

Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity
Ministear an Àiteachais agus Ceangal
Jim Fairlie MSP
Jim Fairlie BPA



T: 0300 244 4000
E: scottish.ministers@gov.scot

Finlay Carson
Convener
Rural Affairs and Islands Committee
rural.committee@parliament.scot

06 January 2025

Dear Convener,

Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Act – section 6 prohibition of use of snares

Thank you for your letter of 12 November 2024 regarding the Wildlife Management (Consequential Amendments) (Scotland) Regulations 2024.

You have asked for the Scottish Government to clarify a number of points raised in your letter. I have responded to each of these in turn below.

You asked *when the Scottish Government will be issuing communications to stakeholders providing information on the courses available which highlight alternative forms of predator control.*

The Scottish Government emailed all key stakeholders on 25 September 2024 to notify them that the prohibition on the use of snares would come into effect on 25 November 2024. Further to this, NatureScot posted communications on their social media accounts on 20 November 2024. As part of these communications NatureScot included the main organisations they have worked with on predator control training courses which train practitioners on alternatives available. This included the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust and the Scottish Gamekeepers Association.

You asked *about the established ground nesting bird surveys which will continue to monitor the population trends of these species, and for further information on the science and data used as part of these surveys and which will provide a benchmark against which to measure future population trends.*

The Breeding Birds Survey (BBS) will be the main survey used to monitor the population trends of the ground nesting species such as curlew, lapwing and golden plover. The BBS is the main

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[™]
We invest in people Silver



scheme for monitoring the population changes of the UK's common and widespread breeding birds, producing population trends for 118 bird and nine mammal species.

The Breeding Bird Survey started in 1994, and a report is produced every year containing population changes and other results from the scheme.

Further information on the science and data collection for the BBS can be found on the British Trust for Ornithology webpages here: [Breeding Bird Survey | BTO - British Trust for Ornithology](#)

The Scottish Government may also commission or consider other research which looks at population trends of ground nesting birds as part of its decision-making regarding legislation which affects predator control methods.

You asked for further information relating to what consideration the Scottish Government gave at the time the snaring ban amendments were lodged, on the impact of the ban on land managers and predation control.

The Scottish Government gathered and analysed a significant amount of information on the impact of a ban of the use of snares on land managers and predation control. I have summarised the main pieces of information considered prior to making the decision to ban the use of snares:

1. Alongside a report provided by the Scottish Animal Welfare Commission, the Scottish Government asked the Rural and Environment Land Management Group for a report on its perspectives on the use of snares for predator control in Scotland. The final report was provided to the Scottish Government in September 2022 and formed part of the decision-making process on whether to ban the use of snares in Scotland.
2. On 22 August 2023 we published a consultation which ran until 03 October 2023, seeking views on the use of snares in Scotland. The consultation received 5289 responses, and the findings were considered fully. The analysis from the consultation was published on 07 November 2023: [Wildlife Management and Muirburn \(Scotland\) Bill - use of snares and powers of Scottish SPCA inspectors: consultation analysis - gov.scot](#)
3. On 26 September 2023 the Minister for Energy and Environment, Gillian Martin hosted a roundtable event where stakeholders with land management interests were invited to discuss the use of "humane cable restraints" as an alternative to older versions of snares. The discussion formed part of our consideration of what impact the use of snares ban would have on land managers and predation control.

I hope this clarifies the Scottish Government's position.

Yours sincerely,



JIM FAIRLIE

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See www.lobbying.scot

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG
www.gov.scot

INVESTORS IN PEOPLE[™]
We invest in people Silver

