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Frank McAveety MSP
Convenor
Public Petitions Committee
Scottish Parliament

PE1124/S



homecomingscotland2009.com
An Tilleadh Albannach 2009

6 October 2009

Dear Frank,

PE1124: SNARING

I am writing in response to the letter from the Clerk to the Public Petitions Committee seeking further information in response to points considered by the Committee, dated 9 September 2009.

Firstly, you asked whether the proposed Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill (WANE) will contain provisions which will impact on the manufacture, sale, possession and use of snares, and if so, what these provisions will be. It is intended to introduce 2 provisions in the WANE Bill. These proposed provisions aim to strengthen the current policy of snaring in Scotland by making it a specific offence to tamper with a legally set snare, and to introduce an accreditation scheme for operators of snares.

Specifically, we propose to introduce;

- a new offence of tampering with a lawfully set snare. We wish to make it quite clear that snaring when properly carried out is a legitimate countryside management tool, and it is not acceptable for those who disagree with it to damage or remove lawfully set snares. It is also the case that tampering with a snare could conceivably lead to injury to an animal caught in the snare.
- a new land management industry accreditation scheme, which aims to ensure that within a fixed period everyone who sets a snare will require to have received training in best practice and the law - eventually no one without such training will be allowed to set a snare. This will raise the standard of operation of snaring activities across Scotland to improve the welfare of animals caught in snares.

You also asked whether the Scottish Government will produce statistics to demonstrate whether and how the measures to be introduced have led to;

- a) reductions in the number of 'non-target' animals being caught in both legal and illegal snares
- b) reductions in the number and use of illegal snares

and also

- c) How many animals were trapped in legal/illegal snares over the last 12 months and how many of these were animals for which the snare was designed?

The Scottish Government does not hold any information on these points you have raised above. There is no legal requirement for snaring operators to record numbers of target or non-target species caught, although the best practice guide "Snaring in Scotland – A Practitioners' Guide, recommends that a daily diary should record the success of individual snares.

You also asked if the Scottish Government would produce statistics to show if there has been an increases in the number of prosecutions for setting and using illegal snares since 2008. This data is not yet available. The latest figures we have are for 2007/8.

You also asked how does the number of predators caught in legal and illegal snares compare with other predatory control measures. Again, the Scottish Government does not hold this information for the same reasons given above. As we have previously noted, shooting and snaring are the two most common forms of fox control. The choice of using the method of snares or shooting is dependant on several factors including the topography of the land and also the season in which the control is being carried out.

In the original consultation on snaring in 2006, the majority of responses supported a ban.

Finally, you asked when the Scottish Government will next review its decision not to ban snares. The Scottish Government has no plans to review the practice of snaring as a land management tool.

Yours
Roseanna

ROSEANNA CUNNINGHAM MSP