

LMDP Director's Meeting – A progress report June 2013

The summer Langholm Moor Demonstration Project Director's meeting took place on 10 June 2013. This formal meeting reviewed the progress of the project to date. Habitat restoration is proceeding well and the Directors noted that at least two female hen harriers are nesting on the moor. The field staff highlighted the low overall density of grouse following several years of high overwinter mortality but were cautiously pleased with the grouse breeding performance this season.

The Directors, head gamekeeper, project manager and senior scientist also made a field excursion to the moor. The regeneration of the cut, burnt, sprayed and re-seeded plots was thought very impressive. The remarkable show of cotton-grass seed heads is a visible sign of the reduced over-winter grazing, as are limited but visible signs of heather recovery on non-sprayed, grass-dominated areas of the moor. A male harrier was seen hunting over the hill close to feeding posts. The visit ended with an inspection of the hill road work which will improve access for the keeping team to the remoter parts of the moor.

Mark Oddy, current chairman of the LMDP Board of Directors said: "The board's meeting was a constructive assessment of the project's performance on the ground and financially. The moor's habitat is looking very well under the traditional and novel management actions and we are pleased there are harriers successfully nesting. Our concerns remain with the grouse population. The current field work and proposals for tracking of ravens and buzzards is of considerable interest. It will help us understand how important predator numbers and behaviour are in affecting other bird populations on the moor."