

Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill: Stage 3

The Deputy Presiding Officer (Annabelle Ewing): The next item of business is a debate on motion S6M-12535, in the name of Jim Fairlie, on the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill at stage 3.

As members will be aware, the Presiding Officer is required under standing orders to decide whether, in her view, any provision of a bill relates to a protected subject matter—that is, whether it modifies the electoral system and franchise for Scottish parliamentary elections. In the Presiding Officer's view, no provision of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill relates to a protected subject matter. Therefore, the bill does not require a supermajority to be passed at stage 3.

Before we move on to the debate, I call Shona Robison, Deputy First Minister, to signify Crown consent to the bill.

The Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Finance (Shona Robison): For the purposes of rule 9.11 of standing orders, I advise the Parliament that His Majesty, having been informed of the purport of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, has consented to place his prerogative and interests, in so far as they are affected by the bill, at the disposal of the Parliament for the purposes of the bill.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Thank you, Deputy First Minister. We will now move on to the debate. I invite members who wish to speak in the debate to press their request-to-speak buttons.

15:14

The Minister for Agriculture and Connectivity (Jim Fairlie): I am honoured to present to the Scottish Parliament my first bill as a minister, and to open the stage 3 debate on the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill.

As I said in my stage 1 contribution, my boyhood ambition was to get a glimpse of my favourite bird of prey, the peregrine falcon. Never for a moment did I believe that I would one day be standing in this chamber putting legislation through our Parliament that will, I hope, finally rid us of the scourge that has seen too many of those magnificent birds, and many others, disappear—the scourge of illegal persecution perpetrated by a tiny minority, who just do not accept that that will simply no longer be tolerated by Scottish society or the industry that they shame.

With over 10,000 responses to our two public consultations, from stakeholders and public alike, the debate has generated great interest, and all sides have shown clear support for what the bill seeks to achieve.

The history leading up to the conclusion of the bill's process is long, and many should be thanked, from my friend and predecessor Roseanna Cunningham to Mairi Gougeon, Màiri McAllan and my immediate predecessor, Gillian Martin, who not only started the stage 2 process but has been and continues to be my wingwoman throughout the stage 3 proceedings, including today.

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): Although I join in the minister's congratulations on the efforts and work of his predecessors, does he not agree that that has led to problems with continuity—in particular, with parts of the bill such as those on snaring and glue traps—which has brought some uncertainty about the Government's position, right up to the very last minute?

Jim Fairlie: I put on record my thanks to the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee for its careful consideration of the bill, and I thank its members for all their hard work.

Each of the people who I just spoke about has played a significant role, and I put on record my grateful thanks to them all.

There were those who disagreed with the principles of the bill, but if the grouse-shooting community had shut down raptor persecution—stopped the killing of our most iconic birds of prey—we would not have had to legislate in this way. Sadly, that community did not shut it down, so it is now up to us to make sure that it does so. It is for that reason that the bill is before us today.

However, the issue is not just about raptor persecution. When the Scottish Government commissioned the Werritty review of grouse moor management, it asked for wider recommendations on how grouse moors could be managed more sustainably. On behalf of the Scottish Government, I thank Professor Werritty and the group for providing the recommendations that are the foundation of this bill and cover a breadth of topics, including muirburn and several other important matters.

The bill introduces licensing schemes for muirburn and for the taking of red grouse. There are measures to better protect animals by regulating the use of traps and giving enhanced powers to officers of the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, to help them to support the police in their efforts to tackle wildlife crime.

We are—finally—banning the use of snares. We are banning not only the use of glue traps but their possession and sale—going further than any other country in the United Kingdom.

The bill has caused concern for folk who work legally and responsibly in moorland pursuits, and I completely understand that. However, I am clear that there should be no victory parade, and I reassure them that the Government recognises their economic contribution—and, just as important, their work in combating biodiversity loss and guarding against the risk of wildfires. We value that immensely. As often as not, keepers are on the front line beside our fire and rescue services, protecting local communities when fire breaks out. They are a highly-skilled standing army of vital volunteers in our rural and remote areas—the very places that we are looking to protect—and I thank them for their continued efforts.

Throughout the progress of the bill, ministers and officials have worked hard to develop and improve its measures. At stages 2 and 3, we have sought to address the concerns that have been raised with amendments from Government and from members across parties, and I am pleased to have seen a willingness from everyone to find real solutions to the sometimes complex issues that have had to be addressed. Although we may not have agreed on everything, I hope that members see that we have tried to find a balance and common ground. That has helped us to achieve clarity and a workable bill, which has been made better through members listening to each other, and which the industry will embrace and ultimately benefit from.

I believe that we will all benefit from the bill. I am fully committed to continuing to listen to the concerns that have been raised about the detail of the coming schemes. I commit to working with people from all sides, and for those people to be fully involved in the work that NatureScot will now lead on to implement those schemes, not least to complete the development of the grouse moor and muirburn codes of practice that will accompany the bill.

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): I welcome the minister's confirmation on Tuesday that historical offences will not be a basis for revoking a licence that is granted under proposed section 16AA of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. However, we would like some clarity on whether there will be a retrospective angle to the granting of such a licence. Would a historical offence be a lawful basis for refusing to grant a licence in the first place?

Jim Fairlie: That issue will be addressed by NatureScot as we go through the process that we have already talked about.

Amid a climate and biodiversity crisis, science and research are demonstrating to us all that some practices undertaken in the past, such as draining peatland, are harmful, despite the fact that—as Edward Mountain rightly pointed out—we thought that they were advantageous at the time. Oh, for the gift of hindsight. Others are simply no longer going to be tolerated.

The aims of the bill are not mutually exclusive. It is possible to manage wildlife while ensuring the highest standards of animal welfare. People who live and work on our land do so every day. It is possible to undertake muirburn in a manner that does not damage fragile ecosystems and brings positive benefits for rural communities. It is possible to support activities that contribute immensely to our rural economy, such as grouse shooting, while at the same time taking a zero-tolerance approach to raptor persecution and wildlife crime.

We may have our differences of opinion in the chamber, but one thing that I know for sure is that there is an unwavering commitment to protect our wildlife, support our rural businesses and protect our iconic moorlands. That is why the bill is so important.

If members vote to pass it today, we will vote to end the stain and the shame of raptor persecution, put animal welfare at the forefront of responsible land management, and support the hard-working people in our rural communities—those highly responsible grouse moor managers who manage their land in an environmentally sustainable manner that will give long-term security to them and their families.

I move,

That the Parliament agrees that the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill be passed.

15:21

Rachael Hamilton (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con): I am pleased to speak to the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill at stage 3 on behalf of the Scottish Conservatives.

I take the opportunity to thank all stakeholders who provided evidence on what is a very complex and intricate piece of draft legislation. I also thank Marina Sinclair-Chin and Lucy Scharbert from the Scottish Parliament bills team for their extreme patience and efficiency. Last but not least, I thank the various ministers for meeting me. In total, four ministers have presided over the bill—which is quite a churn. I noted that Gillian Martin joked on X

with Jim Fairlie about how quickly she could send her bill folder off to her successor.

Scrutinising this bill has been an eye-opening experience for my colleagues and me. The extent to which the Scottish National Party-Green Government has ignored evidence and sidelined science has been, frankly, astonishing—but why should I have been surprised? After all, we have had a raft of bills and policies since the SNP has been in power that have been completely off the mark. Take gender recognition reform, the deposit return scheme, the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Act 2023, highly protected marine areas and the Hate Crime and Public Order (Scotland) Act 2021—which, of course, comes into force on April Fool's day. You could not make it up.

Members across the chamber will know that the catalyst for the bill was the Scottish Government's independent review of grouse moor management, chaired by Professor Alan Werritty. Since the publication of the review's report, ministers have been on the record saying that they are implementing the review's recommendations. At best, that is a gross mischaracterisation. Professor Werritty's review in 2019 was very clear that the licensing of grouse shooting—the flagship provision of this bill—should be implemented only if, within five years, the ecological favourability of grouse moors in relation to three key raptor species had not been improved.

Jim Fairlie: Would Rachael Hamilton not recognise that the Werritty review was brought in because of decades of raptor persecution, and that the Parliament, the Government and the public had finally lost patience?

Rachael Hamilton: I think that bringing forward a bill because people have lost patience is entirely the wrong way to do it. Legislation should be evidence and science led.

Jim Fairlie: It was.

Rachael Hamilton: It was not. *[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We do not want sedentary chit chat, members.

Rachael Hamilton: Raptor persecution is at a historic low. I will come to that.

Let us be clear that ministers ploughed on with implementing the bill and, in effect, ignored the flagship recommendation of their own independent review, which was commissioned by ministers and cost £86,000. The disdain that this Government seems to have for evidence-led policy making and independent arbitration is, frankly, shocking.

Let us take another key section of the bill: the provision of enhanced powers for the SSPCA to investigate wildlife crime. Ministers commissioned an independent task force to consider whether the

SSPCA should be given enhanced powers. It concluded that the extension of such powers would not be appropriate without the institutional support of the police and the Crown Office. Yet, despite receiving a crystal-clear recommendation calling for partnership working over enhanced powers, yet again, ministers rode roughshod over it. What is the point of commissioning independent review after independent review if ministers ignore them?

In reality, SNP ministers do not care about the bill or the people who are set to be impacted by it. They do not care about independent arbitration, evidence-led policy making, and the wildlife that the bill is likely to affect. The bill is a shameful reflection of the Government's derision for rural Scotland. It is for all those reasons that the bill has ended up being conceptually flawed. Ministers appear to have no understanding of proportionality, which should be a central component of every bill that is put before the Parliament. In effect, a bill should go no further than is required to achieve its policy aim. Ministers' appetite for punishing landlords for anything and everything knows and sees no bounds—a fact that has crystallised in other legislation that has been passed in this place.

The Minister for Energy, Just Transition and Fair Work (Gillian Martin): No, it has not.

Rachael Hamilton: We know that the genesis of the licensing scheme comes down to one issue and one issue only: raptor persecution, the prevalence of which is, thankfully, now at historically low levels. Raptor persecution was a problem on Scotland's grouse moors in the past, but it has been largely consigned to the history books, with on-going issues now limited to a tiny minority. To be clear, Scottish Conservatives condemn that minority, who should be punished with full force.

With a licensing—*[Interruption.]*

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Hamilton, please take your seat. I have said already that I do not want sedentary chit-chat. Members, please have the courtesy to listen to the member who has the floor. In this instance, it is Ms Hamilton. I ask her to resume her contribution.

Rachael Hamilton: I am surprised. I would have thought that, with grouse shooting on the horizon, Shona Robison ought to be focused on tackling raptor persecution. Not so, Presiding Officer.

The SNP continues to demonise and penalise grouse moor operators at any cost. The bill—

The Cabinet Secretary for Transport (Fiona Hyslop): On a point of order, Presiding Officer.

Rachael Hamilton: —is a classic example of the tail wagging—

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Excuse me, Ms Hamilton. Fiona Hyslop has a point of order.

Fiona Hyslop: I understand that people feel strongly about the subjects of various debates, but on the matter of standing orders on respect for other colleagues, I point out that I have been sitting next to Ms Robison, who has not uttered a word since she spoke before the beginning of the debate. Such behaviour is creeping into debates too often. Your guidance would be gratefully received.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: I thank Ms Hyslop for her contribution. That is not a point of order, but the matter is on the record. I had already indicated to members on the Government front bench that they should not be engaging in sedentary conversations while another member had the floor. Notwithstanding my entreaty, that was ignored.

Ms Hamilton, please continue.

Rachael Hamilton: The bill is a classic example of the Green tail wagging the yellow dog. The antipathy of the Scottish Greens towards people who live in rural areas, landowners, landlords and virtually anyone else who has been remotely successful in their life knows no bounds. Country sports are like catnip for the Scottish Greens. We should be in no doubt that the disproportionality inherent in the licensing scheme is their doing, because SNP ministers are too weak to say no while rural Scotland again suffers the consequences.

At an event held by the British Association for Shooting and Conservation, the minister addressed a roomful of aspiring gamekeepers and told them that the bill addresses what society demands. This week, he doubled down on the snaring ban and said:

“We did not support the licensing scheme because of the overwhelming evidence that the public simply will not accept snares any more.”—[*Official Report*, 19 March 2024; c 40.]

That is not evidence, Mr Fairlie; it is the view of a weak SNP Government that is led by ideology. Ministers have taken a wrecking ball to the toolkit for effective predator control, which is likely to have dire consequences for nature, biodiversity and protection of livestock during lambing months.

I regret that I did not lodge an amendment to reflect the need for humane cable restraints to be used under licence during the lambing season or, indeed, a derogation from the total ban, to protect livestock and lambs. People who are opposed to that might argue that, if a farmer wants to reduce predation, he or she should consider lambing

indoors. For many farmers, that simply is not practical. They might not have the facilities, or their flock might have traditionally lamed outdoors.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: Ms Hamilton, you need to bring your remarks to a close, please.

Rachael Hamilton: Overall, the bill is the product of disinterested and unevidenced policy making, exacerbated by disproportionality in the flagship provision. Scottish Conservatives will always stand up for Scotland, and rural Scotland in particular. As such, we will not be supporting the bill at decision time.

15:29

Rhoda Grant (Highlands and Islands) (Lab): I, too, thank the clerks to the committee, all those who work for the committee and all those who gave evidence on the bill. I also thank the parliamentary staff who stayed late on Tuesday night to allow us to get through the stage 3 amendments.

This was an extremely difficult bill to scrutinise. We were handed a bill and told that major amendments would be added at stage 2, but at that time we did not realise that major amendments would also be dropped in at stage 3. That is not the way to make good legislation, and I fear that there will be consequences to the way in which the Scottish Government has handled the issue.

The regulation of grouse moors is not a new issue. The Government had time to legislate. Indeed, my colleague Peter Peacock raised the issue way back in 2010, during the passage of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. It is not something that was raised only recently. However, it is a shame that behaviour regarding raptor persecution has not changed sufficiently in the intervening years. We are now licensing grouse moors because of that behaviour, and I hope that grouse moor owners realise that they are on notice. If illegal raptor persecution on grouse moors does not stop, I am sure that there will be further legislation.

I am not a fan of grouse moors. I cannot understand how someone gets pleasure from killing a living thing for sport. However, the bill is not about banning grouse moors; it is about putting them on notice. I was interested to learn from the evidence that we heard that other species, such as curlew, merlin and golden plover, thrive on grouse moors. There is something to be learned from the management of grouse moors about how we can provide habitats for those birds, to encourage their numbers and protect them in the future. A huge amount of knowledge on land and habitat management is held on those moors

and we need to learn from that, regardless of our opinion of the purpose of grouse moors.

I have concerns about the amount of legislation that is coming through the Parliament, and this bill is no different. We are presided over by a Government that does not believe that it will ever lose power. Its back benchers do their masters' bidding, and I, for one, will have a wry smile when they cry foul, in opposition, when a new Government uses the powers bequeathed by them to carry out policies that are not to their liking. A wise Government legislates as though it is its last day in office and in the full knowledge that it will be required to keep future Governments in check. That is not about the balance of power; it is about legislating wisely and ensuring that there are checks and balances in place.

There is, of course, a need for enabling legislation on occasion, and muirburn is a case in point. The science is not clear. Wildfires on degraded peat with a large fuel load release huge amounts of carbon, as we saw in the devastation in Cannich last year. Does muirburn have the potential to protect peat from wildfires? We must ask that question, because we need to manage the fuel loads to ensure that wildfires are kept in check. However, we do not know the science—we have to be honest about that. Therefore, it is necessary to have the ability to adapt regulations. When scientific knowledge evolves, the regulations need to evolve, too, but that needs scrutiny and the bill does not allow for that.

I hope that the bill will provide a step change in how grouse moors are managed. Raptors should no longer be persecuted and grouse moors should be playing their role in protecting nature and the environment. I very much hope that that is what comes from the bill.

15:34

Beatrice Wishart (Shetland Islands) (LD): I am pleased to speak for the Scottish Liberal Democrats at stage 3 of the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill. As others have done, I offer my thanks to organisations that provided briefings and gave evidence, and to all who were involved in organising the stage 2 and stage 3 amendment processes. I extend my particular thanks to the clerks and supporting staff of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee for their hard work.

From the beginning of the bill process, the Scottish Liberal Democrats have been broadly supportive of the legislation. We committed to implementing the recommendations of the grouse moor management group, which was chaired by Professor Werritty. We recognised the need for action to address raptor persecution and we noted

that, although most estates on which red grouse are shot are run responsibly, there was not sufficient evidence that the situation regarding raptor persecution had improved since the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 was passed. Wildlife crime and raptor persecution are never acceptable, and I hope that future reviews of the legislation will demonstrate its effectiveness in reducing instances of those crimes.

The bill introduces a licensing scheme for land that is used for the shooting of red grouse. At stage 1, I raised the concern that the bill would grant licences for only one year. That was at odds with the consensus from stakeholders and NatureScot that a longer licence period would be preferable and would correspond to similar schemes. I supported the amendment at stage 2 that changed the licence period to five years and improved that aspect of the bill.

The Scottish ministers are required by the bill to create two codes of practice—one relating to licences to shoot red grouse and one on how to make muirburn safely and appropriately. Both codes need to be workable and proportionate, and relevant stakeholders need to be involved in their creation.

There has been much debate about the use of an arbitrary depth measurement to define peatland in the bill. I am persuaded that, when done correctly, muirburn burns only the vegetation on top of the soil. I supported the addition of a requirement in the bill for the Scottish ministers to approve training courses on muirburn and the muirburn code. Under the new provisions, all those who conduct muirburn under licence will be trained. That should reassure those with concerns about muirburn that takes place on peatland.

I turn to other provisions in the bill. At stage 1, I noted my concern about evidence that the committee received on the lack of alternatives to glue traps and the potential impact of banning them on the ability to control rodents in public health settings. I welcome Scottish Government amendments that enable ministers to make a scheme for the authorisation of glue traps for the purpose of protecting public health. I trust that the Scottish Government will continue to engage with the industry as research into alternatives to glue traps develops, but I consider that that limited authorisation is necessary to safeguard against outbreaks in settings with enhanced public health risk.

It is important that there is monitoring and evaluation of any new law. I note the Scottish Gamekeepers Association's opposition to the banning of snares and its view that humane holding devices were not fully assessed. The bill's impacts must be evaluated to ensure that they are proportionate and fair. I supported amendments to

include a review of the bill's operation and effectiveness. I ask the minister to give assurance that the Scottish Government will bring forward changes if a review shows that they are needed.

I hope that the bill's process has brought a better understanding of the rural way of life as something to be valued. Those who work and live on the land have demonstrated their passion for our rural areas. Important discussions that affect rural areas need to engage all communities, and they must not just be viewed through an urban lens. I also hope that we can all agree that Scotland's unique countryside and wildlife are to be celebrated and protected.

The Deputy Presiding Officer: We will now move to the open debate.

15:38

Alasdair Allan (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP):

As a member of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee, I can confirm that the bill has been the subject of rigorous debate and scrutiny since it was first brought to the Parliament. Despite some of the more colourful comment, I believe that, in the end, the committee managed to steer some sort of middle path and improve the bill. At stage 3 this week, members have gone through the legislation in the chamber with a similarly fine-toothed comb.

As was pointed out at stage 1, the bill deals with subjects as disparate as raptor persecution and rat traps. I will deal with the latter first, as they were raised as an issue in amendments at stage 3 this week. The Government and the committee faced no simple task in reaching a workable solution. However, I hope that we have reached a reasonable solution this week by seeking to move glue traps out of use by the general public while retaining residual powers for the Government to deal with any scenario, such as an outbreak in a healthcare setting.

Perhaps a more substantial part of the bill's scope is that which deals with the issue of raptor persecution. Raptor persecution is, by its very nature and location, a crime largely committed without witnesses. I hope that the bill that we have put together provides the means that we need to finally tackle that issue more effectively. We certainly received much evidence that the criminal standard of evidence that currently applies around raptor persecution is proving virtually impossible to meet.

I do not doubt that the vast majority of land managers are working within the law. However, a licensing scheme around grouse moor estates is a proportionate response to ensuring that raptor persecution, where it happens, is tackled. Indeed, when so many other areas of activity operate via a

licensing scheme, I think that such an approach is a more proportionate response than some of the criminalising alternatives.

Snaring accounts for a substantial part of the bill. I believe that, with a ban on the use of snares, we are aligning Scotland's criminal law with that of other European nations.

On the issue of muirburn, the bill has been improved in a number of ways. A number of the amendments that were lodged at stage 2 recognised that not all the alternatives to muirburn were necessarily practical and that allowance should be made for that fact. I am pleased that an amendment in my name that made that point was accepted at stage 2. The committee heard evidence from a variety of sectors, including the crofting sector, that wanted to make sure that that and other issues would not be overlooked. I believe that in that area, as in other areas of the bill, improved wording has been arrived at.

There are areas of the bill that, for some interest groups, will always remain contended and contentious. That is the nature of any legislation that touches on biodiversity, animal welfare and land management practices. The bill addresses all those issues. However, it is a necessary and balanced measure that has been subjected to a process of rigorous scrutiny and improvement, and I believe that that means that we should vote for it now.

15:41

Finlay Carson (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con): The catalyst for the bill was the review by Professor Werritty that reported in December 2019. Four years on, licensing schemes are to be introduced for grouse shooting, muirburn and wildlife traps.

Professor Werritty made it clear in his flagship recommendation that the matter of whether grouse shooting should be licensed was to be addressed in December 2024—five years on from the review's publication. It was envisaged that such a decision would be predicated on an assessment of the ecological favourability of grouse moor management with regard to golden eagles, hen harriers and peregrine falcons. However, ministers pressed ahead with their own interpretation of the recommendations without conducting sufficient assessment of the aforementioned ecological favourability. It is clear that that was not in the spirit of good, evidence-based policy making. Should we be surprised by that, given that rural communities feel increasingly marginalised by the SNP-Green Government's approach to traditional rural sectors, which is anecdotal rather than scientific?

I remind the chamber that the bill was intended to deter raptor persecution linked to grouse moor management in Scotland. We are all united in our belief that raptor persecution is absolutely deplorable and that there is no place for it in modern-day society. The bill represented a fantastic opportunity to address that heinous crime, but it has fallen short, and it takes away some of the tools that are critical for good wildlife management.

Over the years, significant progress has been made in driving down raptor persecution, and I believe that we all recognise that that illegal activity is engaged in on only a tiny minority of grouse moors. Many moorland managers are doing incredible work in the name of conservation and are whole-heartedly committed to helping raptors to flourish. It is critical that the licensing of grouse shooting does not detract from the work of those operators who are doing everything right and more.

In a nature crisis, we cannot afford to compromise extensive private investment that has been shown to deliver decisive net gains for biodiversity through good moorland management. The bill will have a disproportionate effect on those who are doing tremendous things for conservation, who will ultimately hold licences to shoot grouse.

Grouse moors are being singled out—targeted, even—by ministers, and certainly by the Greens and Scottish Labour, who have a desire to bring an end to country sports. The bill gives the Scottish Government broad enabling powers to add further species to the licensing scheme. Constituencies such as mine are heavily reliant on the shooting of other types of game, including pheasant, red-legged partridge and duck. The possibility that those birds could be brought within the scope of the licensing scheme by regulation is extremely worrying, not least because the entire premise of the scheme is about deterring the persecution of raptors on grouse moors.

The mission creep that has taken place with the bill has been quite astonishing, and it is important that I and other Conservative members make it clear that the bill exceeds what it set out to do, including by banning glue traps and snares, which are measures that were added to the bill after it was introduced.

The Scottish Government knows just what is at stake if landowners that are investing in moorland management for grouse shooting decide to pack up and go home. It knows because it commissioned research in order to better understand the socioeconomic and biodiversity impacts of grouse moor management. The research could not have been clearer on the benefits that the sector brings to rural Scotland: more jobs per hectare than other comparable land

use; the employment of gamekeepers, shepherds and countless seasonal workers in the form of beaters, flankers, pickers-up and hospitality staff; and the highest level of local and regional spending compared to other land uses, stimulating rural businesses across the business divide, from garages to game dealers. It also benefits from no public subsidies, unlike some non-governmental organisations, in return for delivering the conservation of some of our most threatened upland birds, including curlew, lapwing, black grouse, oystercatchers and the golden plover. It is a sector that we need to support, not disincentivise.

In closing, I put on record my thanks to the committee clerks, committee members and all stakeholders I have had the privilege of engaging with about the bill. It has been an interesting experience to be at the sharp end of a topic that clearly divides opinion. Success now depends on NatureScot taking heed of the considered views of those who will, ultimately, have to obtain the licences.

15:46

Ariane Burgess (Highlands and Islands (Green)): The legislation is a momentous step forward in the laws that protect the welfare of Scotland's wildlife. Raptor persecution was described by the late First Minister Donald Dewar, in the early days of the Parliament, as a "national disgrace". Today, we can take confidence that the window of opportunity has closed for those few individuals who continue to perpetrate crimes against our birds of prey and other wildlife. Indeed, since the Scottish Greens have been in the Parliament, we have demanded tougher penalties for those who commit wildlife crime and an end to blood sports and the wildlife management practices that are associated with them. Although the bill does not go as far as entirely outlawing grouse shooting, we should make no mistake that the robust licensing system will regulate the industry and the small number of people within it who have continued to flout the law.

The legislation was a fundamental component of the Bute house agreement, which brought the Scottish Greens into Government. It is built on the legacy of work by my Scottish Green colleagues past and present, who have campaigned with steadfast determination for a full ban on snares, tougher restrictions on the use of inhumane wildlife traps, increased powers for animal welfare inspectors, and restrictions on muirburn to address the climate emergency. All those measures have made it into the bill.

I will take a moment to highlight the important provisions that have been secured to extend the powers of Scottish SPCA inspectors. For more

than a decade, shameful wildlife crimes have gone unpunished because of the difficulties that are faced by the police in gathering evidence to secure prosecutions. Such crimes often occur in remote, isolated areas, with evidence having disappeared by the time that the police arrive on the scene. SSPCA inspectors, who may arrive earlier as part of their duties, have found themselves unable to take action on illegally set traps that are in the vicinity. The extension of SSPCA inspectors' powers to gather evidence to aid police prosecutions is a proportionate way forward. It will enhance the work of the police and should bring more of those who perpetuate wildlife crime to justice.

That progress could not have been achieved without the tireless work of stakeholders from animal welfare and environmental organisations. I extend personal thanks to the brilliant team at RSPB Scotland, the dedicated Revive coalition, Trees for Life, and third sector animal welfare champions including OneKind. The peatland programme of the International Union for Conservation of Nature also provided valuable impartial advice that was based on the latest science, which has certainly deepened my understanding of the vital importance of protecting our fragile peatland ecosystems.

The bill is a significant step forward in bringing Scotland's wildlife management into the 21st century. However, as with any legislation, there is more that I hope to see the Parliament act on in the future. The conversation on implementing ethical principles for wildlife control, which the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee started last year, during consideration of the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill, and continued in stakeholder evidence during stage 1 of this bill, should not end. There is more that the Government can do in the years ahead to implement those principles in a meaningful way.

Finlay Carson: Will the member give way?

Ariane Burgess: I am just about to wind up.

Members working on the bill have heard about the emerging science in the areas of raptor population recovery, about the control of wildfire, about the environmental impacts of muirburn, and about the restoration of peatland. An amendment in the name of Elena Whitham that was passed on Tuesday evening commits the Government to reviewing the legislation every five years. We should use the time between now and the first review to improve our evidence base and data sources and to ensure that the legislation continues to deliver for Scotland's wildlife and uplands for generations to come.

The Scottish Greens whole-heartedly support the bill, and I am proud to vote for it today.

15:50

Emma Harper (South Scotland) (SNP): I welcome the opportunity to speak in the stage 3 debate, not least because I am member of the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee and because I lodged a number of amendments to the bill at both stage 2 and stage 3. I very much appreciate the minister's help with that.

It has been interesting to be part of the scrutiny process for the bill, which supports wildlife management and muirburn. I will focus my comments mostly on birds of prey. Fundamentally, we know that—as members from all parties have stated—the illegal killing of Scotland's magnificent birds of prey cannot be tolerated. It is right, therefore, that the bill seeks to tackle the destructive minority who continue to commit those wildlife crimes.

As a representative of a large rural area in the South Scotland region, I think that it is important to put on record that the Scottish Government recognises the economic contribution of grouse shooting to Scotland's economy. Wildlife crime is abhorrent, reprehensible and unacceptable, and the persecution of birds of prey has no place in a modern Scotland. It is also completely at odds with work to address the biodiversity crisis, which is supported by many people and organisations across Scotland.

Rachael Hamilton: Will the member take an intervention?

Emma Harper: Presiding Officer, I do not know how much time there is for interventions.

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone): We are very tight for time this afternoon.

Emma Harper: Okay—I will not take an intervention, then; I will keep going.

Raptor persecution is a serious problem in some parts of Scotland, particularly in areas that are linked to driven grouse shooting. We heard another report just four hours ago on STV about a missing hen harrier called Shalimar, which is the fourth bird to disappear suspiciously from the Angus glens.

Of the 131 tagged golden eagles that were analysed in the 2017 Fielding and Whitfield report on "Analyses of the fates of satellite tracked golden eagles in Scotland", 41 birds suspiciously disappeared and were assumed to have been killed. Since the report was published, RSPB Scotland has reported the sudden stop, or "no malfunction", of satellite tags of a further eight golden eagles, 21 hen harriers, five white-tailed eagles and a red kite on Scottish grouse moors. We also know that Merrick, the female golden eagle, who was translocated from the Angus glens to the South Scotland region, was reported

missing; she was last recorded on 12 October 2023 in an area of the Scottish Borders that is associated with grouse moor management.

The bill will include monitoring and reporting on, and improving, investigation powers for any incidents that are reported. The Scottish Government recognises that grouse shooting contributes immensely to the rural economy, and the bill is not about stopping that activity. It is interesting to note that, while we keep hearing that the Scottish National Party doesnae care about rural, there are 29 SNP members in the chamber and online, and only five Tories in the chamber and three online. It is interesting to see those numbers.

Rachael Hamilton: Will the member take an intervention?

Emma Harper: I have said that I am not taking any interventions.

It is worth repeating that the Scottish Government recognises that grouse shooting contributes immensely to the rural economy. For many years, conservation groups have reported the number of raptors over grouse moors to be lower than expected.

I will touch on one other issue, because I realise that we are short of time. The introduction of muirburn licensing—one of the subjects to which my amendments to the bill related—will ensure that muirburn is undertaken in a safe, environmentally sustainable manner in line with best practice. The licensing scheme will allow muirburn for a number of purposes, including preventing and reducing the risk of wildfires.

I know that time is really short, so I will conclude. The bill is important in ensuring that the balance between conservation, muirburn and wildlife management is supported and sustained. Finally, I thank the committee clerks, all the witnesses and colleagues for their input to the bill.

The Presiding Officer: We move to winding-up speeches.

15:54

Colin Smyth (South Scotland) (Lab): It has been a long stage 3 process, but it has been an even longer wait for action to disrupt the undeniable link between driven grouse moors and raptor persecution. Rhoda Grant reminded us that it is nearly 14 years since Labour member Peter Peacock lodged an amendment to the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Bill that sought to establish licensing. It was dismissed at the time by the SNP as being “too far reaching”. When I look back at the dozens of unsuccessful amendments that I have lodged to the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, I am comforted by the

fact that Parliament eventually gets round to agreeing with Labour.

I suspect that the exception to that will be the Conservatives, if their contributions to this debate are anything to go by, with their warnings of Armageddon for rural Scotland, simply as a result of licensing. The truth is that they do not speak for rural Scotland on the issue. Rural Scotland overwhelmingly backs the reforms and, in fact, rural Scotland wanted to go further, as polling has shown. The bill could and should have been better, but it was not.

If the Conservatives' contributions have been many and noisy, I have to say that I am disappointed at the silence of the Greens throughout the process. Not one amendment to the bill was pressed by a single Green MSP. Many amendments to improve animal welfare were lodged but, on every occasion, the Scottish Greens voted with the Tories against them—and against the very views of the animal welfare charities that Ariane Burgess listed earlier. Has a party ever voted—

Mark Ruskell (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green): Will the member give way on that point?

Colin Smyth: Absolutely.

Mark Ruskell: I do not know whether Colin Smyth has recognised that the Greens are now a party of government. We have been influencing and working on the bill for some time, including in respect of the important provision of SSPCA powers that probably would not be in the bill had it not been for the Bute house agreement and the amazing work that the Government has done on the back of that.

Colin Smyth: The reality is that Mark Ruskell fails to explain why, when we had stage 2 and stage 3 amendments, he took the whip from Edward Mountain more than he listened to the animal welfare charities. Dozens of amendments were lodged, and Mr Ruskell voted against every one of them. [*Interruption.*] He thinks that it is amusing that we cannot have the improvements to the bill that could have been achieved if his party had stuck to its policies and principles.

I thank those who stuck to their principles and campaigned for reform for so long, including the Revive coalition members—OneKind, League Against Cruel Sports, Raptor Persecution UK, Common Weal, Friends of the Earth—and charities such as RSPB, the SSPCA and Scottish Badgers. It was their tenacity, persistence and determination that led to the bill in the first place. It is a bill that will end the cruelty of snaring; call time on the barbaric use of glue traps; properly utilise the immense skills, professionalism and experience of the SSPCA in the battle against wildlife crime; and pave the way for the long-

overdue licensing of traps and of muirburn on our grouse moors.

I am sorry that we did not succeed in making the bill stronger, and it will remain a mystery to me as to why Green and SNP MSPs joined the Tories to block even modest improvements, such as the recording of the numbers and species killed, to improve our understanding of species biodiversity. We also have to be honest that the bill will not end the mass killing of one animal to protect another solely for the purpose of subsequently killing that animal for sport—the “circle of destruction” that Revive described.

I also thank those who will feel that the bill goes too far. Groups such as BASC, the Scottish Gamekeepers Association and Scottish Land & Estates suggested a number of constructive changes to improve the workings of the bill, and we backed some of those changes.

I know that, with their skills and experience, it will be our land managers, gamekeepers and others who work the land who will implement the legislation and continue to manage and protect our countryside. They have absolutely nothing to fear from the bill and what is a modest, overdue licensing scheme that will protect the innocent and start to rid the grouse moor industry of the minority that brings it into disrepute.

The Presiding Officer: You must conclude, Mr Smyth.

Colin Smyth: Those people who think that it is acceptable to illegally shoot, trap and poison protected birds of prey on our grouse moors are the only ones who should fear the bill. I hope that, as a result of the bill, their time will, at long last, be well and truly up.

15:59

Edward Mountain (Highlands and Islands) (Con): Where do I start? The debate has been heated, but I do not think that anyone in the chamber would sanction or approve any shape or form of wildlife persecution: it is just not on. I have made the point on numerous occasions that it needs to stop. A selfish and stupid few carry it out. I am happy to put that on the record.

I thought that I was going to enjoy talking about a subject that has taken up a huge period of my life. I have enjoyed engaging with the committee and with some of the groups that sought to change activities that I have been involved in during my life. Most of those engagements have been good natured, although we have agreed to disagree. I hope that, as we progress, dialogue can continue on an open and frank basis.

The bill's progress has been unusual; a new section was added at stage 2, which I always think

is not good for a parliamentary procedure. We have, unfortunately, had a change of ministers, although I understand the reason for that. We heard a minister arguing against his own amendments at stage 2, which I found quite odd. When he was challenged about it the other day in the chamber, the minister said that since becoming a minister, his eyes had been opened and he is aware of more figures. It is a pity that that was not the case during stage 2.

I will talk only briefly about glue traps, because I understand that my time is short. At stage 3, we saw an about-turn on glue traps. It has been a bit of a rollercoaster ride. I am disappointed, in some respects, that we are where we are with glue traps. I hope that the minister will bear it in mind that there are plenty of places where it is not appropriate to use rodenticides—certainly their use is not appropriate in schools, hospitals and restaurants. We do not want dead rats and mice lying around. People who have smelled them when they have been under floorboards could have been put off more than just their dinner. Glue traps are something that we should consider.

I am disappointed in respect of snaring. I make no bones about the fact that removing snaring as a tool is regressive and will end up bringing firearms closer to conurbations. That is bad news. It will also make it very difficult to control rabbits. For example, in one particular patch that I managed, in one year alone we had to kill 12,000 rabbits to maintain and look after designated habitats.

As far as trapping generally is concerned, there are bits of the bill with which I am unhappy. I welcome the Government's point about damage to traps. That was helpful, and I hope that the Government will ensure that it follows through on that.

I remain deeply concerned in relation to muirburn. Everyone thinks that muirburn is done to promote grouse shooting, but it is absolutely not done purely for grouse shooting. As Kate Forbes said during stage 2, muirburn is vital for protecting communities and making sure that there is not a heavy fuel load within and close to habitation.

Muirburn is also about managing the vegetation on a hill, and not just for grouse. Other species need long rank heather to nest in—hen harriers prefer to nest on burn edges where there is longer heather. However, to allow them to do well on the moor, they need prey species, such as grouse or other birds that benefit from shorter heather. Eagles also probably benefit from shorter vegetation that hares can go in.

I urge the minister to monitor carefully the effects of muirburn on all wildlife—it is not just about grouse—and, if necessary, to come back

with amendments at a later stage to make it easier to carry out muirburn to benefit management of our high hills.

To conclude, I say that I found one thing amusing in the debate—the justification for making something that was already illegal, illegal, in case anyone illegally makes it legal in the future. That was the argument that the minister put in relation to making traps for killing birds illegal.

The Presiding Officer: You must conclude.

Edward Mountain: That twisted logic perhaps defines much of the bill.

16:04

Jim Fairlie: As I close the debate, I again thank the Rural Affairs and Islands Committee and the Parliament, especially the committee clerks and the members who have spoken today, as well all the organisations that have contributed to the debate.

At the inception of the Scottish Parliament, it was hailed as “the people’s Parliament”. The levels of engagement and participation in this bill and many other bills demonstrate how much better legislation is when the Government and the people engage to get it right. I thank everyone who has done that in order to get us to where we are today. I will aim much of my closing speech at those who are listening now.

My final thanks are probably the most important. The only way that this very new minister was able to manage a stage 2 with 23 groupings and more than 200 amendments, and a stage 3 with 15 groupings and more than 100 amendments, was by having an absolutely brilliant team, supported by outstanding policy and legal officials, who have helped me every step of the way in navigating the complexity of making complex law. They do all the heavy lifting: I am not sure that many members in the chamber really realise just how hard Scotland’s civil servants work in the service of Scotland. I give them my thanks for their expertise, their diligence and, most of all, their patience.

Because my entire adult life has, until recently, been bound by the rhythms of nature, the ebb and flow of seasons, the understanding of new life and, of course, the acceptance of death as a reality of our natural environment, it is perhaps fitting that this has been my first bill as a minister. It is vital that part of the Scottish Government’s wider programme of work is to protect and restore our wildlife, biodiversity and natural environment. The bill builds on the strong foundations of the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Act 2020 and the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Act 2023, which we passed last year.

I remember being brought up in a council housing estate in Perth before, as a young man, going to spend more than 30 years working on the land. I have always had love and a passion for our countryside and the wildlife that we share with it. I have lived through some great highs and very real lows in my farming career. I would like to touch on that briefly and make a comparison for the folk whom we rely on now to manage our landscapes.

Today, most folk in our country and, most certainly, in this Government absolutely get that farmers play a vital role in our society and in serving the nation, by providing the raw products for feeding us and generating income that we spend more widely, and by enhancing our environment and working with nature. A new agriculture reform law will do even more to strengthen that symbiotic relationship and the respect that we have for each other, and to cement that absolutely vital relationship.

It was not so long ago that farmers were seen as the villains. The occurrence of BSE, “Frankenstein foods” and foot-and-mouth disease had the industry on the rack, with farmers feeling as though they were public enemy number 1. As a young shepherd with a very young family in a tied house, I was well aware of the anxiety that that uncertainty could bring. During work on the bill, we have been reminded of the uncertainty that hangs over a group of rural workers with regard to housing. The Minister for Housing has agreed to meet me to discuss that issue, so I will revisit it at a later date.

Through farmers’ engagement with the public, the telling of positive stories and reminding folk of the good work that farmers do, the narrative started to change, and attitudes changed with it. We now have a healthy relationship between farmers and consumers, which should be celebrated and continued. That is an opportunity that the passing of the bill affords rural practitioners on grouse moors and in game businesses. It is a demonstration that the industry is regulated and that regulation is adhered to by hard-working responsible people who love the natural environment as much as, if not more than, the rest of us do. That should be celebrated.

If the BBC can get blockbuster viewing figures from the farming heroes in “This Farming Life”, could it not do the same with environmental heroes in a programme called “This Moorland Life”? It could do worse than to start off with the aforementioned Dee Ward of the Rottal estate, who is, as I have already stated, doing amazing work.

When taking the bill forward, the Government and all the ministers who have helped in its passage have been clear that balance is the key to making the legislation work for all. Our aim was

clear: the tiny number of bad apples should be weeded out. We will consider our burnings far more. We will have the highest standards of animal welfare, thereby demonstrating that the industry will do its job better than anyone could have imagined was possible. The industry will gain the respect that it so richly deserves by being the custodian of the landscape and of the standards that society expects and wants.

I urge the industry to grab this opportunity and to make it its quest to be recognised—not just in Scotland, but across the world—as the beating heart of an environment that we can all be proud of for generations to come.

For the benefit of our environment, our wildlife and our rural communities, I urge all members to agree to the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill today.

Parliamentary Bureau Motion

16:09

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

The next item of business is consideration of Parliamentary Bureau motion S6M-12592, on committee membership.

Motion moved,

That the Parliament agrees that—

Meghan Gallacher be appointed as a member of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee; and

Tim Eagle be appointed to replace Jeremy Balfour as a member of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee.—[George Adam]

The Presiding Officer: The question on the motion will be put at decision time.

Decision Time

16:10

The Presiding Officer (Alison Johnstone):

There are two questions to be put as a result of today's business. The first question is, that motion S6M-12535, in the name of Jim Fairlie, on the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to. As it is a motion to pass the bill at stage 3, the question must be decided by division. There will be a short suspension to allow members to access the digital voting system.

16:10

Meeting suspended.

16:12

On resuming—

The Presiding Officer: The question is, that motion S6M-12535, in the name of Jim Fairlie, on the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, be agreed to. Members should cast their votes now.

For

Adam, George (Paisley) (SNP)
 Adam, Karen (Banffshire and Buchan Coast) (SNP)
 Adamson, Clare (Motherwell and Wishaw) (SNP)
 Allan, Alasdair (Na h-Eileanan an Iar) (SNP)
 Arthur, Tom (Renfrewshire South) (SNP)
 Baillie, Jackie (Dumbarton) (Lab)
 Baker, Claire (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Beattie, Colin (Midlothian North and Musselburgh) (SNP)
 Bibby, Neil (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Boyack, Sarah (Lothian) (Lab)
 Brown, Keith (Clackmannanshire and Dunblane) (SNP)
 Brown, Siobhian (Ayr) (SNP)
 Burgess, Ariane (Highlands and Islands) (Green)
 Callaghan, Stephanie (Uddingston and Bellshill) (SNP)
 Chapman, Maggie (North East Scotland) (Green)
 Choudhury, Foyso (Lothian) (Lab)
 Clark, Katy (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Coffey, Willie (Kilmarnock and Irvine Valley) (SNP)
 Cole-Hamilton, Alex (Edinburgh Western) (LD)
 Constance, Angela (Almond Valley) (SNP)
 Dey, Graeme (Angus South) (SNP)
 Don, Natalie (Renfrewshire North and West) (SNP)
 Doris, Bob (Glasgow Maryhill and Springburn) (SNP)
 Dornan, James (Glasgow Cathcart) (SNP)
 Dunbar, Jackie (Aberdeen Donside) (SNP)
 Duncan-Glancy, Pam (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Ewing, Annabelle (Cowdenbeath) (SNP)
 Fairlie, Jim (Perthshire South and Kinross-shire) (SNP)
 FitzPatrick, Joe (Dundee City West) (SNP)
 Forbes, Kate (Skye, Lochaber and Badenoch) (SNP)
 Gilruth, Jenny (Mid Fife and Glenrothes) (SNP)
 Grahame, Christine (Midlothian South, Tweeddale and Lauderdale) (SNP)
 Grant, Rhoda (Highlands and Islands) (Lab)
 Gray, Neil (Airdrie and Shotts) (SNP)
 Griffin, Mark (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Harper, Emma (South Scotland) (SNP)
 Harvie, Patrick (Glasgow) (Green)

Haughey, Clare (Rutherglen) (SNP)
 Hepburn, Jamie (Cumbernauld and Kilsyth) (SNP)
 Hyslop, Fiona (Linlithgow) (SNP)
 Johnson, Daniel (Edinburgh Southern) (Lab)
 Kidd, Bill (Glasgow Anniesland) (SNP)
 Leonard, Richard (Central Scotland) (Lab)
 Lochhead, Richard (Moray) (SNP)
 MacDonald, Gordon (Edinburgh Pentlands) (SNP)
 MacGregor, Fulton (Coatbridge and Chryston) (SNP)
 Mackay, Gillian (Central Scotland) (Green)
 Mackay, Rona (Strathkelvin and Bearsden) (SNP)
 Macpherson, Ben (Edinburgh Northern and Leith) (SNP)
 Maguire, Ruth (Cunninghame South) (SNP)
 Martin, Gillian (Aberdeenshire East) (SNP)
 Mason, John (Glasgow Shettleston) (SNP)
 Matheson, Michael (Falkirk West) (SNP)
 McAllan, Màiri (Clydesdale) (SNP)
 McArthur, Liam (Orkney Islands) (LD)
 McKee, Ivan (Glasgow Provan) (SNP)
 McLennan, Paul (East Lothian) (SNP)
 McMillan, Stuart (Greenock and Inverclyde) (SNP)
 McNair, Marie (Clydebank and Milngavie) (SNP)
 McNeill, Pauline (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Minto, Jenni (Argyll and Bute) (SNP)
 Mochan, Carol (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Nicoll, Audrey (Aberdeen South and North Kincardine) (SNP)
 O'Kane, Paul (West Scotland) (Lab)
 Regan, Ash (Edinburgh Eastern) (Alba)
 Rennie, Willie (North East Fife) (LD)
 Robison, Shona (Dundee City East) (SNP)
 Roddick, Emma (Highlands and Islands) (SNP)
 Rowley, Alex (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Lab)
 Ruskell, Mark (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Green)
 Sarwar, Anas (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Slater, Lorna (Lothian) (Green)
 Smyth, Colin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Stevenson, Collette (East Kilbride) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kaukab (Glasgow Kelvin) (SNP)
 Stewart, Kevin (Aberdeen Central) (SNP)
 Sturgeon, Nicola (Glasgow Southside) (SNP)
 Sweeney, Paul (Glasgow) (Lab)
 Swinney, John (Perthshire North) (SNP)
 Torrance, David (Kirkcaldy) (SNP)
 Tweed, Evelyn (Stirling) (SNP)
 Whitfield, Martin (South Scotland) (Lab)
 Whitham, Elena (Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley) (SNP)
 Wishart, Beatrice (Shetland Islands) (LD)
 Yousaf, Humza (Glasgow Pollok) (SNP)

Against

Balfour, Jeremy (Lothian) (Con)
 Briggs, Miles (Lothian) (Con)
 Burnett, Alexander (Aberdeenshire West) (Con)
 Carlaw, Jackson (Eastwood) (Con)
 Carson, Finlay (Galloway and West Dumfries) (Con)
 Dowey, Sharon (South Scotland) (Con)
 Eagle, Tim (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Ewing, Fergus (Inverness and Nairn) (SNP)
 Findlay, Russell (West Scotland) (Con)
 Fraser, Murdo (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Gallacher, Meghan (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Golden, Maurice (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Gosal, Pam (West Scotland) (Con)
 Greene, Jamie (West Scotland) (Con)
 Gulhane, Sandesh (Glasgow) (Con)
 Hamilton, Rachael (Ettrick, Roxburgh and Berwickshire) (Con)
 Hoy, Craig (South Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Liam (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Kerr, Stephen (Central Scotland) (Con)

Lumsden, Douglas (North East Scotland) (Con)
 McCall, Roz (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Mountain, Edward (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Mundell, Oliver (Dumfriesshire) (Con)
 Ross, Douglas (Highlands and Islands) (Con)
 Simpson, Graham (Central Scotland) (Con)
 Stewart, Alexander (Mid Scotland and Fife) (Con)
 Webber, Sue (Lothian) (Con)
 Wells, Annie (Glasgow) (Con)
 White, Tess (North East Scotland) (Con)
 Whittle, Brian (South Scotland) (Con)

The Presiding Officer: The result of the division on motion S6M-12535, in the name of Jim Fairlie, on the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill, is: For 85, Against 30, Abstentions 0.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that the Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill be passed.

The Presiding Officer: The final question is, that motion S6M-12592, in the name of George Adam, on behalf of the Parliamentary Bureau, on committee membership, be agreed to.

Motion agreed to,

That the Parliament agrees that—

Meghan Gallacher be appointed as a member of the Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee; and

Tim Eagle be appointed to replace Jeremy Balfour as a member of the Delegated Powers and Law Reform Committee.

The Presiding Officer: That concludes decision time.

Meeting closed at 16:15.

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