Much has been learnt and science has moved on since I lodged this petition in 2017, so I would like to take this opportunity to summarise this for the members of the Committee.

There is new evidence about the cat populations in Scotland. The scientists and Trap-Neuter-Vaccinate-Return experts in the Scottish Wildcat Action (SWA) project have found evidence of highly challenging problems in trying to effectively reduce the numbers of un-neutered domestic and feral domestic cats. “There is little purpose in doing this indefinitely if the influx of domestic cats into wildcat populations cannot eventually be turned off at source.” They require “legal measures across the whole of Scotland that would prevent cat ownership unless they were neutered/ vaccinated/ microchipped, starting with the priority areas and extending to the whole of Scotland.”

World experts from the International Union for the Conservation of Nature/ Specialist Cat Group provided a scientific overview of data on the cat populations in Scotland in 2019. Their independent conclusion is “There is evidence of high and accelerating numbers of un-neutered domestic and ferally living cats in Scotland”.

The position of the Scottish Government has not however shifted from 2017 despite this evidence. Not to implement the recommended measures, no if’s, but’s or maybe’s, will put Scotland in a failing position in terms of climate crisis and natural systems crisis in November 2020 and beyond.

I have provided evidence illustrating the scale of morbidity and mortality that accompanies the life conditions of un-neutered domestic and feral domestic cats, on my website.

A collaboration of UK cat organisations submitted objections early on - I think it's fair to say that these should be considered as requiring genuine addressing/ planning/ mitigation - but they should not be seen as barriers. The experience of Scotland’s cat rescue community was not consulted and our experience in Scotland does not support those objections. The will of cat rescue volunteers is for stronger measures to be introduced urgently, to neuter all cats for their own welfare. Four and a half thousand members of the public have signed to agree with us so far.

Two years on – we need have no doubts that neutering is generally considered as good for cat welfare. However, I fear the wildcat in the wild will be doomed and domestic cats condemned to high morbidity and mortality – unless we act on the scientists’ recommendations today. I accept there are practical challenges to be worked out but these are do-able.

Given the fact domestic cats living ferally without human support or care are rarely seen I believe this OS Map would illustrate the scale of the problem. The map shows locations I have carried out TNVR in one area. There are more maps. This one is enough to show the scale of abundance and saturation. An average number at each location at be c. 6. Each location has been repopulated repeatedly over the 20+
years I have been undertaking this cradle to grave work to support domestic cats living ferally.


2. Urs Breitenmoser, Tabea Lanz and Christine Breitenmoser-Würsten (February 2019) Conservation of the wildcat (Felis silvestris) in Scotland: Review of the conservation status and assessment of conservation activities. “hybridisation is considered the major threat to the survival of the wildcat in Scotland and recent data suggest that this threat is accelerating” http://www.scottishwildcataction.org/latest-news/2019/february/new-international-report-sets-out-how-scottish-wildcats-can-be-saved-from-extinction/

A Long-Term Lens: Cumulative Impacts of Free-Roaming Cat Management Strategy and Intensity on Preventable Cat Mortalities John D. Boone1, Philip S. Miller2, Joyce R. Briggs3, Valerie A. W. Benka3, Dennis F. Lawler4, Margaret Slater5, Julie K. Levy6 and Stephen Zawistowski7