

PE2202/D: Stop the Guga Hunt

Gemma Lawrie written submission, 19 January 2026

I am a 29 year old from Lewis. We are a small very isolated island with a small population. If we were required to vote to keep this practice going, we wouldn't win. We have been doing this for hundreds of years so that the older generation have food to eat. What you call 'tradition', I call island way of living. We depend on the ferry to bring food over. If there is bad weather we might not get milk, meat or veg for a week so we depend on our island. Mainlanders have shops at their fingertips. For many of us on the island, we don't.

This will ruin the Scottish island culture. For what? Because what we are doing is bad. There are far worse things happening in this world. What we do is a means of living, and due to the decline of the older generation and many people leaving, the demand for guga is dropping. So why do this to an island that's already struggling?

Other cultures kill foxes, bulls and many other animals for sport. We kill guga to eat it. I do understand that killing animals is bad and cruel, but look in your supermarket markets at the vast amount of food that does not get eaten. What we kill we eat - no waste! What you are doing is taking something from an island's history! It is still amazing that a small community like Ness still want island life and culture to stay. Why? Because it means so much to us and we don't want to lose it along with the memories and stories our heritage holds. I do understand bird populations are declining due to bird flu but this has been brought on to an isolated island from the mainland due to migration. That again affects our livestock such as chickens that we depend on. So our hunt never causes a decline, we only culled what we were allowed by the government, which was stopped for 4 years then resumed and reduced to help breeding caused by bird flu. So why deny an island of this practice that has been done for hundreds of years because of a worldwide problem?

This petition has caused so many hate comments about the island and their people. Individuals saying "if we hit bird we must hit our family", "we do this as a blood sport". This is disgusting and the information is wrong. Seeing what we do as cruel and barbaric is just a lack of culture and understanding. The people who have signed this petition, some haven't been to the island and don't know how hard it can be sometimes. So instead of getting information from a graphic and violent cartoon on social media platforms, as well as videos from individuals who don't know the struggles of living in Lewis, research it yourself and have a better understanding. If you haven't, you should not say anything without facts! I suggest you could put forward the possibility of not making it annual but every few years as this is a win-win situation for guga numbers while keeping island life in an already changing world.