

To the Clerk of the Committee,

We are writing in relation to your recent consultation on snaring which took place at Holyrood on 8/11/23, during which we believe that the work of the Clyde Valley Wader Group was misrepresented – in a manner which could have misled the committee. We, the undersigned, represent Clyde Valley Wader group and associated parties, and we can confirm that while your witness was technically correct in explaining that snaring was not undertaken in the fields on Douglas Estate where the lapwing/brassica trials have been carried out, snaring is carried out elsewhere in the immediate area, and on a number of neighbouring properties. It is disingenuous to argue that snaring has played no role in managing predator numbers in this study, and while the reasons why snaring is not carried out on the study plots are complex, it is not because we believe that snaring poses a risk to animal welfare, or because we reject the efficacy and value of snares. Snares are an important tool in the effort to conserve wading birds.

Clyde Valley Wader Group understands that predator control is not a management technique its own right – it is the sum of a variety of techniques which include snaring. Predator control is therefore inhibited by the removal of snaring, and we believe that your move to introduce a ban on snares will make it harder to deliver effective conservation for groundnesting birds, not only here in the Southern Uplands but also in Scotland more generally.

As a farmer-led initiative, Clyde Valley Wader Group has put a tremendous amount of time and effort into wader conservation over the last five years, and we are delighted that the Scottish Government is interested our work. However, we would ask that if information is required on any aspect of our conservation work in future, you should feel able to contact us directly – we'd be delighted to help. In this case, we are extremely disappointed that our work was summarised for you by an organisation which has never had any involvement with Clyde Valley Wader Group, or with any practical attempt to conserve wading birds on farmland.

Yours faithfully,

Douglas Telfer, Chairman, Clyde Valley Wader Group
Patrick Laurie, Project Lead, The Working for Waders Initiative
The Rt Hon The Earl of Home, Douglas and Angus Estates