Briefing for the Public Petitions Committee

**Petition Number:** PE1663

**Main Petitioner:** Leslie Wallace

**Subject:** Driven grouse shooting study

Calls on the Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to sponsor a comprehensive and independent study into the full economic impacts of driven grouse shooting.

**Action by the Scottish Government**

In response to -

- a Scottish Natural Heritage report outlined below, and
- Environment Climate Change and Land Reform Committee consideration of a petition, outlined below,

Roseanna Cunningham, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform announced extra measures to protect Scotland’s birds of prey. These measure include that the Scottish Government will –

"Commission research into the costs and benefits of large shooting estates to Scotland’s economy and biodiversity."

No further details are available about the research at the time of writing. But it may be that this research will do what the petitioner requests (depending on whether the study is considered to be comprehensive and independent).

**Consideration by the Parliament**

The Environment Climate Change and Land Reform Committee considered a recent petition (PE01615) by Logan Steele on behalf of Scottish Raptor Study Group Subject concerned the introduction of a state regulated licensing system for gamebird hunting in Scotland.

This petition was lodged in October 2016 and considered by the Environment Climate Change and Land Reform Committee between January and June 2017. Details of that consideration can be found on the ECCLR website. A SPICe briefing is also available.
The Committee wrote to Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform at the end of their consideration. The letter said –

“The Committee recommends the Scottish Government explore with stakeholders the need for and benefit of such a licensing system, how it might operate in practice, what it might encompass, how it could be appropriately enforced and whether such a system might feasibly be trialled in a specific area.”

Analyses of the fates of satellite tracked golden eagles in Scotland

In evidence to the ECCLR Committee the petitioner mentioned above, Logan Steele stated –

“Driven grouse shooting has become a business and, to be frank, raptors are seen as an impediment to that business. The cabinet secretary herself said that it is a risk to business that raptors are on the ground and legitimately taking food.”

In May, SNH published a report SNH Commissioned Report 982: Analyses of the fates of satellite tracked golden eagles in Scotland. The summary states –

“This report provides a major review of the movements and fates of golden eagles satellite tagged during 2004 - 2016. It proposes reasons for the disappearance of satellite tagged golden eagles by analysing associated factors, including the impact of wind farms, natural mortality of tagged birds, tag reliability, effects of tagging on bird survival and illegal persecution. The report highlights illegal persecution is a major factor in artificially restricting the golden eagle population in Scotland and provides a population model for Scotland’s golden eagles in the absence of persecution.”

Wendy Kenyon
Senior Researcher
3 July 2017

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