# Sea eagles threaten lambs on Uist farm as farmer voices concerns



A heartbreaking incident unfolded on a farm in Uist, Outer Hebrides, when Duncan Maclean, a part-time farmer, witnessed two sea eagles snatching his newborn lambs. The event occurred on a Friday morning while Maclean was tending to his ewes. The 40-year-old farmer had noticed the increasing threat posed by the sea eagles, or white-tailed eagles, which have become more prevalent in the area since their reintroduction from Norway in 2007.

Maclean reported that he has already lost approximately six lambs to these birds of prey this season, with the financial loss amounting to £80-100 per lamb. He expressed his frustration at the sight of the eagles carrying off his prized animals, stating, "It's very frustrating and disheartening to see. We knew it had been happening because we notice the missing lambs but actually seeing it made me angry," as quoted in the Daily Mail.

The incident highlights a troubling trend for rural farmers like Maclean, who manage a modest herd of around 200 ewes and 10 cows. He explained that losing a significant number of lambs has considerable repercussions for a small operation such as his. "We're not a big patch... so losing this many lambs has a big impact on us," he remarked.

Maclean’s observations indicate a shift in the behaviour of the sea eagles over the years. He noted that the birds were not a significant problem when he began farming; however, their population seems to have exploded, leading to multiple eagles being sighted in the skies simultaneously. "It used to not be an issue at all. I remember starting to see one or two about five years ago but there still wasn't a big problem. These days you will see multiple in the air at any one time," he commented.

Moreover, Maclean has identified a particular hunting strategy employed by the sea eagles. They appear to target ewes delivering twins, swooping down to capture the firstborn lamb while the mother is distracted by birthing the second. He observed, "We've had ewes who have scanned showing twin lambs and then when we have checked on them after giving birth, there's only one lamb."

Despite attempts to mitigate the situation—including relocating the sheep to different fields and employing scare tactics such as scarecrows—Maclean indicated that the eagles are not easily deterred. "It feels like the eagles have just been far too successful in their reintroduction," he said. The situation reflects a growing concern among local farmers, with Maclean concluding that he is not alone in facing the challenges presented by these birds of prey.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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