

Rural.committee@Parliament.Scot

21 June 2024

Dear Sir / Madam

CORRECTION TO ORAL EVIDENCE GIVE AT RAI COMMITTEE – 5 JUNE 2024

We are writing to correct a comment made in oral evidence to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee aquaculture inquiry session on 5 June 2024. Towards the end of the session John Aitchison, CCN stated *“Acoustic startle devices are now being developed—NatureScot is trialling them in Shetland rather quietly. The devices are not quiet, but the trial is being done rather quietly.”*

For clarity, NatureScot is not undertaking any trial of acoustic startle devices or acoustic deterrent devices (ADD's). NatureScot is the licensing authority for research, survey, education and conservation (non-commercial) purposes for an activity, which would otherwise be an offence, in relation to cetaceans in the inshore waters (up to 12nm). NatureScot derogates these activities under the [Conservation \(Natural Habitats, &c.\) Regulations 1994](#) (as amended). NatureScot, as the appropriate licensing authority, has licensed the use of acoustic devices in Shetland for the purpose of science and research undertaken by a research body which met the statutory licensing tests.

We would like to request that the committee is made aware of this correction as we do not wish them to be misled on NatureScot's role in this matter.

Please let me know if you have any follow-up queries in relation to this email.

Yours sincerely,

CATHY TILBROOK

Head of Sustainable Coasts & Seas
Cathy.Tilbrook@nature.scot