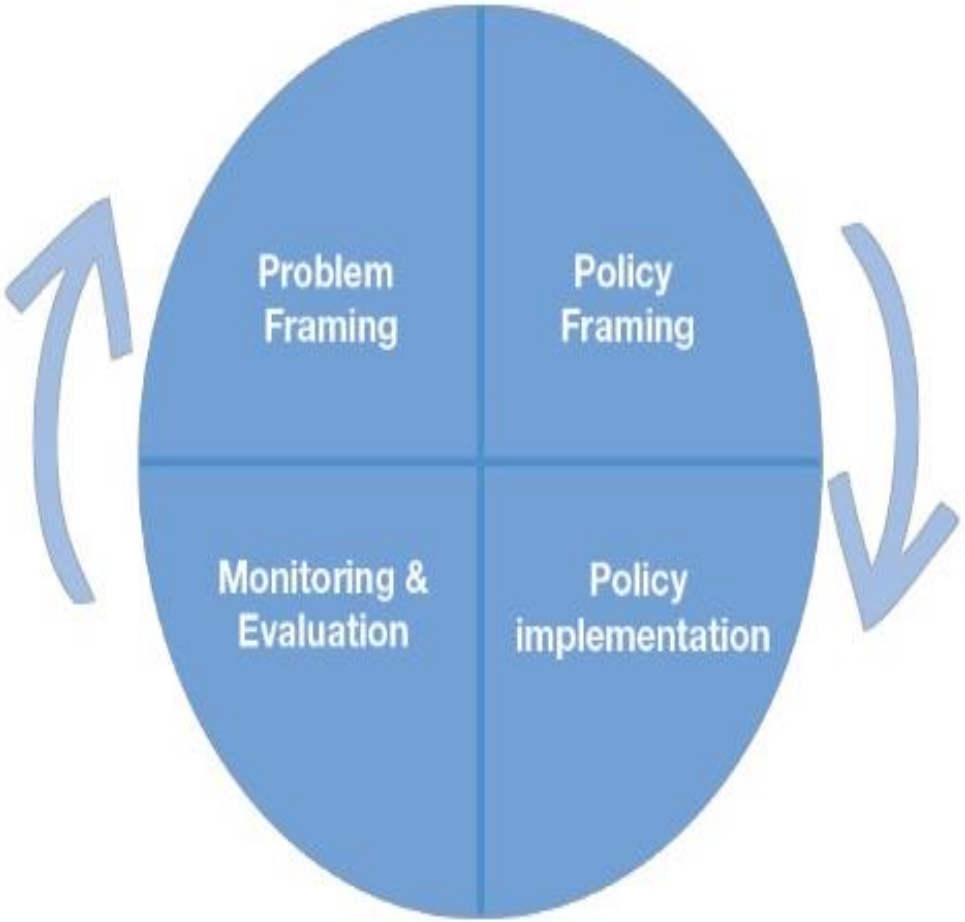
Whereas the conditions of life for birds in Greenland are fundamentally different from those in the other regions of the European territory of the Member States on account of the general circumstances and in particular the climate, the low density of population and the exceptional size and geographical situation of the island;

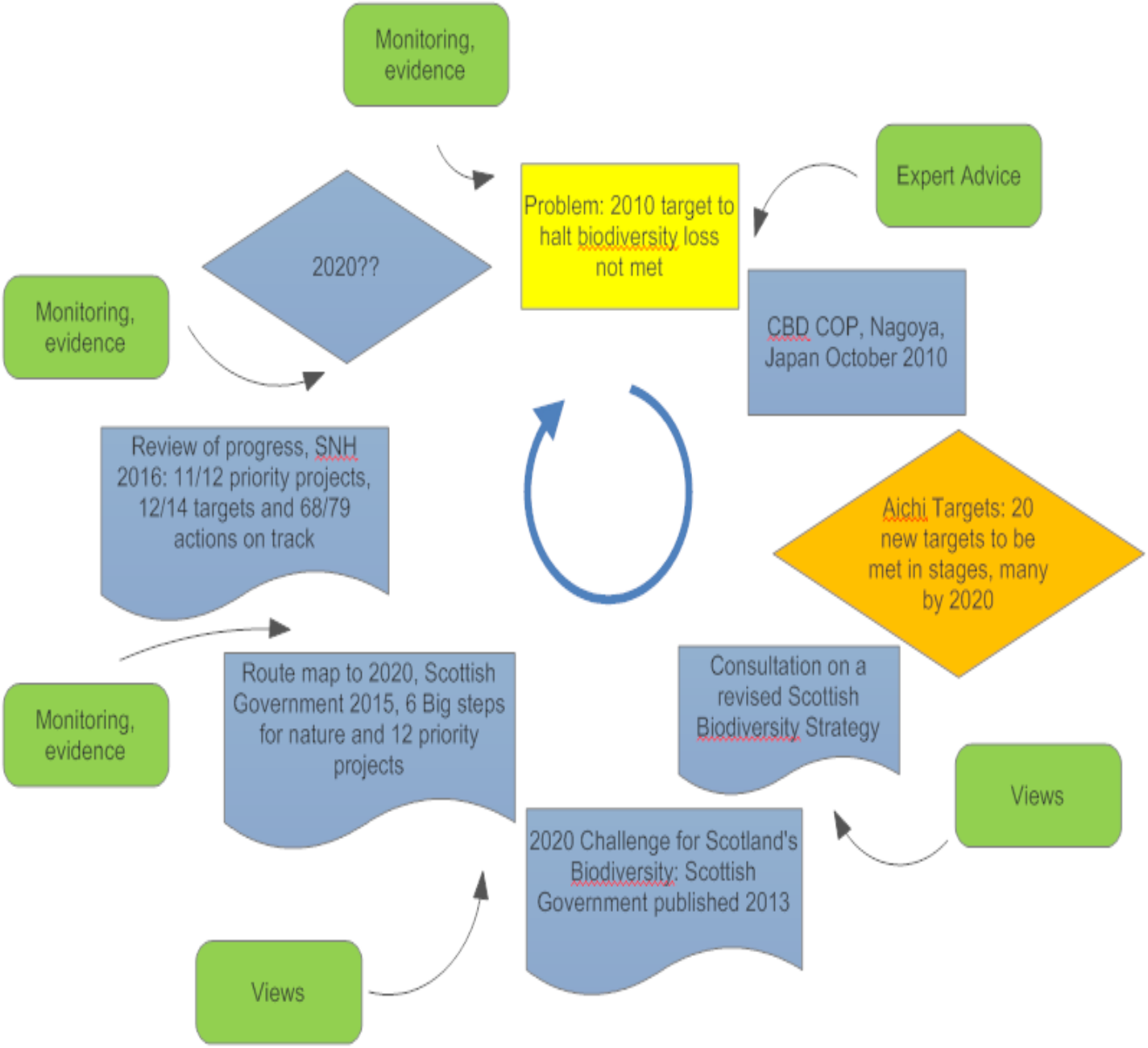
Whereas therefore this Directive should not apply to Greenland;

Whereas the conservation of the species of wild birds naturally occurring in the European territory of the Member States is necessary to attain, within the operation of the common market, of the Community's objectives regarding the improvement of living conditions, a harmonious development of economic activities throughout the Community and a continuous and balanced expansion, but the necessary specific powers to act have not been provided for in the Treaty;

(1) OJ No C 38, 1. 2. 1977, p. 3; OJ No C 201, 23. 8. 1977, p. 2.
(2) OJ No C 163, 11. 7. 1977, p. 28.
(3) OJ No C 152, 29. 6. 1977, p. 3.
(4) OJ No C 112, 20. 12. 1973, p. 40.
(5) OJ No C 139, 13. 6. 1977, p. 1.

Policy Cycle (Spiral)




Monitoring, evidence
Expert Advice
Problem: 2010 target to halt biodiversity loss not met
2020??
Monitoring, evidence
CBD COP, Nagoya, Japan October 2010
Review of progress, SNH 2016: 11/12 priority projects, 12/14 targets and 68/79 actions on track
Aichi Targets: 20 new targets to be met in stages, many by 2020
Monitoring, evidence
Route map to 2020, Scottish Government 2015, 6 Big steps for nature and 12 priority projects
Consultation on a revised Scottish Biodiversity Strategy
Views
2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity: Scottish Government published 2013
Views

Priorities?

River Basin Management Plans
Sea fisheries Strategy
Local Development Plans
Renewable energy strategy
Wild deer strategy
Wild fisheries Strategy
Biodiversity Strategy
Flood Management Plans
Aquaculture Strategy
Climate Change RPP2, RPP3
Agriculture Strategy
Land Use Strategy
Land Reform
National Planning Framework
Marine Plan
Rural Development Plan

Passing a law in Scotland

Other legislatures have broadly similar but slightly different processes

Assymetric devolution

An example WANE Act 2011 – 5 part Act

Part 2 – INNS – problems include – no clear responsibility, INNS defined by lists in WCA

Consultation

Bill introduced to Parliament – main changes – offence to release any NNS; responsible authorities designated; powers to deal with INNS.

3 stage process

Holding Government to account

- Committees shadow Ministerial Portfolios
- Can inquire into any area of ministerial responsibility
- Wild deer management
- SWT “excessive grazing by deer is currently one of the most significant threats to the health, natural functioning and connectivity of ecosystems in Scotland”
- ADMG “deer management brings over £140m to Scottish economy and supports 2,500 jobs”

Inquiry into deer management

2013 – took evidence from E-NGOs, deer sector, regulator (SNH), Environment Minister, open call for evidence

Key finding – of c.45 deer management groups (voluntary) <half had deer management plan

Key conclusion – all DMGs to have DMP in place by end of 2016 that was environmentally responsible

The cycle continues

Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2016 gave SNH powers to require a DMP

Almost all DMGs now have a DMP (Government gave £200,000 to help)

SNH is reporting to Government on adequacy of those DMPs

Poor evidence base for deer management

Evidence based policy making?

- Evidence is lacking – implementation of precautionary approach?
- Evidence is available but action is insufficient – sea fisheries? Climate change?
- Evidence available but conflicting policy goals e.g. renewables?

Need to ensure policy cycles are virtuous circles!

Sarah Boyack

An inside perspective to policy making	**Understanding what it's like to be a policy customer** • **What is it like trying to get hold of evidence?** • **Where do policy makers get their evidence from?** • **Who provides evidence?** • **How does science/ecological evidence fit in to the policy process?**

Understanding who policy makers are and what they are looking for from scientists

Dr Debbie Bassett

Biodiversity Strategy Manager
Scottish Natural Heritage

Scottish Natural Heritage

We are the Scottish Government agency for nature conservation in Scotland

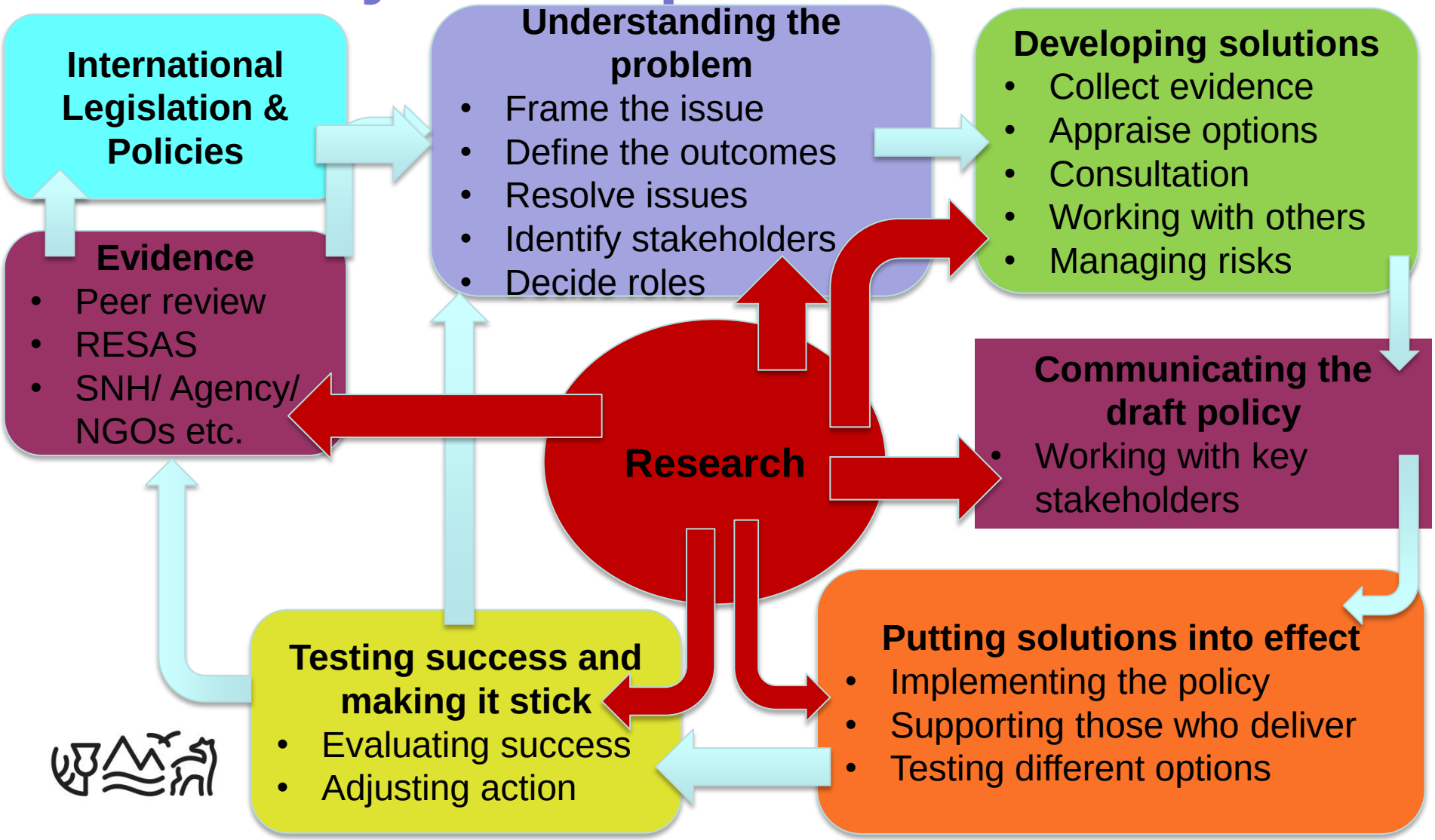
- promote, care for, and improve our natural heritage
- help people enjoy nature responsibly
- enable greater understanding and awareness of nature
- promote the sustainable use of Scotland's natural heritage

- Employee 755 staff
- 37 offices

What we do

- Biodiversity, Monitoring & Advice
- Climate Change
- Coastal and Marine Management
- Creating Better Places
- Increasing Participation
- Managing Nature Reserves
- Natural Resource Management
- Planning and Development
- Protected Areas
- Scottish Rural Development Programme (SRDP)
- Wildlife Management

Policy Development Process

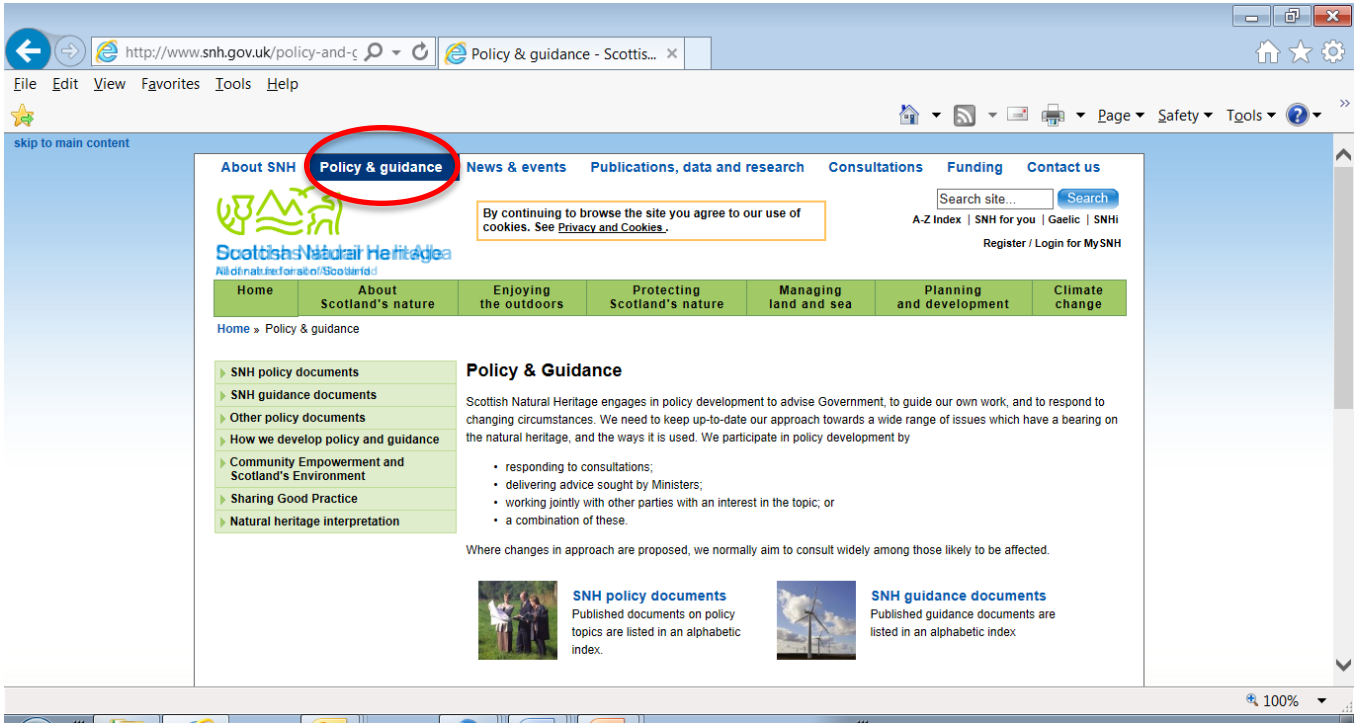


How can researchers have the biggest impact?

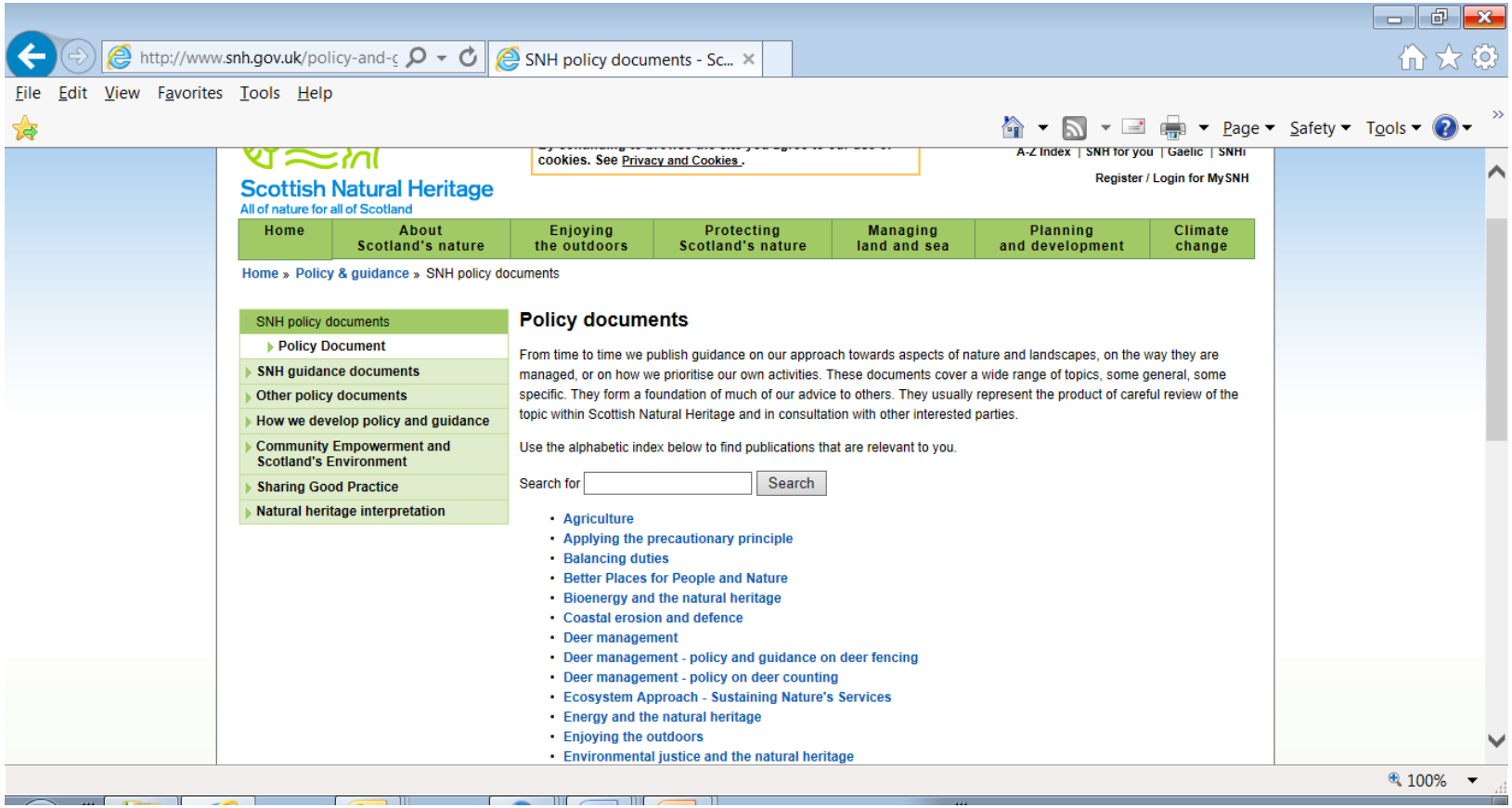
1. Who is it best to engage with and why?
2. What are the questions policy makers want answers to?
3. When is the right time to get your message across?

Who to engage

- SNH engages in policy development to:
  - Advise government
  - Develop our own work
  - Respond to changing circumstances



SNH Policy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How we develop policy and guidance
Community Empowerment and Scotland's Environment
Sharing Good Practice
Natural heritage interpretation
Policy documents
From time to time we publish guidance on our approach towards aspects of nature and landscapes, on the way they are managed, or on how we prioritise our own activities. These documents cover a wide range of topics, some general, some specific. They form a foundation of much of our advice to others. They usually represent the product of careful review of the topic within Scottish Natural Heritage and in consultation with other interested parties.
Use the alphabetic index below to find publications that are relevant to you.
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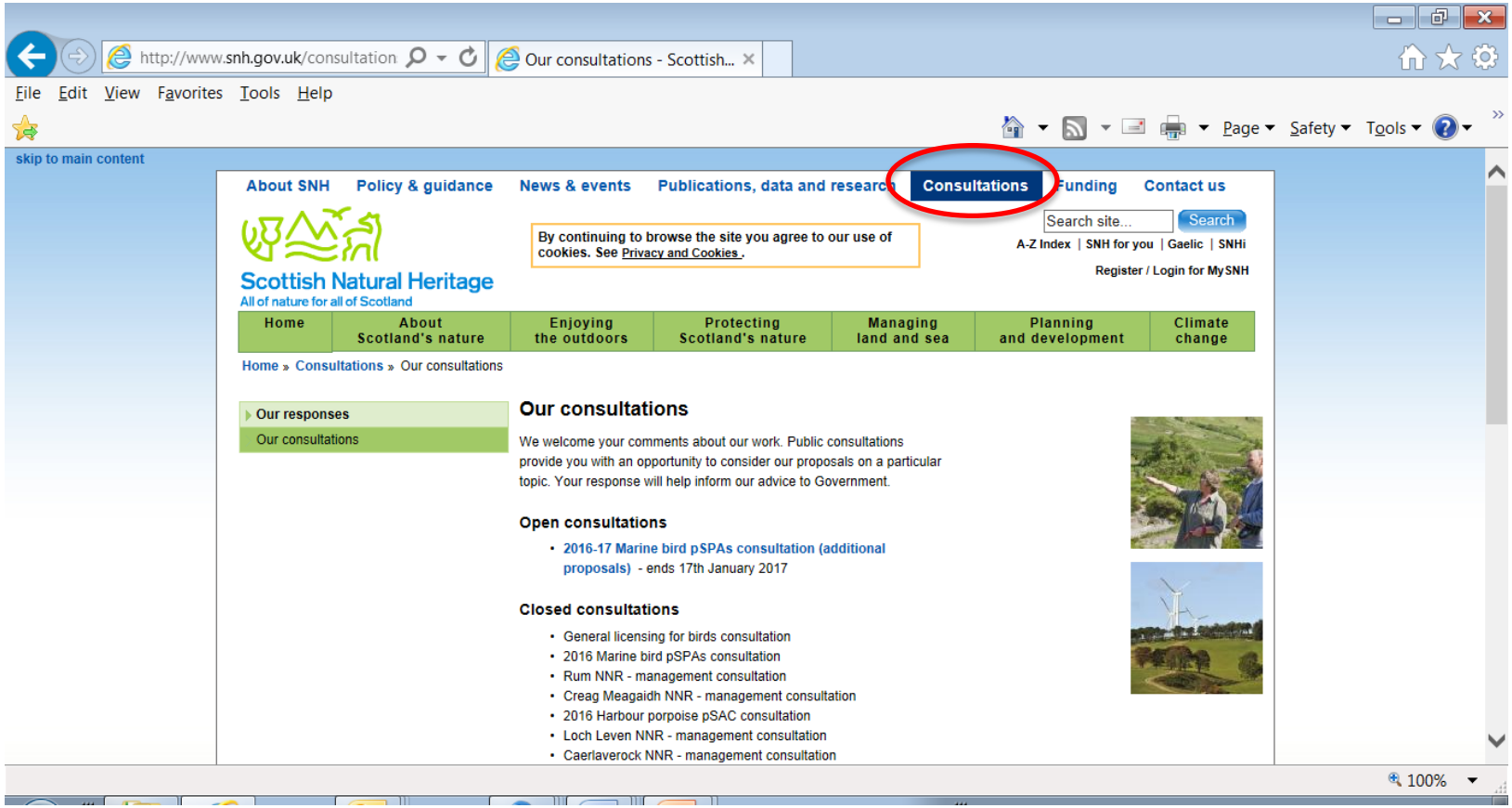
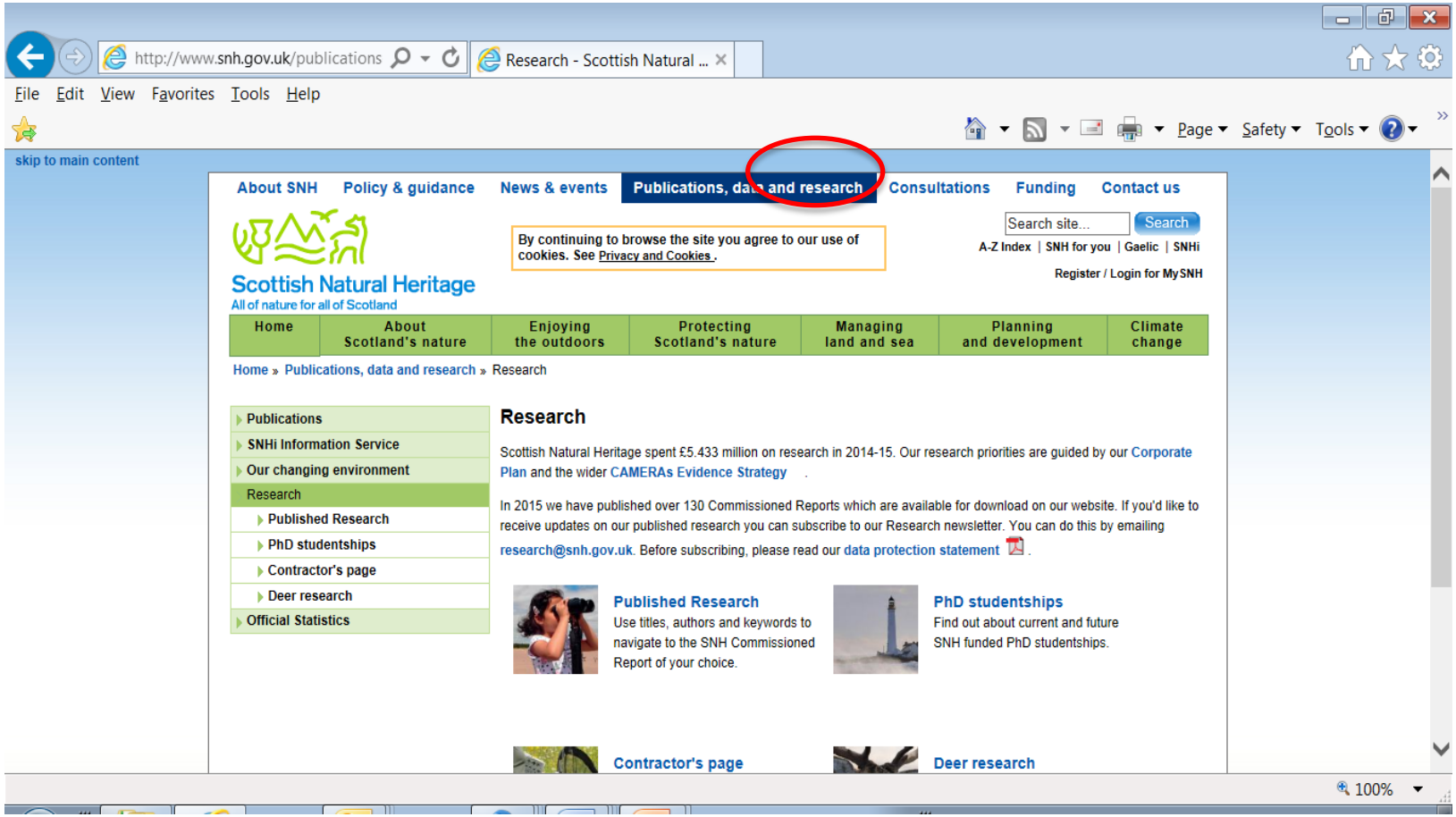
Balancing duties
Better Places for People and Nature
Bioenergy and the natural heritage
Coastal erosion and defence
Deer management
Deer management - policy and guidance on deer fencing
Deer management - policy on deer counting
Ecosystem Approach - Sustaining Nature's Services
Energy and the natural heritage
Enjoying the outdoors
Environmental justice and the natural heritage
100%

Consultations



Research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Research
Scottish Natural Heritage spent £5.433 million on research in 2014-15. Our research priorities are guided by our Corporate Plan and the wider CAMERAs Evidence Strategy .
In 2015 we have published over 130 Commissioned Reports which are available for download on our website. If you'd like to receive updates on our published research you can subscribe to our Research newsletter. You can do this by emailing research@snh.gov.uk. Before subscribing, please read our data protection statement .
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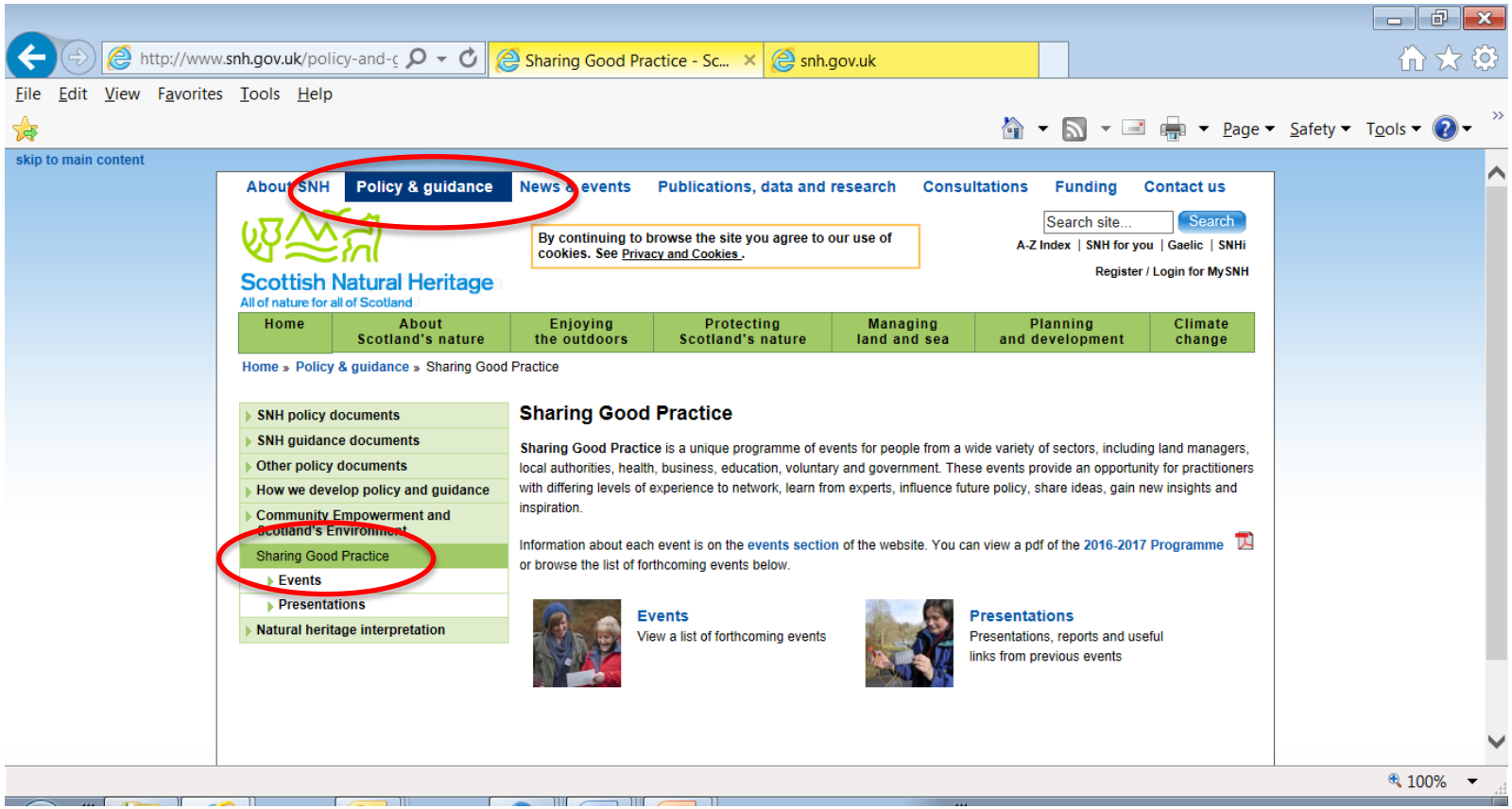
New policy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Sharing Good Practice is a unique programme of events for people from a wide variety of sectors, including land managers, local authorities, health, business, education, voluntary and government. These events provide an opportunity for practitioners with differing levels of experience to network, learn from experts, influence future policy, share ideas, gain new insights and inspiration.
Information about each event is on the events section of the website. You can view a pdf of the 2016-2017 Programme or browse the list of forthcoming events below.
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Presentations, reports and useful links from previous events
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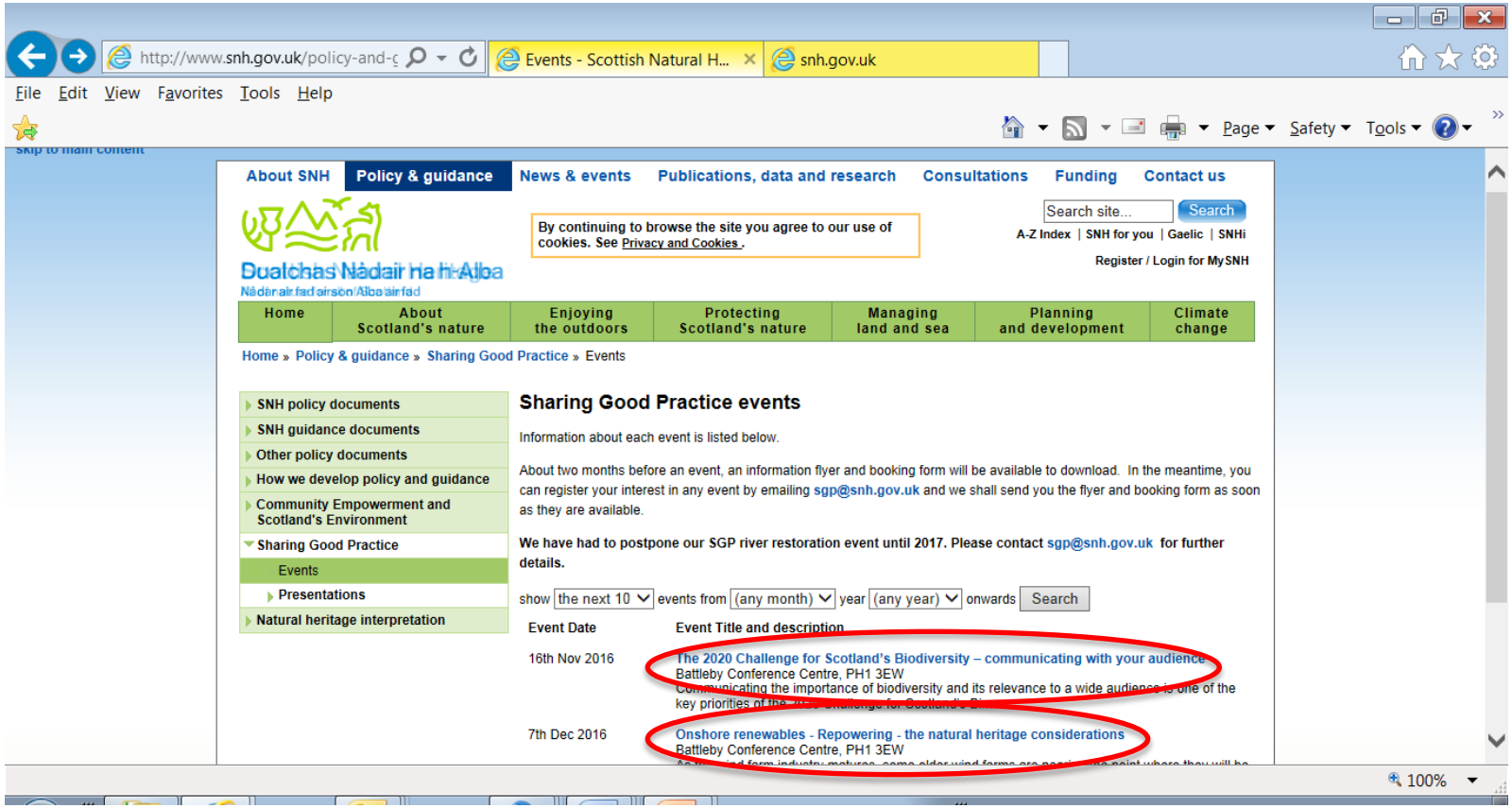
Opportunities to input



Biodiversity Policy

2020 Challenge for Scotland's Biodiversity

Development of next 10 year policy

- SBS Evidence plan
- Biodiversity surveillance
- RESAS outputs
- Commissioned research
- Peer review research

Questions

- Ecosystem function
- Ecosystem resilience
- Auto- ecological response to pressures

What researchers need to know about policy makers

1. Making policy is really difficult
2. No policy will ever be perfect
3. Policy makers can be expert too
4. Policy makers are not a homogenous group
5. Policy makers are people too
6. Policy decisions are subject to extensive scrutiny
7. Starting policies from scratch is very rarely an option
8. There is more to policy than scientific evidence
9. Public opinion matters
10. Policy makers do understand uncertainty
11. The UK has a brilliant science advisory system
12. Policy and science operate on different timescales
13. Policy makers aren't interested in science per se
14. 'We need more research' is the wrong answer

Dr Chris Tyler is director of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology.

www.snh.gov.uk

giving
nature
a home

Influencing policy

getting your message across

Rea Cris, Parliamentary Officer

Who are the policy makers?

Political Parties - Politicians and staff at all levels of government

Bureaucracy- Civil servants and officials in government agencies

The Judiciary – Civil and criminal

Finance & Business - Businesses and business organisations

Trade Unions – Public and private sector

The Media – Printed, broadcast and social media

The Civic Sector - Economic, social & environmental NGOs

The Professions – Lawyers, accountants and doctors

Academics- In universities, colleges and think tanks

The Faith Communities – Christian, Muslim and others

Hereditary Power Brokers –"Lairds"& landowners

The Voters –Nationally and locally

THIS IS THE POLICY COMMUNITY

What works well?

Its not an exact science ¯_(ツ)_/¯

-Know your audience and tailor pitch

-Avoid FYI science – have an ask or recommendation

-Prepare a ‘simplified nuanced stance’

rspb giving nature a home

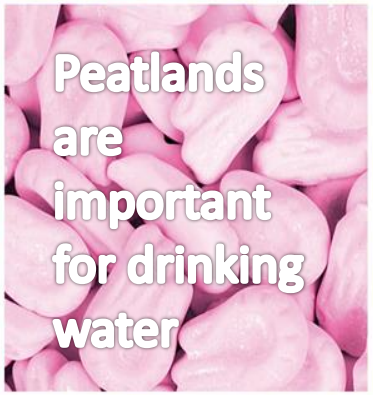
Peatland Restoration - a success story

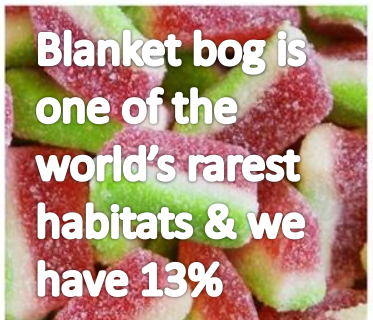
Peatlands are areas of land with a naturally accumulated layer of peat. These are formed under waterlogged conditions from carbon rich, dead and decaying plant material. In the UK mosses, mainly Sphagnum species, are the main formers of peat. There are three main types of peatland in the UK: blanket bogs, raised bogs and fens.

Peatlands are squishy sponge-like habitats made from centuries of dead and decaying plant material piled up in layers

rspb giving nature a home

Peatlands are carbon stores & can help with climate change targets





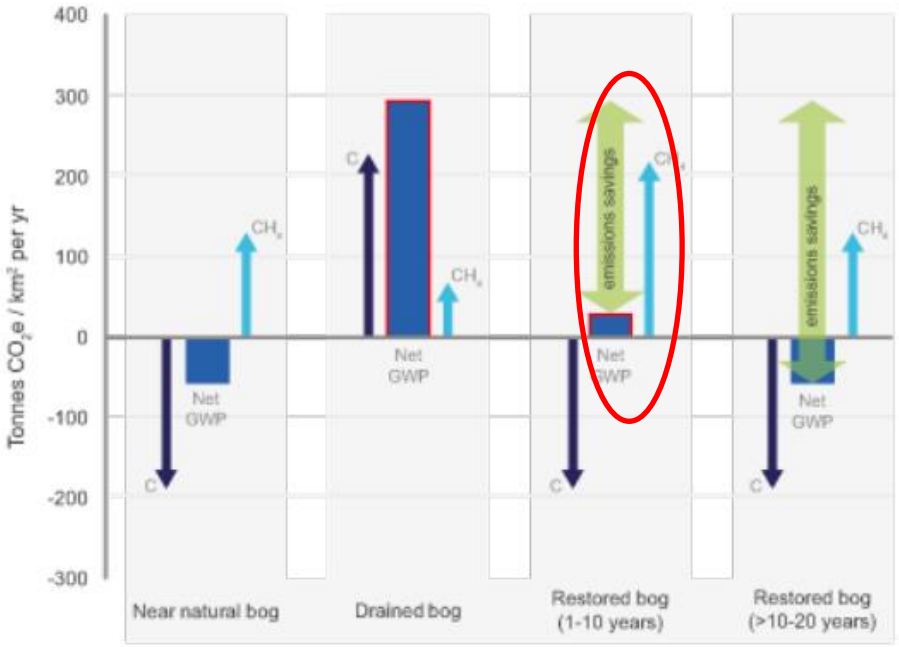
What doesn't work so well....

...or tricky messaging

rspb giving nature a home

DEFORESTATION KILLS ENTIRE SPECIES OF ANIMALS, NO ONE BATS AN EYE...
KILL A GORILLA THAT'S DRAGGING A 4 YEAR OLD CHILD AROUND, EVERYONE LOSES THEIR F_____G MIND!

Global warming potential of peat bogs



Sphagnum, the sign of a healthy bog © RSPB

Brown syke grip © Andrew Keen

Blocked grip, Flow Country © Norman Russell

Results of grip damming © Andrew Keen

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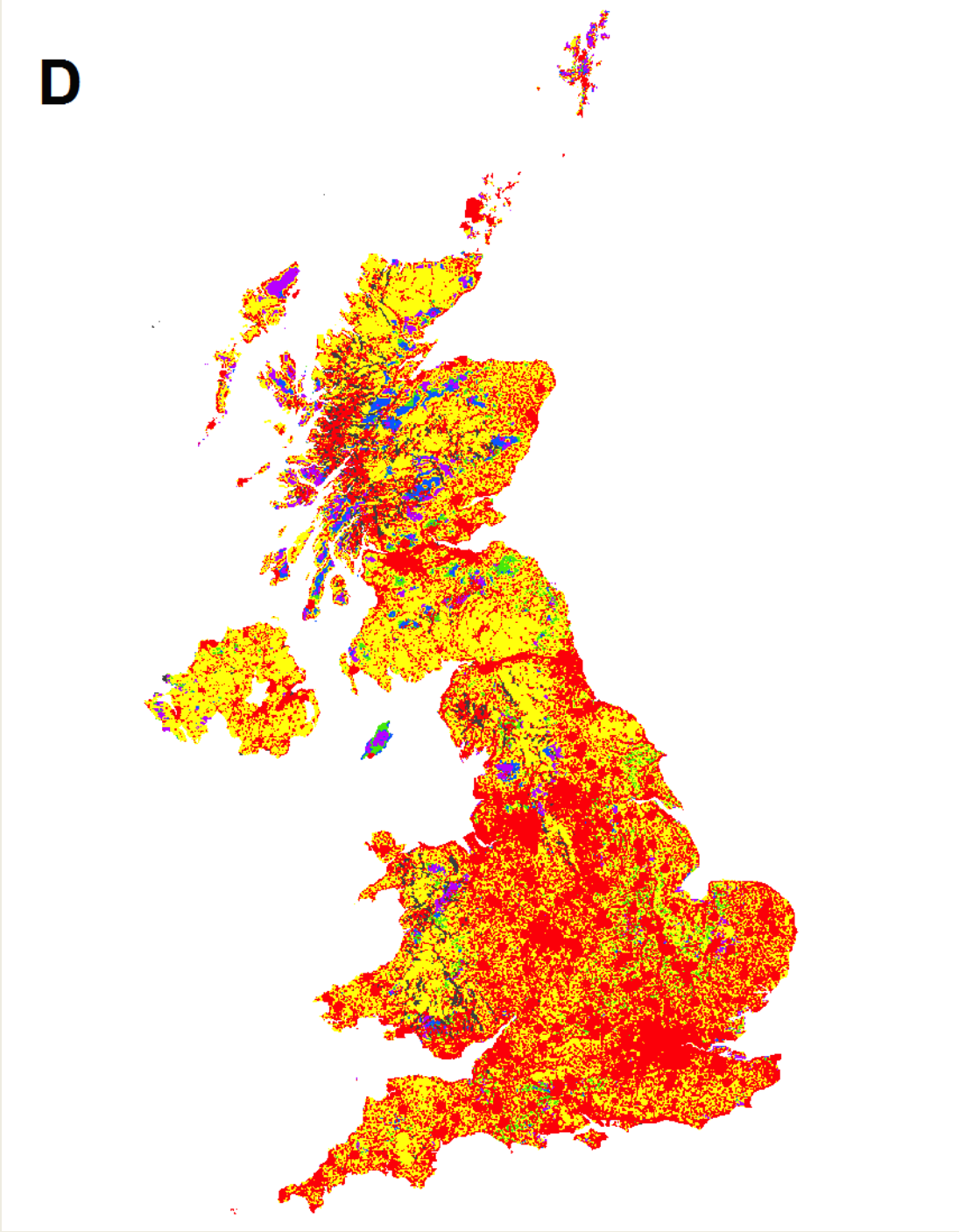

Onshore wind: opportunity mapping

rspb giving nature a home

Interpretation of the maps

- Once you put a line on a map, someone gets mad.
- Provide indicative analysis but challenge of communicating this without people taking it literally.
- Not intended/able to provide fine-scale info for site selection;
- Media always want to paint discussion in polarized terms – anti vs pro

rspb giving nature a home

10 recommendations for Scotland

1. **Set the ambition: 50% renewable energy by 2030**
2. **Plan for nature - Use a plan-led approach to help identify suitable sites and avoid conflicts**
3. **Develop a roadmap for decarbonisation in harmony with nature**
4. **Eliminate energy waste - strong measures to improve the energy performance of our buildings**
5. **Invest in understanding our environment to help renewables grow sustainably**
6. **Invest to unlock low carbon technologies**
7. **Transform low carbon heat and transport – set targets for renewable heat and electric vehicles**
8. **Make economic incentives work for nature and the climate**
9. **Set robust standards for sustainable bioenergy**
10. **Support a grid network fit for the future**

rspb giving nature a home

When is the best time to communicate?

- Once again……¯_(ツ)_/¯
- When the need arises
- Relevant legislation coming up
- Global pressures or commitment
- People pressure or power – but lots of communication and campaign work involved!

rspb giving nature a home

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Thank-you
The RSPB is the country's largest nature conservation charity,
inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

SCOTTISH POLICY GROUP

BRITISH ECOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Workshop Activity

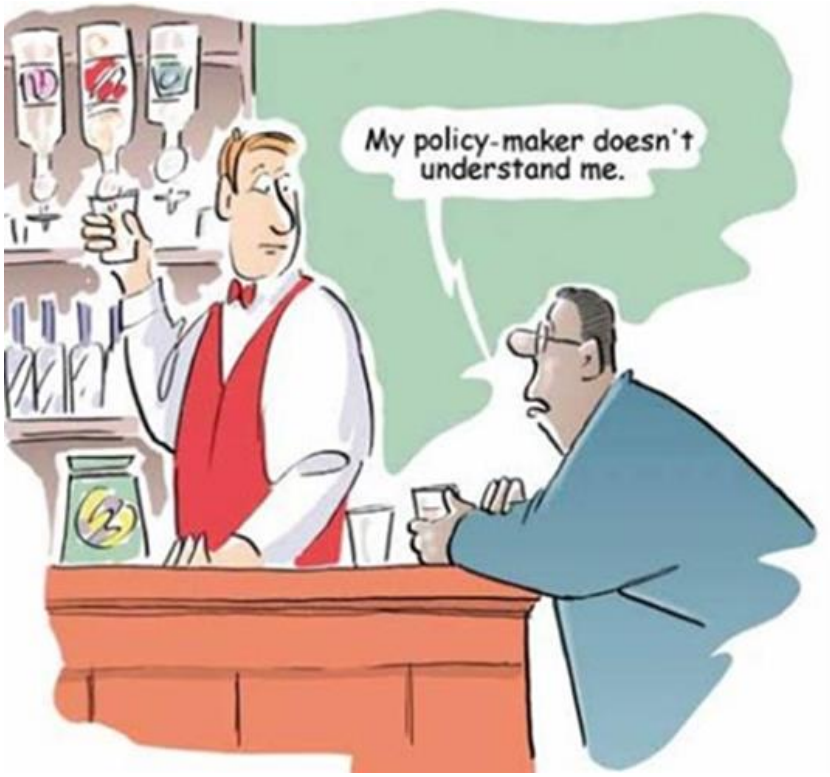
#ScotBio16

Recap: communicating with Policymakers

Communication breakdown

"The incompatibilities between scientists and policy makers are very real ones. If scientists and policy makers are to work together, they must know each other's strengths and weaknesses, as well as likes and dislikes"

Choi et al 2005, J Epidemiol Community Health



Communication principles

Policy Makers	**Scientists**
Uninterested in detailed technical science	Love technical and scientific detail
Work to deadlines of hours or days	Projects last months and years
Hate conferences, meetings last minutes	Love conference, meetings last days
Want simple summaries, 2 sides A4	Want all the details, prepared to read complex material
Want plain English	Write in scientific jargon
Want certainty	Embrace uncertainty

Adapted from Bainbridge 2014, Journal of Applied Ecology

Communication principles

- Simplify
- Don’t neglect uncertainty
- Focus on the evidence
- Keep it brief
- Make it relevant
- Be timely
- Tell a story

A briefing note - what, why and when

What?

- A short paper that distills often complex information into a short, well-structured document.

Why?

- Informs a busy decision-maker about an issue.

When?

- Used for someone who has to keep track of many issues which they may not be familiar with. They don’t have time to research and read-up. They need to know the key points

A good briefing note will:

- Quickly and efficiently fill a person in on an issue.
- It will be
  - Short (1-2pages)
  - Concise (make every word count)
  - Clear (no jargon or acronyms)
  - Reliable (accurate and say if uncertainty)
  - Readable (short sentences, bullet points etc)

There is no one format to follow however…

- There are few key pointers we suggest following:
  - Up to two sides of A4
  - A logo at the top & title / purpose
  - A few key messages you would like them to get across in a speech
  - Paragraphs providing more detailed information on the key messages
  - References to further information and sources, as footnotes or as hyperlinks in the text
  - A name, email and telephone number of someone who can provide further information
  - Use ‘callout boxes’ containing examples or stories for inclusion in speeches.