

From: [REDACTED]
To: [2002 Act Review](#)
Subject: Re: Submission to the Review of Wild Mammals (Scotland)
Date: 30 March 2016 22:58:33

Hi so sorry about that! Here it is below:

Submission to the Review of the Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act.

[REDACTED]

Freelance fox controller.

Address:

[REDACTED]

Author Note:

Please do not publish the name of this organisation, the individual submitting this evidence or their contact details, or in any other way make these details available to the public.

I write concerning the proposed review of the Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act. The exemptions contained in the bill for the allowance of effective pest control using dogs to flush foxes to waiting guns have been the subject of few, if any successful prosecutions since the bills implementation 14 years ago. This begs the question, why the sudden need for a review?

Wildlife crime enjoys a high profile, in the words of one chief inspector "it generates good headlines for the police" so its reporting is pursued rigorously. Any allegations of wrong doing are generally made by a misinformed public or more often animal rights activists working to an agenda. If such allegations are found worthy of investigation these are scrutinised thoroughly by Police Scotland, out of context video footage and a dislike of controlling predators rarely pass such scrutiny, this was verified by assistant Chief Constable Graham in evidence to Holyrood's rural affairs committee.

If the intention is to limit the number of dogs used to flush foxes from cover/above ground to two dogs as in England this would be to the detriment and impossibility of effective pest control measures in many parts of Scotland. From a personal perspective, (until the conditions of the grants scheme changed) I was for a number of years secretary for a government grant approved fox control association covering 30,000 acres. Much of this land would have been unmanageable without the use of a small pack of dogs (8 - 10 beagles) to hunt out large/impenetrable areas of forestry/gorse/scrubland to waiting guns. The number of dogs used facilitates the quick and effective finding, flushing and shooting of foxes whereas if it was limited to the use of two dogs the result would be protracted, ineffective and a general waste of time. A rough analogy could be; if a climber went missing in the hills, nobody would dream of sending two rescuers to look for him/her, it would take forever to cover the area concerned whereas more searchers achieves a more effective conclusion. This is the comparison between using two dogs to search as opposed to a larger number of dogs, it is done for effectiveness - not for aesthetic or sporting reasons. The use of a small pack of dogs hunting cover coupled with the use of terriers to systematically check known fox earths during the critical spring control period greatly contributes to keeping fox predation to a minimum. It is worth noting these methods were used in conjunction with lamping and where possible snaring operations (cage trapping out with the urban environment is insignificant), no one method of control is the stand alone answer to fox control as differing situations/locations require different approaches.

On the subject of terriers for fox control it is a legal requirement that the fox be shot as soon as possible, this necessitates the possession of a shotgun/firearm certificate. To hold a gun licence the recipient must be of sound mind, temperate habits, of stable background and be able to provide referee statements to that effect - an interview with a police licensing officer must also be concluded satisfactorily. Anybody not of sound character or who displays signs of antisocial, disruptive or potential criminal behaviour has no chance of holding a gun licence. Anyone using a terrier to account for a fox from below ground must have a gun for the dispatch of the quarry, therefore it should be seen from the above that anyone involved of this vital aspect of fox control will have been strictly vetted beforehand by police Scotland using a methodology as thorough as is practically possible.

Please remember, we are hunters not sadists. The highly rare incidences in the misuse of terriers are already adequately dealt with by current laws.

The use of dogs for fox control across both the highlands and lowlands of Scotland has been practiced for hundreds of years, if it were ineffective it would have been replaced by now, yet despite the use of advanced night vision shooting optics, the use of dogs in many circumstances continues for one reason - it works. These so called "other methods" of control (sterilisation, relocation, immune contraception etc...) advocated by the SSPCA, One Kind and other animal rights groups are impractical in a rural environment and the fact that such "other methods" are routinely dismissed by anyone involved in practical wildlife management confirms their irrelevance.

While it is widely accepted in the farming/shooting industry of the use of dogs for fox control, it should be noted that small gun packs of hounds or terriers have been used when the often quoted "other methods" have failed by the following bodies: Scottish Natural Heritage, Marines Sciences Centres (Dunstaffnage), S.S.S.I. management plans, Capercallie recovery project and as part of predator control associated with conservation grants on wind farms. Various conservation bodies and wildlife trusts claim to have no proactive fox control measures in place, but it is beyond doubt that they benefit from fox control measures using dogs on neighbouring/surrounding farms or estates. All of the above instances are verifiable and are mainly concerned with the protection often rare/red-list ground nesting birds. In these examples if only two dogs had been used it would have been a waste of the participants time and public money. Quick effective humane control using dogs and guns is what is required and achieved, not a long drawn out affair using only two dogs resulting in a distinct lack of success.

It is my hope that from reading these observations based on over 30 years experience you may appreciate the importance of the continued use of dogs for the flushing of foxes from above and below ground, there being no realistic alternative in many instances.

I thank you for your time in this matter and hope my experiences and knowledge therein may be of some use to you in your deliberations.

Yours Sincerely,



Sent from my iPhone

On 30 Mar 2016, at 17:40, <2002ActReview@gov.scot> <2002ActReview@gov.scot> wrote:

Good afternoon

I'm afraid that I can't open the attachment to this email. If you are unable to send your evidence as a Microsoft Word document I could also take the text in the body of an email or you could post us a hard copy at

2002 Act review
Wildlife Management Team
Natural Resources Division

Directorate for Environment and Forestry
The Scottish Government
1-C North
Victoria Quay
Edinburgh
EH6 6QQ

Regards

Catherine Murdoch
Policy Officer
Scottish Government
www.gov.scot/protectionofwildmammalsreview

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 30 March 2016 17:38
To: 2002 Act Review
Subject: Submission to the Review of Wild Mammals (Scotland)

Submission to the Review of Wild Mammals (Scotland) from [REDACTED].
See attached document.

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Dh'fhaodadh gum bi teachdaireachd sam bith bho Riaghaltas na h-Alba air a chlàradh neo air a sgrùdadh airson dearbhadh gu bheil an siostam ag obair gu h-èifeachdach neo airson adhbhar laghail eile. Dh'fhaodadh nach eil beachdan anns a' phost-d seo co-ionann ri beachdan Riaghaltas na h-Alba.

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