

Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee on petition PE2213: Introduce the Small Animal road signs in Scotland, lodged by Sharon Longhurst on behalf of Burntisland Hedgehog Haven

Background

Traffic signs: The design, size, location, and illumination of traffic signs used on roads across Great Britain are defined in the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016 (TSRGD), as amended. While the regulation of traffic signs was devolved to Scottish Ministers under the Scotland Act 2016, there remains a very consistent approach to traffic signage across Britain.

Non-prescribed signs: National authorities, that is Scottish Ministers in Scotland, can approve the use of signs not included in the TSRGD, typically at the request of roads authorities.

Wildlife warning signs: The TSRGD includes three signs intended to warn drivers that wildlife may be present in the road ahead. These are:



Wild horses likely to be in the road ahead.



Wild animals likely to be in the road ahead.



Wild fowl likely to be in the road ahead.

The TSRGD also includes a sign that can be used in the very specific temporary situation where migratory toads may be crossing a road:



Use of the Small Animal sign in England: The [UK Government](#) created a standardised small animal sign for use on English roads in 2019. The TSRGD was not amended to include this sign, meaning it is non-prescribed. Individual highway authorities had to receive permission from the UK Department for Transport (DfT) prior to using this sign.

In [2023, the UK Government](#) tweaked the design of the Small Animal sign and removed the requirement that highway authorities receive approval from the DfT prior to using it. The small animal sign now looks like:



While the sign depicts a hedgehog, it is intended to warn motorists that they are driving through an area where there are concentrations of small wild animals, which can also include species such as squirrels, badgers, and otters.

Transport Scotland view on using the Small Animal sign in Scotland: Transport Scotland published a [Position Statement on wildlife signs on Scottish roads](#) in 2022, updated in February 2024, which considered the use of Small Animal signs. This concluded that:

“Transport Scotland does not support the introduction or use of new species-specific ‘silhouette style’ warning signs for smaller animals. However, species-specific supplementary plates used in association with the standard warning sign to TSRGD Diagram 562 may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The use of these supplementary plates will be subject to approval through the non-prescribed signs process, so that Transport Scotland can ensure that their use is controlled and is only applied in appropriate circumstances.”

Examples of TSRGD Diagram 562 and supplementary plates are provided below:



Key Organisations and relevant links

Key organisations fall into three broad categories, key representatives of which include:

- **Wildlife groups:** [Scottish Wildlife Trust](#), [Scottish SPCA](#), [British Hedgehog Preservation Society](#)

- **Motoring groups:** [Brake](#), [RAC Foundation](#), [IAM Roadsmart](#), [Road Haulage Association](#), [Motorcycle Industry Association](#)
- **Roads authorities and professional bodies:** [Scottish Collaboration of Transport Specialists](#) (SCOTS), [Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport](#), [Institute of Highway Engineers](#).

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 11 August 2026

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