Six general licences re-issued for the control of wild birds

Defra has today (18 June) announced that six general licences for the control of wild birds will be reissued on a temporary basis ahead of new licences coming into force on 1 January 2021.

The current licences GL26, GL28, GL31, GL34, GL35 and GL36 will be reissued from 1 August to 31 December. No action is required by licence users, beyond the ongoing requirement to act in accordance with the licence conditions.

Defra announced a longer-term review of general licensing in June 2019 which has made significant progress. The re-issue period is necessary to thoroughly analyse the evidence and to fully develop a general licensing solution for protected sites.

Defra is committed to achieving a general licensing regime for wild birds which is both robust and workable for users, ensuring that longer-term licensing arrangements are informed by the best available evidence. As part of the process, Defra will seek Natural England's statutory advice.

Defra intends to publish new licences in November to allow user groups to become acquainted with the changes before they officially come into force on 1 January 2021.

Environment Secretary George Eustice said:

> It is vital that we have a robust long-term licensing system which balances the needs of users and our wildlife. Our general licencing review has made significant progress, however more time is needed to ensure that we have carefully considered all of the relevant evidence, and to fully develop a general licensing solution for our protected sites.
>
> Our extensive consultation and review process will be completed in the coming months, with the new licences coming into force on 1 January 2021.

The general licences allow users to kill or take certain species of wild birds for a range of purposes such as the protection of livestock and crops, conservation, or public health and safety.

Following a legal challenge by Wild Justice in April 2019, Natural England revoked three general licences and subsequently issued three licences (GL26, GL28 and GL31) to cover some of the species and purposes covered by the original licences that were revoked. Defra subsequently issued three interim licences (GL34, 35 and 36) while the longer term licencing requirements were reviewed. NE's licences have remained in place, since they allow for

specified activity on European protected sites which are not covered by Defra's licences.

The six general licences are:

- Carrion crows: licence to kill or take them to prevent serious damage to livestock (GL26)
- Canada geese: licence to kill or take them for public health and safety (GL28)
- Woodpigeons: licence to kill or take them to prevent serious damage to crops (GL31)
- Licence to kill or take wild birds to conserve wild birds and to conserve flora and fauna (GL34)
- Licence to kill or take wild birds to preserve public health or public safety (GL35)
- Licence to kill or take wild birds to prevent serious damage to livestock, foodstuffs for livestock, crops, vegetables, fruit, growing timber, fisheries or inland waters (GL36)

Work of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine: UK statement

Thank you Mr Chairperson. I would like to thank Ambassador Villadsen for his detailed briefing on the work of the Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine (PCU).

We are a firm supporter of the PCU. They do excellent work with the Ukrainian government, including on key areas such as civil society engagement, humanitarian demining, and implementing reform across Ukraine. It is unfortunate that alongside other international organisations, their ability to operate throughout the entire territory of Ukraine is restricted due to Russian interference. The PCU also had to adapt its activities to the Covid-19 pandemic. I commend Ambassador Villadsen and his team's efforts to ensure staff are protected and projects continue during this difficult time.

We welcome the PCU's introduction of a Gender Strategy, which includes measures related both to internal Mission procedures and to the planning, implementation and evaluation of projects. It is important that gender mainstreaming is integrated into all aspects of the PCU's work in order to increase its effectiveness and beneficial impact. I am therefore pleased to note that the PCU continues to make progress on this area and has provided additional training to their staff on gender-related topics.

The PCU's decision to focus 2019 as the Year of Mediation reinforced the importance of drawing on expertise from government and civil society stakeholders. Last year the UK was proud to support the PCU's project on Dialogue Reform and Social Cohesion in Ukraine, which enabled the training of

9,000 Ukrainian civil servants on dialogue facilitation techniques. We welcome the continued work in this area to promote dialogue and build bridges by advancing national mediation, dialogue and school mediation in 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also resulted in increased risks to cyber security. The PCU's focus in this area is extremely timely as the Government of Ukraine seeks to enhance its cyber security capabilities. This year, the UK will support the PCU to train Ukrainian civil servants on cyber security and better address shared cyber security threats. These issues not only affect Ukraine, but also the UK and many other participating States in this Permanent Council.

Another issue that has confronted many States during the pandemic has been the sharp increase in violence against women and girls. We welcome the PCU's decision to strengthen their prevention work on domestic violence. Adapting prevention measures and ensuring continued accessibility of essential support and services at this time can be life-saving.

Humanitarian demining remains another crucial area of focus this year. We applaud the PCU's work on demining to strengthen national mine action authorities and ensure mine risk education is provided to affected communities. More so than ever, environmental risks should be addressed. Increased support to Ukrainian authorities on developing comprehensive legislation to improve chemical safety and security is a positive example of the PCU's engagement in Ukraine.

The UK remains committed to the long-term security, stability and prosperity of Ukraine. We commend the work of the PCU to promote reform across a broad range of issues, some of which have been highlighted today. We reiterate that the mandate of the PCU applies to all Ukrainian territory including in eastern Ukraine, and illegally annexed Crimea. We once again thank Ambassador Villadsen and his team for their work supporting Ukraine, and I wish them continued success.

AAIB Report: Boeing 737-4Q8, partial electrical failure

News story

A Boeing 737-4Q8 (G-JMCR) suffered a partial electrical failure resulting in the loss of a number of systems. The pilot declared a MAYDAY and proceeded to land but poor weather meant that visual references were lost during the approach. A go around was initiated followed by a successful second approach, 4 June 2019.

While descending to land at Brussels National Airport, a partial electrical failure occurred resulting in the loss of a number of systems including the electronic and analogue flight instruments on the left side of the cockpit. The pilot declared a MAYDAY and aware that a thunderstorm was approaching the airfield, assessed that the weather reported by Air Traffic Control (ATC) would allow him to continue and land at Brussels. However, visual references were lost at a late stage of the approach when the aircraft entered a heavy rain shower. A go-around was initiated during which the pilots estimated the amount of thrust required; the aircraft initially appeared to be slow to accelerate and establish a positive rate of climb. The aircraft entered an orbit and subsequently landed successfully from a second approach.

The electrical failure was caused by a fault in the transfer relay which resulted in the loss of power to a number of electrical buses. Following the electrical failure, the commander’s assessment was that the aircraft was in a stable condition so continued the approach to land at Brussels National Airport. This gave the pilots relatively little time to assess the situation and a number of non-normal checklists actions were not carried out; consequently, the aircraft was incorrectly configured for the approach and landing.

At a late stage of the approach the pilots lost visual references and executed a go-around. The aircraft then orbited while the thunderstorms cleared the airfield and the pilots used the time to further analyse the failure. The second approach and landing were uneventful.

Safety action has been taken by the operator to provide clarity in the aircraft documentation.

Read the report.

For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

Published 18 June 2020

AAIB Report: Cirrus SR22T, insufficient engine power on takeoff

News story

A Cirrus SR22T (2-RORO) produced varying amounts of power on takeoff, insufficient to allow the aircraft to climb away and it contacted power lines before pitching down and striking a dual carriageway, 12 May 2019.

On takeoff from Abergavenny Airfield the engine of a Cirrus SR22T (2-RORO) started to produce varying amounts of power, which the pilot and witnesses described as the engine “surging”. The power available was insufficient to allow the aircraft to climb away, and it contacted power lines before pitching down and striking a dual carriageway. The aircraft came to rest inverted and was quickly consumed by fire. All three occupants were helped to escape by a passing motorist and suffered only minor injuries.

The loss of engine power was probably caused by too much fuel being delivered to the cylinders. Due to the significant damage to the aircraft and parts of the engine, the investigation was unable to determine the cause of the over-fuelling because many components of the fuel system as well as the data recorder were not located or were destroyed in the post-impact fire.

Read the report.

For media enquiries, please call 01932 440015.

Published 18 June 2020

Government sets out plans to drive up smart meter installations

- Consumer safety at heart of new government plans to install smart meters in homes and businesses over 4 years
- ambitious future targets for smart meter installations to be set out for energy suppliers, while flexibility given around current targets due to the impact of lockdown restrictions
- smart meters key to UK reducing emissions and instrumental in cutting up to £16 billion off annual cost of delivering net zero emissions by 2050

The UK government today (18 June) set out new plans for the installation of smart meters in households across the country, ensuring that consumers continue to be able to cut their energy bills and carbon emissions as coronavirus lockdown measures are eased.

Installing smart meters could save savvy consumers up to £250 on their bills, while slashing countrywide carbon emissions by 45 million tonnes – the equivalent of taking 26 million cars off the road for a year.

Putting consumer safety first during this pandemic, energy suppliers are being granted an extra 6 months to ensure they have taken all reasonable measures to install smart meters in households and small businesses – making up for the reduced contact they have had with customers. New secondary legislation laid today will see a consultation with industry set strict future annual targets that could result in fines if missed.

Minister for Climate Change, Lord Callanan, said:

> Smart meters are playing an important role in helping the UK deliver a cleaner and more efficient energy system, with the added benefit of also saving tens of billions of pounds in the process.
>
> By allowing households to conveniently track their energy use, and prepayment customers to more easily top-up credit, we are working with industry to safely install even more across the country in a way that keeps consumers and suppliers safe.

The rollout of smart meters will represent up to £16 billion annual savings on the cost of reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 thanks to creating a more flexible, cleaner energy system, while small businesses with smart meters collectively save around £1.5 billion each year on their energy bills.

Smart meters are revolutionising the way consumers use electricity, including facilitating cheaper off-peak charging for electric vehicles, as well as boosting household incomes by helping renewable energy generators export green energy to the grid. Thanks to smart tariffs, smart meters have even led

to some customers getting paid to use electricity during windy days when there is excess clean energy in the system.

Energy suppliers have been ramping up installations, with 21.5 million smart and advanced meters already in homes and small businesses across Great Britain. This replacement of traditional gas and electricity meters with smart meters is an essential national infrastructure upgrade that is digitising Britain's energy system, so that it is cleaner, more flexible and saves consumers money. But the onset of the coronavirus crisis led to an inevitable drop in the rate of nationwide smart meter installations.

Since lockdown restrictions started easing, engineers have begun undertaking non-emergency installations of smart meters again in accordance with published guidance on safe working in other people's homes.

Government and Ofgem ensured that energy suppliers have the flexibility to prioritise essential and emergency metering work and focus on the needs of vulnerable customers. This has enabled them to have the safety, health and wellbeing of their customers and staff as their central priority when installing smart meters in homes.

Ambitious targets for individual suppliers will be agreed later this year following consultation, and will be implemented from July next year.

Until early March, around 19,000 smart meter installations were taking place each day. However, following public health advice in response to COVID-19, government and Ofgem ensured that energy suppliers had the flexibility to curtail smart meter installations, prioritise essential and emergency metering work, and support those in vulnerable circumstances in the communities they serve.

4 out of 5 people with a smart meter say it gives them a better idea of their energy costs and nearly two-thirds of people would recommend one to friends and family. Research conducted by Ipsos MORI on behalf of BEIS also shows that 9 in 10 are satisfied with the installation process.

The Committee on Climate Change have said that without the flexibility enabled by smart meters the cost of reaching net zero could be up to £16 billion a year more expensive than current estimates predict:

CCC Net zero technical report

Read the cost benefit analysis of the smart meter programme.

Read the government response to the Smart meter policy framework post 2020 consultation.

Respond to the Smart meter coordinated consumer engagement consultation – closes 13 August 2020.