



NatureScot

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORY COMMITTEE

INFORMATION PAPER

Grouse Moor Review – next steps

Purpose

1. This paper outlines the next steps for NatureScot in taking forward the Scottish Government [response](#) to the Grouse Moor Management Review (Werritty) Report.

ACTION

2. **The Committee is asked to note work being taken forward.**

PREPARATION

3. The paper was written by Donald Fraser and Des Thompson; it is sponsored by Eileen Stuart.

Background

4. The Grouse Moor Review Group, chaired by Professor Alan Werritty, [reported to Ministers](#) in December 2019. The Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, Ms Gougeon, outlined the Scottish Government response by [Ministerial statement in November 2020](#).
5. The Committee will be mindful that Professor Werritty had earlier chaired a Committee sub-group, reporting on [sustainable moorland management](#) to the Committee in 2015. A scientific [report](#) on the fate of satellite tagged golden eagles, published by NatureScot, precipitated the announcement by Ministers to establish the Professor Werritty's [grouse moor group](#).

Government response to the report

6. The substantive issues of the response relate to:
 - Licensing of grouse shooting: That a licensing scheme should be introduced earlier than the five-year timeframe suggested by the review group.

- Shooting of mountain hares: Will be subject to increased regulation. The Scottish Government supported an amendment to the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Act 2020 and a new [licensing regime](#) to take effect from March 2021 was announced recently.
 - Muirburn: A ban on burning on peatland with all muirburn licenced, with further consideration being given to the definition of 'peatland'.
 - Use of Traps: To maintain the highest standards of animal welfare there is a commitment to explore what further regulation is required as plans for a licensing regime are developed.
 - A Code of Practice on grouse shooting: Which will reflect regulation specific to the sector and advise on best management practices including the use of medicated grit.
7. It is Scottish Government's intention to bring forward the necessary legislation to affect these changes in the next parliament following a full public consultation.

Next steps

8. NatureScot staff are working with Scottish Government officials to support implementation of Ministers' recommendations. This work includes:
- Scoping and developing a licensing scheme including Code of Practice for the shooting of grouse and associated activities (involving engagement with key stakeholders); and
 - Developing policy and related research on issues such as muirburn, trapping, and definition of peatland.
9. Work commenced in the New Year to develop the licensing approach and foundations for a Bill, including stakeholder engagement. This will allow for the Bill to be introduced early in the next parliamentary term. Enactment of any licensing approach obviously depends on the passage of a Bill through parliament.

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