| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-1410  Responded to: 03 June 2025 |
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Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## I am writing to request official figures on hare coursing incidents in Scotland for the year 2024. Following a recent investigation into hare coursing in England and Wales, which saw a significant rise in reported incidents, I would like to better understand if Scotland is experiencing a similar increase in this illegal activity.

## Given the concerns highlighted in the report—such as the impact on animal welfare, rural communities, and farmers, as well as the potential for hare coursing to be linked to other forms of criminal activity—an insight into any trends or increases in incidents in Scotland would be incredibly helpful.

## Specifically, I would appreciate information on:

## 1.The number of hare coursing incidents reported in Scotland in 2024, if available.

## 2.Any areas or regions in Scotland that are particularly affected by this issue.

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it […] is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available:

[Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/)

## 3.The actions and measures being taken by law enforcement agencies to tackle hare coursing and its associated issues.

Police Scotland has both full time and part time Wildlife Crime Officers throughout Scotland and Hare Coursing incidents will be allocated to these specialist Officers wherever possible.

Police Scotland is a participant in Operation Galileo which is a national police initiative which focuses on Hare Coursing. In line with Operation Galileo, Police Scotland Wildlife Crime Officers carry out targeted patrols and engagement with rural communities in efforts to build intelligence and bring offenders to justice.

Hare Coursing was part of the 2022-2025 Scottish Partnership against Rural Crime (SPARC) strategy with the lead organisation being Scottish Land & Estates. SPARC is a preventions led partnership strategy. An action plan is published on the SPARC webpage.

[Sparc-2022-strategy-13-9-22-1.pdf](https://scottishparc.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Sparc-2022-strategy-13-9-22-1.pdf)

## 4. Any insights into the impact of hare coursing on local farmers, wildlife conservation efforts, and public safety.

## If the information is not readily available, I would be grateful for guidance on how to obtain these figures or any relevant reports.

Hare Coursing forms a significant part of the UK wildlife crime priority of ‘Poaching’. The inclusion of this priority, of which there are only 6, highlights how seriously it is viewed within the wildlife crime enforcement sector. It is widely accepted that those involved in Hare Coursing are often involved in other forms of criminality. Hare Coursing can often involve intimidation of farm and landowners by those committing it, and Police Scotland routinely investigate instances of Hare Coursing as they are reported to Police, as well as any additional offences identified.

Police Scotland does not hold any information relating to the conservation status of hares with a particular focus on coursing.

In response to this part of your request, and in terms of Section 17 of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, this represents a notice that the information you seek is not held by Police Scotland.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.