

At the presentations by Richard Birnie, Digger Jackson, and Peter Cosgrove on Wednesday 17 November 2010 organised by the Wind Farm Supporters Group but paid for by Viking Energy, a question was addressed to the ornithology and habitat management experts. This referred to the developer actively preventing birds entering their breeding areas before the breeding season began. They replied this would not be the case, at which point the following was quoted back to them.

"3.3.3. Deterrence Methods

3.3.3.1. *Where deterrence is considered to be a viable option at a particular construction site, measures will be put in place as required, to deter target species from settling so close to the site that they would be disturbed by activities there (generally within 300m). The most cost-effective technique to move birds further away from sites would be the installation of iridescent reflective tapes, a method which has been applied successfully elsewhere. Tapes will be stretched between posts, across the area of the relevant construction site. This area will then be monitored daily, to ensure that deterrence has been effective. If birds continue to visit the exclusion zone, additional tape or more conspicuous items such as revolving reflective discs will be installed."*

In other words Viking Energy will deter birds from their breeding areas prior to breeding, in this way they will technically avoid disturbing Schedule 1 breeding birds by displacing them from their traditional breeding areas. What this means in terms of where these birds will go and how they will be monitored is anybody's guess; it amounts to a form of ornithological ethnic cleansing. These rare breeding bird populations will be irreparably disturbed. In my view it is questionable if this is legal, surely actively preventing birds returning to their traditional breeding grounds constitutes deliberate disturbance?

When this was read out the response was, "where are you getting that from?"

This sits in the Addendum - Volume 4 - Appendices - Site Environmental Management Plan - Technical Schedule - No 8. Apparently the 'experts' did not even know this method statement existed!

Planning Board Chairman Frank Robertson will be familiar with the strict conditions placed on the current renewable works on Foula, where no work is allowed in the hill during the bird-breeding season. Similarly some years ago in Out Skerries when the turbine was erected for the hall I believe no work was allowed during the bird-breeding season. It seems these conditions do not apply when you want to industrialise the central mainland of Shetland!

If anyone is still labouring under the illusion that this wind farm can be built sympathetically within the landscape, and with no significant effect on this nationally important bird population - think again!

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