

Species Population Control Policy

Definitions

“Species” is defined here as “any animal, plant or fungus”.

“Species population control” is defined here as “any intervention to limit the population of a species by killing or removal as a means of achieving nature conservation objectives and /or to meet legal obligations”.

“Council” is the governing body of Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

Policy

1. The Trust strongly supports all protective species legislation and will assist law enforcement agencies in the investigation of alleged contraventions of wildlife legislation. Where the agencies fail to act the Trust may take proceedings against individuals or bodies who are alleged to have taken part in illegal activities.
2. On Trust reserves where significant damage to habitats, species, crops or forestry can be proved and control is necessary the Trust may sanction species control on a properly organised basis by experienced and qualified persons using legal and humane methods. Constraints on the control may be specified in terms of extent and timespan.
3. In the wider environment where significant damage to habitats, species, crops or forestry can be proved the Trust does not oppose species control on a properly organised basis by experienced and qualified persons using legal and humane methods.
4. Where legal species control in the wider environment is shown to threaten local or national populations of those species the Trust opposes that activity and may support efforts to provide legal protection for the population.

Procedure

1. Species control is regarded by the Trust as a “last resort” measure to deal with serious conservation management problems and/or legal requirements to control pests.
2. Methods of regulating the population by other means should always be considered before species control: For example, by habitat manipulation, altering access to food supply, adjusting natural predation levels. The aim is to achieve a self-regulating system that controls the species at an acceptable level and should be frequently reviewed.
3. There should be a convincing case that control of the species concerned will address the management problem that has been identified and that the chosen method of control is the only practical mechanism that would achieve this.
4. On Trust reserves where species control is to be considered a reasoned case will be presented in writing to Council or to any individuals who have been given delegated powers by Council for decisions in that policy area.

5. Any proposal to undertake species control should be adequately researched, be for a limited time-scale and have a monitoring mechanism built in.
6. Damage to habitats and their wildlife while carrying out species control will be minimised: For example, clearance of ride-side, bank-side and aquatic vegetation; use of herbicides and pesticides. The Trust will not permit the use of lead ammunition and lead shot on Trust nature reserves.
7. Disturbance to habitats and their wildlife while carrying out species control will be minimised: For example, shooting near heronries; disturbance of otter territories or breeding and wintering birds.
8. Any decision to subsequently undertake a further phase should be based on the assessment of the effectiveness and continued relevance of the previous phase.

August 2018