

# **Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill**

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

**Pre-screening Notification**

**February 2022**



**Scottish Government**  
Riaghaltas na h-Alba  
gov.scot

## SEA PRE-SCREENING DOCUMENT

**Responsible Authority:**

Scottish Government

**Title of the plan:**

Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill

**What prompted the plan:**

(e.g. a legislative, regulatory or administrative provision)

Following concerns about the effectiveness of the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002 ("the 2002 Act"), which makes it an offence to hunt a wild mammal using a dog in Scotland except in limited specified circumstances, the Scottish Government commissioned an independent review of the 2002 Act. The review made a number of recommendations to improve the 2002 Act which the Scottish Government accepted and which led to it developing this plan.

**Plan subject:**

(e.g. transport)

Agriculture and Forestry

**Brief summary of the plan:**

(including the area or location to which the plan related)

The Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill will repeal and replace the 2002 Act, which makes it an offence to hunt a wild mammal using a dog in Scotland except in limited specified circumstances.

It will broadly replicate the core provisions of the 2002 Act but will address the inconsistencies and ambiguities in the language of the 2002 Act to make the law easier to understand and to enforce. The use of dogs to hunt wild mammals in Scotland will continue to be banned except in limited, specified circumstances and for certain permitted activities. Additionally, the Bill will introduce measures to:

- Limit the number of dogs that can be used to search for, stalk or flush wild mammals from cover above ground to two.
- Introduce a licensing regime for the use of more than two dogs to search for, stalk or flush wild mammals above ground in certain limited circumstances.
- Limit the number of dogs that can be used to search for or flush foxes or mink from cover below ground to one.
- Prohibit the activity known as trail hunting (the activity of directing a dog to find and follow an animal-based scent).

**Brief summary of the likely environmental consequences:**

(including whether it has been determined that the plan is likely to have no or minimum effects, either directly or indirectly)

This Bill will have no, or minimum, effect on the environment either directly or indirectly.

The purpose of the Bill is to address the inconsistencies and ambiguities in the language of the 2002 Act to make the law easier to understand and to enforce. The use of dogs to hunt wild mammals in Scotland will continue to be banned except in limited, specified circumstances and for certain permitted activities. The Bill will, enhance animal welfare and reduce the risk of wild mammals being killed by dogs, by limiting the number of dogs that can be used to search for, stalk and flush wild mammals. The Bill will have effect across Scotland.

The new offences created by the Bill are concerned with improving animal welfare and reducing the likelihood of wild mammals being killed accidentally or deliberately by dogs. Therefore, there should be no adverse environmental impacts.

If the passage of the Bill through the Scottish Parliament follows the proposed timeline, it will receive Royal Assent and be commenced in 2023.

**Brief summary of how environmental principles have been considered:**

(including whether any of the guiding principles, as set out in section 13 of the Continuity Act, are relevant to the plan)

The Guiding principles set out in Section 13 of the Continuity Act are not directly relevant to this plan as it will have no or minimal effect on the environment.

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**Date of opinion:**

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2022

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