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Finlay Carson MSP
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
The Scottish Parliament
EDINBURGH
EH99 1SP

14 April 2023

Dear Finlay,

WILDLIFE CRIME ANNUAL REPORT 2021

I am writing to inform the Committee that we have today laid the Wildlife Crime in Scotland: 2021 annual report before the Scottish Parliament as required by section 26B of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The report will also be published on the Scottish Government website.

You will be aware that the Act requires that the report be produced every year. This meant that this report was due at the end of 2022. I regret that we have missed that deadline this year as a result of staffing pressures.

Wildlife Crime Report – Transition to official statistics for future reports

To date this report has been prepared by Scottish Government policy officials and routinely includes a Ministerial Foreword. Given the statistical content of the report, and based on advice from the Chief Statistician for Scotland, it is considered more appropriate for the publication to be published as official statistics in the future. Official statistics are produced by government analysts in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics with the intention of providing the public with assurance around the quality and trustworthiness of statistical publications. This improved approach is consistent with our obligations under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

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Future reports will be produced as official statistics by the Rural & Environmental Science and Analytical Services division. Analysts will engage closely with policy colleagues and other stakeholders to ensure the content of the publication continues to meet the needs of users. It is not envisaged that there will be substantial changes to the content of the report, however there will be some adjustments to processes around it, including introducing pre-release protocols around its publication.

It is anticipated that a policy statement will be published at the same time as the official statistics publication.

Yours sincerely,



MAIRI GOUGEON

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