



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## Rural Affairs and Islands Committee

Jim Fairlie, Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity  
Scottish Government

7 October 2024

Dear Minister,

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

The [Wildlife Management \(Consequential Amendments\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2024](#) were laid on 30 September and will be considered by the Committee on 6 November.

In advance of our consideration, it would be helpful if you could provide information about how the Scottish Government is supporting land managers transition to other forms of predator control and what plans it has in place to monitor the impact of the ban.

By way of background, in our [stage 1 report on the Wildlife Management and Muirburn \(Scotland\) Bill](#) we reported that—

394) Land management organisations and the GWCT told the Committee that limiting the options available to them to control predators would damage rural and farming businesses, for example sheep farming, as well as biodiversity and, in particular, ground-nesting birds. Animal welfare organisations stressed the need for a more fundamental shift towards a different approach to land management, although the GWCT highlighted this is a long-term goal and recommended the continued use of modified cable restraints in the short-term. NatureScot emphasised the complexity of understanding the relationship between predator control and ground-nesting birds and said the risk of removing snaring in relation to conservation had not been quantified. NatureScot also referred to alternative methods being available.

The Committee went on to recommend on-going monitoring of the effectiveness of alternative methods of predation control and for the Scottish Government to set out how it would support land managers' transition away from the use of snares.

In [her response, the then Minister for Energy and the Environment](#) said that, “while the removal of snaring as a predator control option will reduce options for some land managers, few land managers rely heavily on it, and most land managers instead use shooting as their only or main method of fox or rabbit control. I am therefore

satisfied that alternative methods of predator control are and will continue to be available”.

She went on to say that, “as I set out in my evidence session to the Committee I am committed to on-going monitoring of the impact of all of the provisions in the Bill, including the impact of the ban on the use of snares on both land managers and wildlife. I agree with the Committee that, should Parliament agree to ban the use of snares, it will be important that land managers are supported to transition to other methods of predator control and to adapt their practices to minimise the risks to biodiversity. I have asked government officials and NatureScot to take this forward directly with stakeholders.”

In addition, the Committee has received a [letter on 4 October from a number of land management organisations](#) in which they raise concerns over the decision not to provide a BRIA with this instrument. It would be helpful, therefore, if you could also provide information explaining the reasons for this decision.

**It would be helpful if you could provide a response by Monday 28 October.**

Yours sincerely,



**Finlay Carson MSP  
Convener**