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**Ecology and conservation of birds in upland and alpine habitats**

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**The role of ecology in addressing conflicts over upland birds**

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Conservation conflicts are pervasive across the world, and the uplands of the UK are no exception. They occur when parties have different strongly held views of conservation and when one party acts against the interest of another. The standard model for dealing with these problematic issues is an "information-deficit" approach, whereby we use data to understand the ecological basis of conflicts and then improve communication to explain the data, raise awareness, develop effective policies and change the behaviour of those people involved in the conflict. Unfortunately this approach can prove ineffective or, worse still, can aggravate conflicts. We will explore what ecology can contribute constructively to our understanding and management of conflict, and some of the reasons why ecological input into conflicts can fail. We will illustrate these arguments with examples from studies on conflicts over upland birds and in particular the ongoing and challenging conflict over Hen Harriers *Circus cyaneus* on moorland managed for Red Grouse *Lagopus l. scoticus* shooting. We will end by considering alternative models for tackling such conflicts.