



- Bringing Back Our Lost Eagles

By Sophie-lee Williams



Aim: Assess if modern Wales can still sustain both the Golden and White-tailed Eagle?



- HOW do we go about a re-introduction?



- WHY are we proposing a re-introduction for Wales?



- WHAT do we need to consider?



- WHEN will a re-introduction happen?



Meet the Eagles- Two of our own!

Golden Eagle

Aquila chrysaetos



The Golden Eagle is part of the 'booted' or 'true' eagle genera. All booted eagles have feathered legs down to the toes, and are known for their dynamic flight and rapacious hunting techniques.

Weight: ♀ 11 ½ lb and ♂ 8 lb

Wingspan: ♀ 7 ft and ♂ 6 ½ ft

UK Population: Scotland (CE) and Ireland (R)

Habitat: Remote cliffs or mountains

Prey: Medium sized prey - Rabbits and Hares & birds

White-tailed Eagle

Haliaeetus ablicilla



The White-tailed Eagle is part of the 'sea' eagle genera. Sea eagles are known for their broad wings, huge yellow bills and a pale/white head. Many are Kleptoparasites who steal prey from other predators.

Weight: ♀ 15 lb and ♂ 10 lb

Wingspan: ♀ 8 ¼ ft and ♂ 7 ft

UK Population: Scotland (R) and Ireland (R)

Habitat: Coastal, Islands and Wetlands

Prey: Fish, water-birds and carrion

How do we go about a re-introduction?

How: to plan a reintroduction?

- Reintroduction programmes are strict, highly regulated, licencing processes

- Licence application reports usually need to address -

- **Biological feasibility** - can reintroduced eagles biologically survive in modern Wales?
- **Environmental feasibility** - can the modern Welsh landscape hold two restored eagle species?
- **Social & Political feasibility** - will restoring eagles fit into modern community structure and ethics?
- **Economic feasibility** - costs and benefits of restoring eagles in Wales?
- **Risk assessments** - advantages and disadvantages of bringing eagles back to Wales?

- Reintroduction Licence applications are different for every species!



Guidelines for Reintroductions and
Other Conservation Translocations



IUCN/SSC (2013). *Guidelines for Reintroductions and Other Conservation Translocations*. Version 1.0. Gland, Switzerland: IUCN Species Survival Commission.

Why propose a re-introduction?

Why: Is a re-introduction the most acceptable option?

1. Cause of extinction and has this cause been reduced or eliminated?

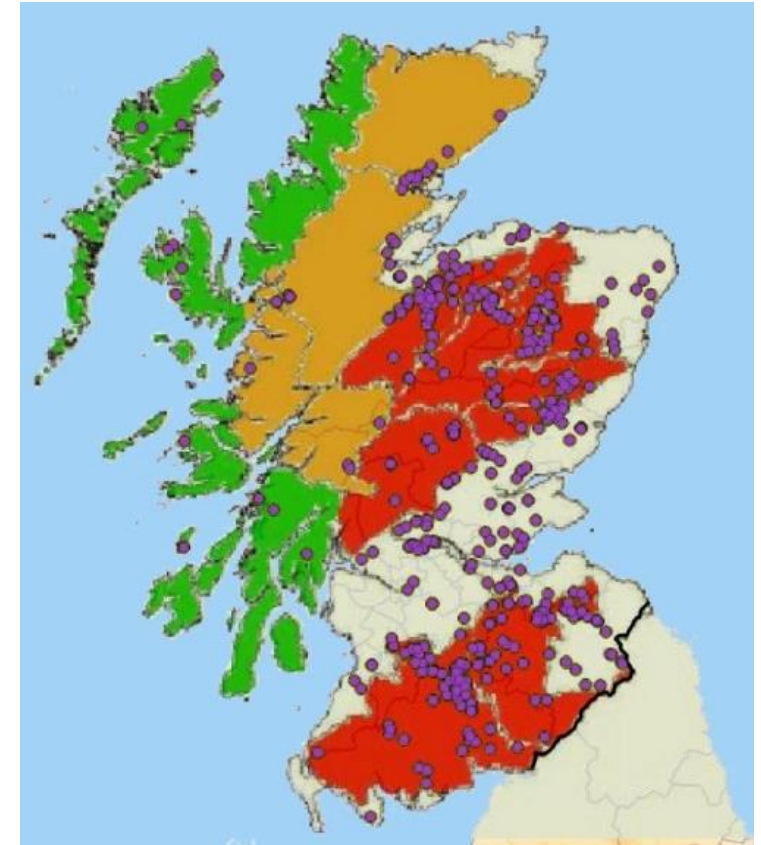
- The Golden and White-tailed Eagle fell victim to ruthless hunting
- Eagles were wiped out of the welsh landscape by 1860
- There is evidence of a change in public attitude around persecution

2. Distribution and abundance of eagles in Britain?

- The Golden and White-tailed Eagle occupy ranges of Scotland and Ireland
- White-tailed eagles: 106 pairs in Scotland and 10 pairs in Ireland
- Golden eagles: 508 pairs in Scotland and 1-3 pairs in Ireland

3. Potential of natural colonisation to Wales?

- It has been estimated that 40-60 eagles are killed every year!
- There is little possibility of natural colonisation to Wales

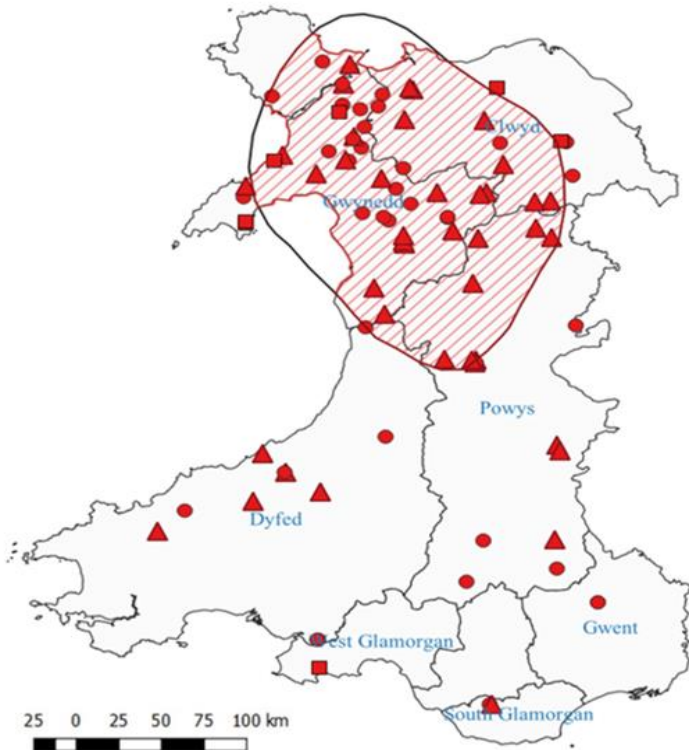


The distribution of adult White-tailed Eagles in Great Britain.
[Available at: <http://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/wildlife-guides/birds-of-the-year/white-tailed-eagle/>]

What do we need to consider about the Welsh Landscape?

Where: eagles were historically distributed in Wales?

The Historic distribution of Golden Eagles in Wales



Williams et al. 2018 (in prep)

Welsh Eagle history has always been a mystery

- Lack of eagle records for Wales (n=25)
- Not enough information for a reintroduction

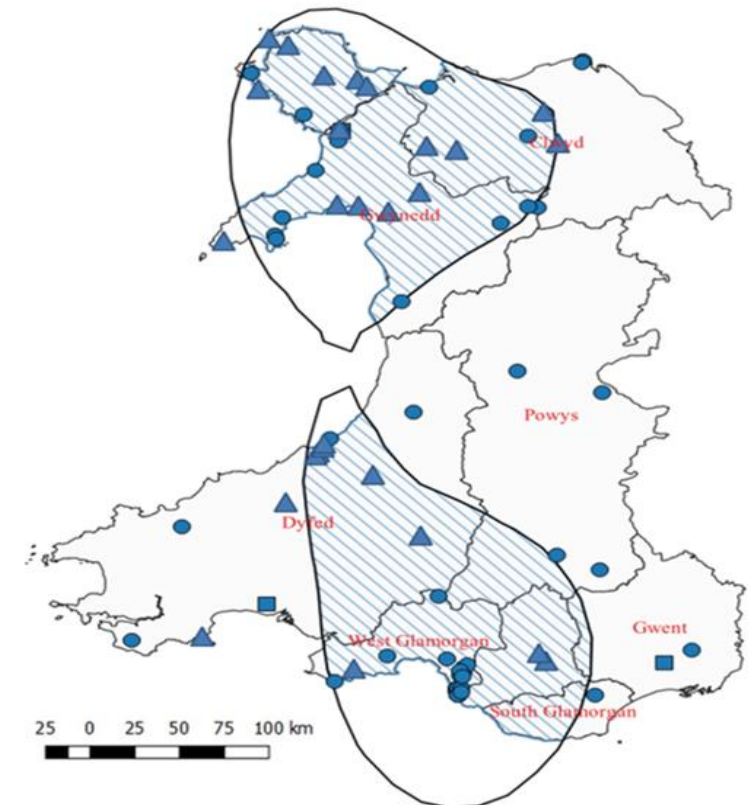
<<GE<< Now things have changed! >>WTE>>

We now hold sufficient historic data (n=166)

- 85 Golden Eagle records
- 77 White-tailed Eagle records
- Golden Eagles occurred mostly in North Wales
- White-tailed Eagles have a much wider distribution

We are now aiming for a 'Mitigation Reintroduction'
– to restore both eagles within their native ranges in
Wales.

The Historic distribution of White-tailed Eagles in Wales



Williams et al. 2018 (in prep)

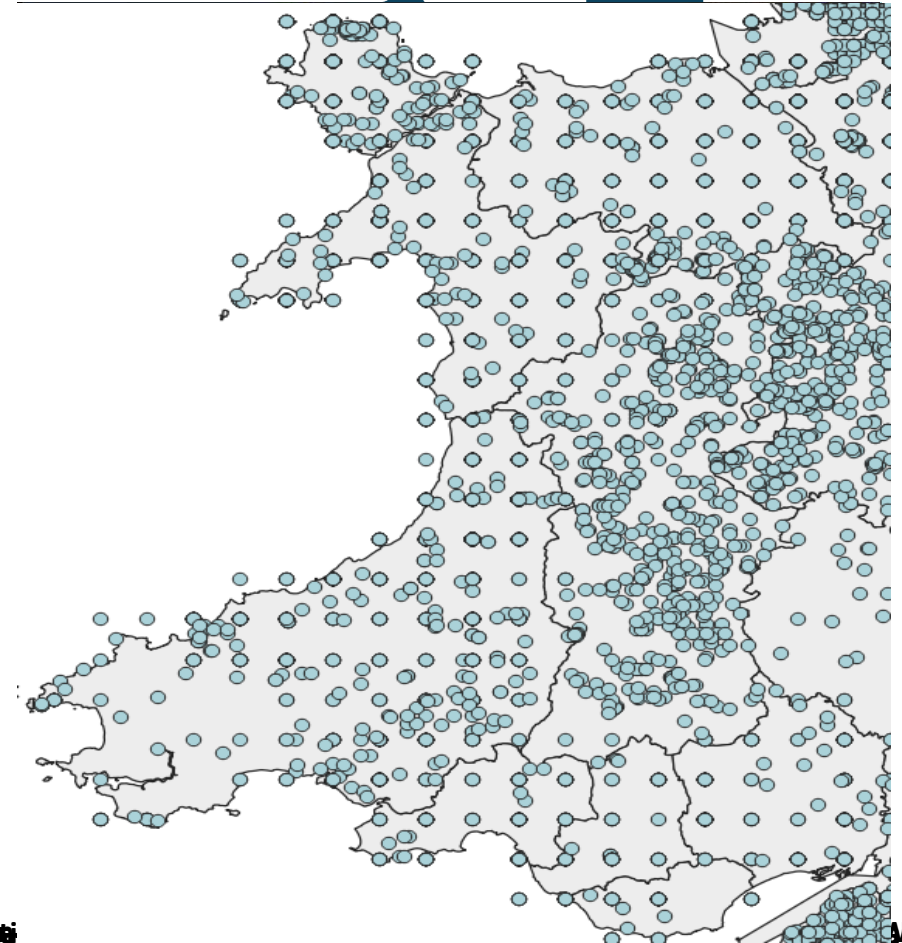
What do we need to consider about the Welsh landscape?

What: suitable habitat is available for Eagles to use?

- The Total terrestrial surface of Wales is 20,641 km² :-
 - 5,201 km²- Moors and Heathland (25.2%)
 - 8,669 km² - Coastal and Wetland (42%)

There are 6 environmental risk factors that we need to consider:

- 1,589 km² - Commercial forestry plantations (7.7 %)
- 9,763 km² - Livestock Farming (47.3%)
- 1,238 km² - Human population including recreation (6%)
- Hazardous obstacles (n = 587 windfarms operating)
- Persecution and land use (46 incidents 2012-2017)
- Prey



When will a reintroduction happen?

When: will eagles be released back to Wales?

“Dream big, start small, act now, but most of all, start!”

Manage people expectations!

Roy Dennis MBE

We will probably not see regular sightings of eagles soaring the skies of Wales within the next decade!





Thank you for listening!

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