

Adam Watson – North East RSG

Adam Watson learnt of Golden Eagles in the eastern Cairngorms from Seton Gordon during the early 1940s. This led him to establish the longest continuous monitoring programme of Golden Eagles in Scotland. He published on the breeding success of Golden Eagles in the 1950s and on the effects of variation in their food supply in the 1960s long before the concept of Raptor Study Groups had evolved. He was a founding member of the one of the first Raptor Study Groups in Scotland (North East) which was set up to increase co-ordination of visits by members to reduce disturbance and to improve coverage. Throughout his professional life Adam Watson studied members of the grouse family, providing, with colleagues at ITE and later CEH, much of the basis of our understanding of the population dynamics of this, one of the most important bird groups (both as a prey item and socio-economically) in the uplands of Scotland. Indeed, his New Naturalist monograph on the grouse, written with his colleague Robert Moss, was the bestselling bird book in 2008. In the 1980s he published important research into prey, effects of land use and spacing of Golden Eagle nests in the eastern highlands. He is an outstanding field worker, passionate conservationist and a scholar, who has written 22 books and more than 200 scientific publications. As the longest active raptor worker in Scotland he was a truly worthy recipient of the Scottish Raptor Study Group's first Donald and Jeff Watson Raptor Award in 2009.