

Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill Consultation - Suggested Answers

Each question gives the option of:

- Yes
- No
- Neutral
- Don't Know

Question 18 of the online survey allows for further comments and 19 asks how you found out about this survey.

1. Will the bill make the law easier to understand and enforce the offence to hunt a wild mammal using a dog in Scotland?

No - We do not believe the drafting of existing law is either hard to understand or is a problem in terms of enforcement either by the police or the courts.

2. Section 3 would allow hunting with dogs to manage wild mammals above ground for the purpose of preventing serious damage to livestock, woodland or crops, preventing the spread of disease and protecting human health. Do you agree with section 3?

Yes - It is accepted by all parties, except those opposed to hunting who do not believe any fox control is necessary, that wildlife management, and fox control in particular, is necessary. The Scottish Government has stated consistently that it supports effective and humane fox control.

3. Do you agree with the limit on two dogs to manage wild mammals above ground?

No - This proposed restriction is contrary to all the evidence, including the conclusion of Lord Bonomy. It is contrary to the only peer-reviewed research comparing the effectiveness of using two dogs as opposed to a pack, which found a pack was both more effective and reduces the period between a fox being found and flushed to be shot.

4. Section 4 would allow people to apply for a licence to use more than two dogs to manage wild mammals above ground. Do you agree with section 4?

Yes

5. Section 5 would allow hunting with dogs to manage foxes or mink below ground for the purpose of preventing serious damage to livestock, woodland or crops, preventing the spread of disease and protecting human health or for ending the suffering of an injured or dependent fox or mink. Do you agree with section 5?

Yes - The use of a dog below ground as a key part of fox control was confirmed by the Burns Inquiry and the Bonomy Review. The Bill does not allow use of a dog below ground for environmental reasons such as protecting vulnerable species. This is currently possible under the existing law and the Bill should be amended to allow for this.

6. Do you agree with the limit on one dog being allowed to flush a fox from cover to one below ground?

No - The current law does not specify one dog only in the section allowing terrier work. While generally only one dog at a time is used below ground, there are very good reasons why there may be occasions when more than one dog may need to be used. The law should recognise this.

7. Section 6 would allow hunting with dogs to search for, stalk or flush from cover a wild mammal with the intention of providing quarry for falconry, game shooting or deer stalking. Do you agree with section 6?

Yes

8. Do you agree with the limit on two dogs to search for, stalk or flush from cover a wild mammal with the intention of providing quarry for falconry, game shooting or deer stalking?

No

9. Section 7 would allow hunting with dogs for environmental benefit for the purpose of preserving, protecting or restoring a particular species, the diversity of animal or plant life, or eradicating an invasive non-native species. Do you agree with section 7?

Yes

10. Do you agree with the limit on two dogs for the purpose of preserving, protecting or restoring a particular species, the diversity of animal or plant life, or eradicating an invasive non-native species?

No

11. Section 8 would allow people to apply for a licence to use more than two dogs to manage wild mammals for environmental benefit. Do you agree with section 8?

Yes

12. Do you agree with the section 11 proposed ban on trail hunting?

No

13. Section 12 would allow trail hunting for the purpose of training a dog to follow an animal-based scent. Do you agree with section 12?

Yes - Should not be necessary as a pre-emptive ban on trail hunting is unjustifiable.

14. Do you agree with the definition of 'wild mammal' in section 1(3) of the bill?

No - The definition now includes and therefore protects rabbits, unlike the existing legislation.

15. Do you agree that rats and mice should be included in the definition of a wild animal?

No - This is a strange question as the Bill currently excludes rats and mice from the definition of wild mammal and they should remain excluded so as not to be covered by the Bill.

16. Do you agree that the court may disqualify a person from owning, keeping, or managing a dog for a given length of time, or deprive them of the dog or horse used in the offence, if convicted of an offence under this Bill?

No - While disqualification orders exist in the current legislation and relate to dogs, deprivation orders are new and seem unnecessary. They also apply not just to dogs but also horses. To single out horses seems discriminatory when an offence could be committed using another mode of transport such as a quad bike.

17. Do you support the Bill

No

18. Please provide any comments in the box below. When responding, it would be helpful if you could indicate which section of the bill your comments relate to.

The Bill is unnecessary, contrary to all the evidence and the Bonomy Review in introducing a two dog limit, and the licensing provisions for using more than two dogs are unworkable in their current form. We would suggest the Bill needs considerable improvement if it is not to do serious harm to rural Scotland's communities and wildlife. **This is also an opportunity for you to highlight any direct impact this legislation will have on you etc.**

19. How did you find out about this consultation?