

## **Justin Grant 2018**

Justin's introduction to the world of raptor research happened largely by chance as he returned from working in Africa to continue his studies at the University in Edinburgh, to find he had become Mike McGrady's landlord! (while he had been in Africa his sister had answered Mike's advert looking for accommodation, and Mike had moved into a vacant room in their flat).

Justin went on to work with Mike in Argyll studying the range-use of territorial golden eagles. This work was difficult and there were many challenges to overcome, not least of which were the terrain and weather. Justin's dogged determination, ingenuity and seemingly endless energy were a perfect match. His skills with a radio receiver have become legendary and he has been a key part of many raptor re-introduction projects that have relied on this technique to monitor the fates of their birds.

As well as radio tracking, Justin is expert in a wide array of specialist skills – climbing, satellite tagging, ringing (and training ringers), prey identification and kayaking. He has passed many of these skills on to others in the raptor world, having shared his wealth of experience with a healthy dose of encouragement to any and all.

Justin is a really key part of raptor research in Scotland and there is seemingly no site too remote or nest too hard to access. For those that need specialist help, whether it is locating a radio transmitter, accessing a difficult nest or fitting a satellite transmitter to an eagle on a remote island only accessible by kayak, Justin is your man.

Although Justin's name is synonymous with eagles, particularly sea eagles, for which species he has been the backbone of fieldwork for the last 20 years, he has been behind the scenes quietly helping with many projects and carrying out his own monitoring of a wide variety of species. He is an unsung hero of the raptor world, quietly getting on with it. His efforts and achievements have often gone un-noticed as he often keeps out of the limelight. This rare combination of skills,

determination and willingness to share these with others makes Justin a deserving candidate for the Donald and Jeff Watson raptor award.

**Ewan Weston and Robin Reid January 2018**