

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

CONFIDENTIAL

Title of Report: Licence to shoot Crested Caracara (Caranchos) at Teal Inlet

Paper No: 171/10

Date: 29 July 2010

Report of: Environmental Planning Officer/ Head of Policy Unit

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek authority to issue a licence to shoot up to six Crested Caracara at Teal Inlet settlement.

2.0 Recommendation

A licence request by Ms Kristiane Thorsen to shoot up to 6 Crested Caracara at Teal Inlet over a two month period be approved.

3.0 Summary of Financial Implications - None

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Members may recall approving an application to shoot 6 Crested Caracara at Teal Inlet at the meeting in April (Ref NAT 10/1). The licence was implemented in full and temporarily solved the problem.
- 3.2 However, the applicant (Teal Inlet resident Ms Kristiane Thorsen) has recently reported further harassment of her ewe flock by Crested Caracara. Up to 40 birds are congregated in the trees in the settlement in the early morning and late evening. The same pattern took place last winter. Some of last winters group have remained in the settlement and it is likely that the numbers present will increase.
- 3.3 Ms Thorsen has tried several different techniques to scare the birds away from her sheep, including firing different weapons in close proximity to the birds. None of these have succeeded in moving them away for any period of time.
- 3.4 Ms Thorsen has been issued with several licences to shoot Crested Caracara previously, the one in April 2010, two last winter and one in the winter of 2008. A total of 6 Crested Caracara were shot over the past 2 months. 14 Crested Caracara were permitted to be shot at Teal Inlet last year, although only 4 birds were destroyed. In the last two winters the numbers of caracara has increased steadily over the winter to over 70 birds being present. Ms

Thorsen provided photographs of the damage done to her sheep last year – with images of two ewes and five lambs that were killed by the Crested Caracara at Teal Inlet. These images are available from EPD on request.

- 3.5 Crested Caracara are known to group together, particularly in winter months and often move into camp settlements to access food sources. They often move away from settlements by the end of the lambing period – around October. It is believed to be unusual for them to gather in the numbers reported at Teal Inlet and cause the levels of damage reported.

4.0 Proposed action

- 4.1 The request was forwarded to the raptor control consultation group (comprising representatives from the Agricultural Department, Rural Business Association, Falklands Conservation and the Tourist Board) for views. The group support the licence application.
- 4.2 Our understanding of Crested Caracara numbers and behaviour is lacking and the Environmental Planning Department is now working with Falklands Conservation to develop a better understanding of this species and enable a more informed response to requests to shoot them.
- 4.3 It is proposed that a licence be issued for 6 birds to be shot over two months. It will be made clear in the licence that the birds are only to be shot when threatening or attacking sheep. It is hoped that the culling of a proportion of Crested Caracara will scare the remaining birds away, and thereby save having to kill a larger number this winter. This figure has been endorsed by the raptor control consultation group.

5.0 Future delegation of licences to shoot Crested Caracara

- 5.1 At its meeting on 29 April 2010 ExCo instructed me (NAT 10/1) to prepare a report on the delegation of licences to shoot Crested Caracara. A paper setting out proposals was due to be considered by the Environmental Committee on 27 July 2010 and, if approved, will come before Executive Council next month.

6.0 Financial Implications – none.

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 A licence is required under the Conservation, Wildlife and Nature Ordinance 1999, otherwise the shooting of the birds is illegal. The EPO currently has delegated powers to approve licence requests to shoot Turkey Vultures but not other species, such as Crested Caracara, which is why this ExCo paper is required.

8.0 Human Resources Implications – none.