

Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

19th Meeting, 2023 (Session 6), Wednesday, 21 June

Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

1. The [Wildlife Management and Muirburn \(Scotland\) Bill](#) was introduced on 21 March 2023 and referred to this Committee for Stage 1 scrutiny. The deadline for Stage 1 is 6 October 2023.
2. The policy memorandum states the purpose of the bill is “to address raptor persecution and ensure that the management of grouse moors and related activities are undertaken in an environmentally sustainable and welfare conscious manner”.
3. The Bill contains three parts. Part 1 relates to wildlife management and how wild animals may be captured and killed; namely—
 - **Bans the use, possession and purchase of glue traps (sections 1-3).** The policy memorandum refers to the Scottish Government seeking an exemption from the UK Internal Market Act 2020 to allow the Scottish Government to ban the sale of glue traps in Scotland and states that, if an exemption is allowed, relevant amendments would be laid at Stages 2 or 3;
 - **Introduces a licensing system for the use of certain wildlife traps (sections 4-5).** The policy memorandum refers to the on-going review of the impacts of snaring on land management and animal welfare and states that “in order to allow sufficient time for analysis of the ... wider review to be completed, the Scottish Government intends to introduce provisions on snaring at Stage 2”;
 - **Introduces a licensing system for land on which certain birds (currently only proposed to include red grouse) may be killed or taken (sections 6-7);** and
 - **Extends the investigatory powers of inspectors under the Animal Health and Welfare (Scotland) Act 2006 (section 8).** The policy memorandum refers to the review of Scottish SPCA powers that has been undertaken by the Scottish SPCA taskforce and states that “if a decision is made to extend the powers of the Scottish SPCA to investigate wildlife crime then the Scottish Government will bring forward further provisions by amendment at Stage 2”.

4. Part 2 (sections 9-19) extends the existing muirburn licensing system to require a licence all year round, with different licence conditions depending on whether this is carried out in muirburn season (1 October to 15 April), outwith muirburn season or on peatland.
5. Part 3 (sections 20-28) relates to enforcement, as well as miscellaneous and general provisions.
6. The Bill seeks to implement the recommendations made by the independent [Grouse Moor Management Review Group which reported](#) in November 2019. The [Scottish Government consulted](#) on the Bill's provisions between 26 October and 8 December 2022 and an [analysis of responses to the Scottish Government's consultation](#) was published on 3 April 2023.

Written evidence

7. The Committee issued a call for views which ran between 31 March and 5 May 2023. Nearly 5,700 responses were received; 100 of these were from organisations or businesses, the remainder from individuals.
8. A [summary of all responses has been produced by SPICe and PACT](#) (the participation and communities team). The [responses from organisations or businesses](#) have been published in full.

Oral evidence

9. The agreed timetable for consideration of the Bill is provided below—

31 May	Official report for the evidence from the Scottish Government bill team
14 June	Evidence from members of the Grouse Moor Management Review Group; and Roundtable focusing on sections 1-3 (glue traps); sections 4-5 (wildlife traps) and section 8 (SSPCA powers)
19 June	Fact finding visit to Roxburghe Estate
21 June	Roundtable focusing on sections 6-7 (grouse moor licensing); then Roundtable focusing on sections 9-19 (muirburn licensing)
28 June	Evidence from the Cabinet Secretary for Rural Affairs, Land Reform and Islands
6 Sept	Consideration of draft report
13 Sept	Consideration and agreement of draft report

**Rural Affairs and Islands Committee clerks
June 2023**