

Hunting for sustainability

The controversial and emotive topic of hunting will come under the spot-light in two major EC-funded projects recently awarded to researchers at the Macaulay.

“We will use hunting as a lens through which we will examine how people interact with biodiversity”

More than £3.2 million worth of projects will primarily be implemented through the Institute’s ACES partnership with Aberdeen University.

‘HUNT’ will assess the social, cultural, economic and ecological aspects of a variety of hunting traditions in both Europe and Africa. Working with partners in eight European and African countries, the project seeks to understand what influences attitudes to hunting, how these attitudes determine individual and societal behaviour, and finally, how hunting behaviour influences biodiversity.

Project leader Dr Simon Thirgood said: “Throughout the project we will use hunting as a ‘lens’ through which we will examine the wider issue of how people interact with biodiversity.

“The project results will be interpreted in respect to current and future EU policy on hunting and biodiversity conservation, and they will contribute to the global debate about the sustainable use of biodiversity.

‘HUNT’ is thus an extremely good fit to the Macaulay’s remit of providing the science base to underpin environmental sustainability.”

The project is financed by £2.3 million from the European Commission 7th Framework Programme and will involve several staff from the Macaulay Institute, as well as colleagues from the Universities of Aberdeen, Stirling, and London, and international partners from Norway, Sweden, Spain, Croatia, Slovenia, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

The second project, ‘Sustainable Hunting Tourism in Northern Europe’ plans to promote the development of sustainable hunting tourism to help diversify the economic activity of under-developed regions in Northern Europe.

According to Dr Thirgood, the project will focus on the international exchange of information and expertise on hunting tourism.

the University of Aberdeen, and international partners from Finland, Sweden, Iceland and Canada.

“These two projects are very complementary,” said Dr Thirgood, “as the first will provide much of the cutting-edge, interdisciplinary science to underpin EU policy on hunting, whereas the second is focussed mainly on interactions with European stakeholders – particularly the hunting



“This will reduce obstacles to entrepreneurship and enhance the activities of small businesses – as well as provoking discussion and raising awareness of the potential of tourism based on northern hunting cultures.”

As part of the process the project will create sustainable models for hunting tourism and tools for managing sustainability in different institutional settings.

This EC project is financed by £950,000 from their Intereg Northern Periphery Programme, and as well as Macaulay staff, it also involves

industry and the government organisations that regulate hunting.”

The projects provide an excellent opportunity to showcase the relevance of the research conducted at the Macaulay to the wider community of land-use stakeholders in Scotland, Europe and beyond, he added.

**For more information on these projects email
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A win-win situation?


Hare today...


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