



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Stuart Earley
Chief Executive
SSPCA

c/o Clerk to the Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
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Via email only

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18 January 2016

Dear Mr. Earley,

Scottish Government's Wildlife Crime in Scotland - 2014 Annual Report

The Scottish Parliament's Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment (RACCE) Committee took evidence from Police Scotland and the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) on the Scottish Government's Wildlife Crime in Scotland 2014 Annual Report¹ on 13 January 2016².

At this meeting, the panel were asked about the role of the SSPCA in the investigation of Wildlife Crime. Specific reference was made to two issues:

- The outcome of the Scottish Government's consultation on extending the role of the SSPCA in this area;
- The reduction in the number of cases reported for prosecution by the SSPCA to the COPFS each year.

Table 11 of the 2014 Annual Report details the number of cases reported by the SSPCA to COPFS, showing this has reduced from 36 in 2009-10 to 18 in 2013-14. However, Tom Dysart, of the Wildlife and Environment Crime Unit at COPFS, said the number of cases reported to them in 2013-14 was 10 according to their records.

¹ Scottish Government (2015). Wildlife Crime in Scotland - 2014 Annual Report. <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2015/09/6676>

² RACCE Committee, Official Report, 13 January 2016: <http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10314> The video is available to watch here: <http://www.scottishparliament.tv/Archive/Index/19f1a72a-7f47-4144-9624-e6b161e0969e?Area=&categoryId=e63c0ca2-800b-462c-b39e-813ee9e06cb7&parentCategoryClicked=False&pageNumber=0&orderByField=PlayCount&queryOrder=ASC>

The Committee would be grateful if you could clarify which of these figures is accurate and account for the discrepancy between the figure provided by the SSPCA to the Scottish Government and the figure held by COPFS.

The Committee is concerned at the reduction in the number of reported cases at a time when it is proposed that further powers in this area are extended to the SSPCA. The Committee requests that you provide details of the reasons for this decline in the number of cases reported to COPFS by the SSPCA.

I would be grateful if you could send your response by Friday 22 January at 12:00 to racce.committee@scottish.parliament.uk in MS Word format.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

Rob Gibson MSP
Convener