

Petitioner submission of 7 September 2023

PE1966/G: Formally recognise and incorporate local knowledge in Scottish Government policy

We would like to make you aware of new information, in the form of a NatureScot commissioned report led by The James Hutton Institute, which recommends greater incorporation of local knowledge when understanding and addressing biodiversity loss in Scotland.

The paper is here: <https://www.nature.scot/doc/naturescot-research-report-1309-understanding-indirect-drivers-biodiversity-loss-scotland>

In our view, this new paper, published this month, backs the petition's main aim which is to see recognition and incorporation of local knowledge into Scottish Government policy. In the midst of a nature and biodiversity crisis, we consider this to be more urgent than ever.

In particular, we would draw attention to the following statements:

“Local and experiential knowledge is undervalued in environmental decision making. Participatory governance arrangements should be developed that incorporate local knowledge into decision making.”

“Local and experiential knowledge is increasingly accepted as a valid input into decision-making: governance structures should include such local and experiential knowledge alongside other forms of evidence and be balanced to prevent vested interests misdirecting change.”

The paper also acknowledges there is currently a shortage of rural skills, which makes the knowledge and skill-sets of rural practitioners even more important to Scotland's efforts in tackling the climate and biodiversity crises.