

The Employment Rights of Gamekeepers

Part 2 of Research to assess socioeconomic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors and to understand the rights of gamekeepers



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**The views expressed in this report are those of the researchers
and do not necessarily represent those of the Research Advisory Group,
the Scottish Government or Scottish Ministers.**

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Summary and key findings from the research

1.1 Background

1. [Thomson et al.](#) (2018, 'Phase 1') noted that grouse shooting and related activities are important to some remote and fragile local economies. The '[Phase 1' evidence review](#) of socio-economic impacts of grouse moors suggested that that around 2,500 FTE jobs (both direct and indirect) were reliant on the grouse moor sector in 2009, with £14.5 million spent on wages related to grouse moor management and support activities. [Thomson et al.](#) (2018, p.40) recommended that there needed to be *“independent research to engage with gamekeepers on motivations, behaviours and support needs...this important group of land managers are understudied and developing a greater understanding of their drivers, concerns and motivations would likely be beneficial.”*
2. This report - [Part 2. The Employment Rights of Gamekeepers](#) - is part of a larger, multipart study commissioned by the Scottish Government to [Assess Socioeconomic and Biodiversity Impacts of Driven Grouse Moors and to understand the Rights of Gamekeepers](#). The report delivers to a Scottish Government commitment to undertake *“work in relation to protecting gamekeepers' employment and other rights”*, this report provides evidence on the working lives and employment rights and benefits of gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies across Scotland, with key findings specific to the driven grouse sector drawn out where appropriate.
3. This research is one of the first independent attempts to investigate the gamekeeping profession and develop a profile of the people involved in the sector, their terms and conditions of employment and opinions they have on issues that impinge on their working lives.

1.2 Methods and caveats

4. Members of the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) and the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC, in Scotland) were surveyed. The online survey was open for two months closing in early February 2020. 152 responses were received and this is estimated to be a response rate of 10%-13% of the population of gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies in Scotland.
5. It is acknowledged that only the views of those gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies that chose to participate in the survey are provided and that the views of the wider public, or those with competing ideologies are not presented. Further, a **number of biases inherently exist** within surveys of this type, including voluntary-response bias, social desirability/response biases, under-coverage or non-response. Whilst the stakeholders on the project's Research Advisory Group considered the results to be a fair representation of the sector the findings should therefore be viewed with these caveats in mind.

1.3 Findings

1.3.1 The people

6. The gamekeeping profession is significantly **male dominated** (95% of survey respondents were male). There was **good geographical representation** in the survey responses with two-thirds coming from the Highlands and Islands and the North East of Scotland. Half the respondents were **over 50 years of age** (with 25% being 60 and older), a third were aged 30-49 years of age whilst 13% were under 30.
7. A quarter of the respondents held the **position** of head keeper, with 18% beat keepers, 15% deer stalkers and 14% single-handed keepers. There were also some semi-retired and self-employed keepers. For many, being a gamekeeper, stalker or ghillie was considered a '**vocation**' rather than a job *per se*, particularly where there were **familial links** to the profession – the case for over half of the respondents.

8. For most, there was considerable 'practical experience' from a 'lifetime' in the job with 60% of the respondents having **more than 20 years working experience** in the profession. Only 11% of the respondents had no **formal training** pertaining to their job whilst nearly 50% had a further education qualification and 25% a higher education qualification relating to gamekeeping. Gamekeeping apprenticeships had been completed by 14% of the respondents and 63% of respondents receive on-the-job training. On-the-job training and qualifications regularly reflected legal obligations or best practice, such as Deer Management Qualifications, all-terrain vehicles, chainsaws, etc.
9. The majority (87%) of the respondents **lived with a partner/spouse** and 34% lived with dependants at home – with an average of two school age **children** each. Only 16% of these partners/spouses were not economically active – and 18% also worked in the same business as the gamekeeper respondent. For nearly a quarter of the respondents living with a partner/spouse, the gamekeeper respondent provided less than half of the total household income (excluding non-pecuniary benefits such as tied housing).

1.3.2 The job

10. Three-quarters of the respondents **worked solely on private estates**, with 8% working on private estates in conjunction with other types of business/agency. A higher proportion of the respondents who were undertaking driven grouse tasks were working for/owned sporting agencies or were sporting tenants (23%).
11. Game and wildlife management activities are often undertaken within **teams on estates** and only 17% of the respondents stated that they were the sole game and deer manager at their workplace. Those with driven grouse moor roles were much more likely to have large numbers of co-workers, with 52% reporting that they had more than five other full and part-time game and deer management colleagues with nearly a third reporting 10 or more gamekeeper colleagues.
12. On a day-to-day basis the head keeper provided **daily instruction** for 25% of the sample, whilst only 19% took instruction from the owner of the estate/business that they worked for, and 9% being directed by a factor/land agent responsible for decision making. The role of the head keeper in providing direction to other keepers was more important for those with driven grouse work. For those receiving daily instructions, a third of the decision makers were non-resident on the estate/business.
13. Taking an average across the whole sample, the respondents reported that they worked 63 hours per week during **peak working periods** and 41 hours per week during off-peak periods. The roles played are highly variable and individual keepers have their own unique blend of roles throughout the year:
 - 78% were engaged in deer management - *for 21% this was over 60% of their time.*
 - 76% undertook general estate work.
 - 74% were actively involved in pest control for farming and forestry.
 - 61% had non-grouse game birds (such as pheasants and partridge) management roles.
 - 44% were involved in driven grouse work - *for 22% this was for over 60% of their time.*
 - 36% were involved in walked-up grouse activities.
14. For the 83 respondents that were **engaged in grouse shooting** to some extent the grouse work undertaken was exclusively driven for 35% of this cohort of respondents whilst 25% were only engaged in walked-up grouse and 45% were involved in both driven and walked-up activities (remembering they also have other non-grouse activities to undertake). Walked-up grouse tended to be more commercially focused with over half of those involved in driven grouse stating that ongoing shooting was exclusively for estate owners and their families.

15. Respondents represented their employers on a number of different **external forums**, most commonly deer management groups (39%) and regional moorland groups (30%) but also on conservation forums (16%). Beyond work, 45% of the respondents also had official roles in their local communities, including: humane dispatch of injured animals; local sports groups; fire services; community business; community councils/associations; rural crime liaison/partnership for wildlife crime.

1.3.3 Employment terms

16. Head keepers, beat keepers and under keepers were largely **employed on a full-time** basis (over 90%). Full-time self-employment numbers were greatest for single-handed keepers and stalkers. Further, 30% of stalkers were self-employed part-time and 17% self-employed full-time, perhaps indicating more contract work being available for deer management. Those working with driven grouse were more likely to be employed on a full-time basis.
17. Of those in full-time employment as a gamekeeper, stalker or ghillie, 58% earned £15,000 to £25,000 whilst 31% earned £25,000 to £35,000. Although 19% of respondents reported **earnings** of less than £15,000 per annum from their gamekeeping job they were invariably not employed full-time in the profession. The gamekeeper respondents provided more than three-quarters of their household income in 43% of cases.
18. In the game and deer management sector some employees (and occasionally retirees) reside, rent-free, in houses on the estate as part of their overall remuneration package in addition to their salary. This on the job housing is referred to as **tied housing**. In this survey 60% of the respondents lived in tied housing whilst 25% resided in their own house and 6% stayed in privately rented accommodation, which they paid for themselves. Those respondents with driven grouse work were much more likely to stay in tied estate housing (85%) compared to those respondents not engaged in driven grouse work (47%). Of those respondents living in tied housing, 47% of them had not made any retirement housing plans and employers were expected to provide housing upon retirement for 11%. Fifteen percent of the respondents reported that they had the financial security to buy a house and 27% already owned a house to which they can retire.
19. It is often reported that gamekeepers receive **gratuity (tips)** from sporting guests, however, 36% of survey respondents claimed that they 'do not receive tips' at all. For 43% of the respondents, tips made up less than 5% of their income from gamekeeping whilst 5% received 5-10% of their income from tips and 11% received more than 10% of their income through gratuity.
20. Over 28% of the respondents were entitled to over 30 days **annual leave**, with 50% entitled to 25-29 days and 19% entitled to 20-25 days. About two-thirds of the respondents regularly did not fully utilise their annual leave entitlement. Half of the respondents said that they were entitled to full pay if they were absent due to illness, but 25% were unsure of their sickness entitlements.
21. Three quarters of the respondents claimed their employer actively encouraged **participation in training courses** (56% regular encouragement) but for 20% there was rarely or never encouragement to attend training courses. Whilst 24% felt they would not benefit from training, the most common future types of training that respondents considered beneficial were identified as: habitat impact assessment (33%), access laws (30%), conflict resolution (26%), habitat protection (25%), wildlife monitoring (23%) and wildlife laws (20%).

1.3.4 Crime and abuse

22. None of the respondents detailed ever having witnessed others in the profession committing wildlife or other crime. However, 37% of the respondents stated that they had witnessed **wildlife crime** where they've worked such as: deer and salmon poaching; hare coursing; and disturbance of nesting birds. Additionally, 54% of respondents had witnessed **other types of crime** where

they've worked such as: theft and/or deliberate damage of legally-set traps; vandalism; machinery theft; fly-tipping; and unlawful vehicular access.

23. About 8% of the respondents reported receiving **abuse or threats** from people outside of their profession on a regular basis (once or twice a month) whilst 56% had experienced such abuse/threats 'rarely' (once or twice per year). Over a third of the respondents had not experienced abuse/threats as a result of their occupation. The majority of abuse received was verbal, although incidents of physical violence were also reported.

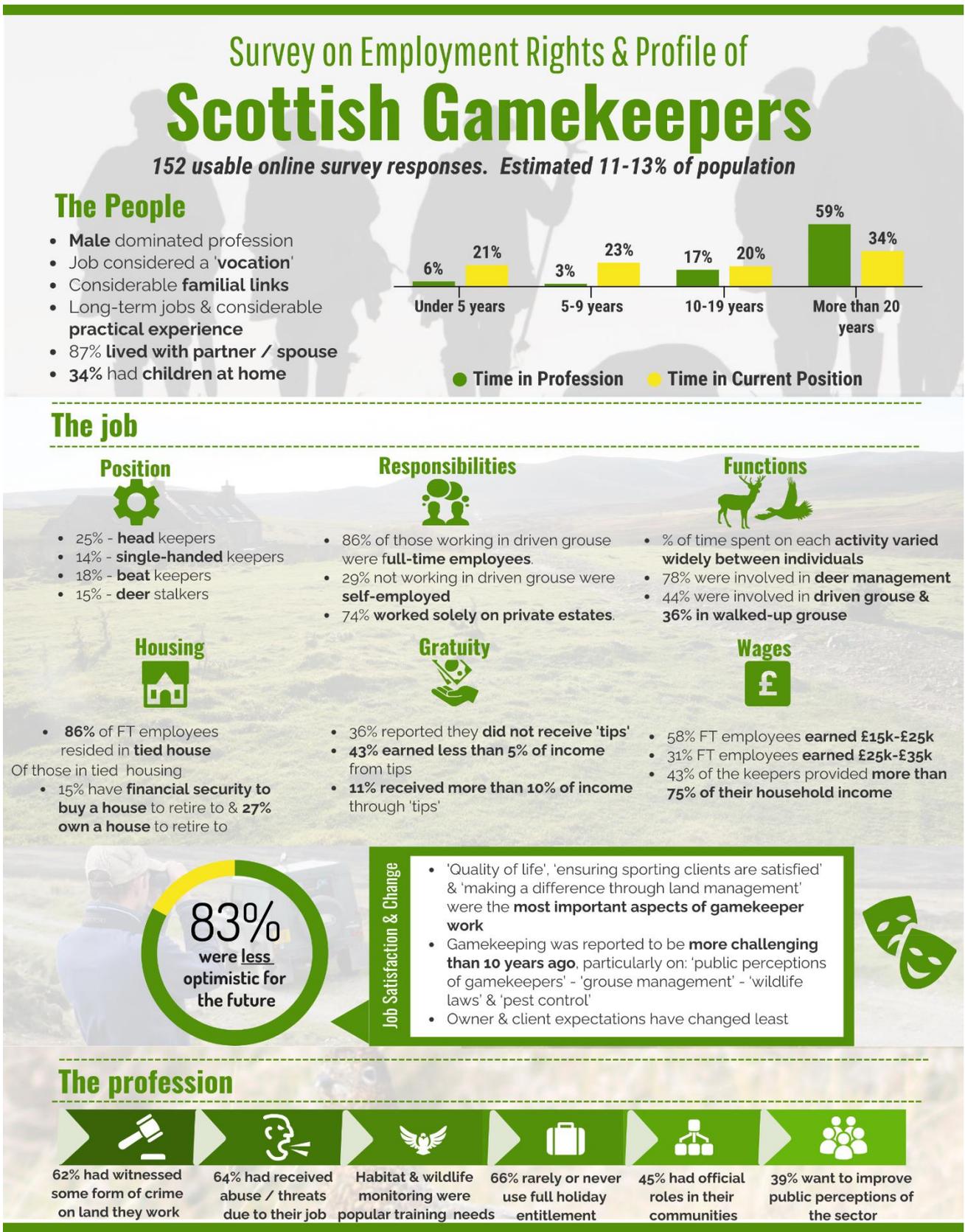
1.3.5 Job satisfaction and outlook

24. There was a high level of **job satisfaction** expressed by the respondents, with three-quarters stating that they were 'very satisfied' with their current job (86% of those with driven grouse work and 73% with no driven grouse work were 'very satisfied'). Three-quarters of the respondents also noted that they were generally 'very satisfied' with their relationship with their employer but levels of satisfaction were lowest for job security.
25. The most **important aspect of the working lives** of respondents was 'quality of life' (rated 'very important' by 95% of all respondents). 'Ensuring sporting clients are satisfied' and 'making a difference through land management' were also rated 'very important' by over three quarters of respondents, and other factors such as 'the community I live/work in' and 'work colleagues' were very important to over half the respondents. 'Tips' and 'other non-pecuniary benefits' derived from their employment were regarded as the least important aspects of their working life.
26. Whilst 11% of respondents said that they would change "*nothing*" about their job, 39% expressed that they would like to **improve public opinion**, and media coverage, about the profession. Respondents also made a range of comments about the need for better public understanding of the work they do, and recognition of the benefits that they deliver. There were frustrations that agencies and legislators did not have practical land management backgrounds, meaning that interventions are often considered impracticable or bureaucratic.
27. Generally, respondents reported that their working lives have become **more challenging** over the last decade, particularly for those working with driven grouse. Dealing with 'public perceptions of gamekeepers' was rated as the most challenging aspect of working in game and deer management over the past 10 years. Dealing with 'grouse management' (89%), 'wildlife laws' (86%) and 'pest control' (86%) were considered the next most challenging changes faced. 'Owner expectations' and 'client expectations' were considered the aspects of gamekeeping work that have changed the least over the last decade.
28. Only 6% of respondents were more optimistic about the profession than when they started their career in the sector. Relatively few respondents (10%) stated that their outlook on their profession was unchanged. The outlook for the profession was **more pessimistic** for 79% of those replying: split between 32% with a 'much less optimistic' outlook and 47% with a 'less optimistic' outlook. The reasons for pessimism felt by some were reported as being related to the negative portrayal of the industry and a perceived lack of support from government and agencies with concerted 'targeting' by anti-shooting campaigns/campaigners and the wider media.

1.3.6 Conclusion

29. This research provides unique, independently conducted insights into Scotland's gamekeeping profession. Whilst the responses accounted for a small proportion of those people in the profession, stakeholders on the project's Research Advisory Group considered the results to be a fair representation of the sector. **New insights into wage rates, tied housing and employment terms, as well as sentiments and experiences of being a gamekeeper, were revealed.** Highlights from the survey findings are presented in the infographic in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Summary of Gamekeeper Survey Findings



2 Background

This report is **Part 2: The Employment Rights of Gamekeepers** of the Scottish Government's commissioned research project to **Assess Socioeconomic and Biodiversity Impacts of Driven Grouse Moors and to understand the Rights of Gamekeepers (CR/2019/01)**. The overall project was led by Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) and Part 2 was undertaken by an experienced team of interdisciplinary researchers from SRUC. This research builds on the evidence base developed, and evidence gaps identified in ['Phase 1' of this research - Socioeconomic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse moors in Scotland](#) (Brooker et al, 2018). [A summary for the full project is available as a stand-alone report from the Scottish Government](#)¹ and other technical reports from the project are available from the [SEFARI website](#).

2.1 Policy context

2.1.1 Grouse shooting in Scotland

The sport of shooting red grouse on heather moorlands is unique to the UK and has occurred since the mid-19th century. A ground nesting bird, the red grouse is fast and agile, and is considered to provide a testing game shooting opportunity. Today, productive grouse moors are mainly found in Scotland and the North of England, where moorlands are actively managed at different intensities by gamekeepers to provide these wild birds with favourable breeding and rearing habitats. Specific management activities include muirburn, predator control and the use of medicated grit to improve grouse health (Moorland Working Group, 2002).

There are three types of grouse shooting: driven, walked-up, and over pointers. Driven grouse shooting is the most intensive form and accounts for the majority of commercial grouse shooting in Scotland. The grouse shooting season runs from 12th August to 10th December each year. Unlike some other game birds, red grouse cannot be reared in captivity, meaning their numbers vary considerably between years, with weather, habitat, disease and predators all having potential impacts on numbers. Successful grouse rearing years provide greater opportunity to engage in shooting activities.

2.1.2 Multiple benefits from moorlands

Scotland's Land Use Strategy promotes an integrated approach to land management, with woodland regeneration, biodiversity conservation, carbon sequestration and recreation encouraged in moorland areas alongside traditional sporting activities (Scottish Government, 2016). Therefore, there is increasing pressure on land managers to deliver multiple benefits from moorlands, including the public benefits that these areas provide.

There have been questions raised about the positive and negative impacts of grouse shooting on biodiversity and other public benefits. While grouse moor managers and collaborators are taking active steps to reverse the decline of wading birds in Scotland², concerns generally focus on large-scale culls of mountain hares on grouse moors, muirburn and the persecution of raptors. It is particularly the latter that has generated emotive reactions from the general public, conservation organisations and campaigners, and led to increasing pressure on politicians to address the issue.³

2.1.3 Recent scrutiny

There has been a growing public and political concern relating to the disappearance of golden eagles in Scotland. In 2016, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform asked Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) to report on the issue. In May 2017, SNH published a commissioned

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/ISBN/978-1-80004-212-4>

² For example, through the [Working for Waders](#) initiative that began in 2017.

³ For example, the [Revive Coalition](#) call for reform of driven grouse moors and a [petition](#) submitted to the UK Parliament in 2016 to ban driven grouse shooting.

report that studied the movements of 131 young golden eagles over a 12-year period, finding that more than 40 had disappeared in suspicious circumstances. The majority of cases were found to have occurred on or near to (within 2km) land that was intensively managed for driven grouse shooting (Whitfield and Fielding, 2017). Indeed, in summer 2019, further, significant attention was brought to the disappearance of two golden eagles in Perthshire, with more calls being made for political action to regulate grouse moor management.⁴

When the SNH report was published, the Scottish Government specified the intention to establish a group (the Grouse Moor Management Group – GMMG), with a remit to look at “*the environmental impact of grouse moor management practices such as muirburn, the use of medicated grit and mountain hare culls and advise on the option of licensing grouse shooting businesses*” (Scottish Government, 2018). In the same month, the Cabinet Secretary also announced commissioning of research into the costs and benefits of large shooting estates to Scotland’s economy and biodiversity.⁵ A related Programme for Government commitment (2017-2018) also confirmed that a research project would be commissioned on the topic, alongside “*work in relation to protecting gamekeepers’ employment and other rights*” (Scottish Government, 2017).

These announcements by the Cabinet Secretary focused specifically on driven grouse shooting. The GMMG, chaired by Professor Alan Werritty began its work in November 2017 to “*ensure grouse moor management [driven and walked-up] continues to contribute to the rural economy while being environmentally sustainable and compliant with the law*”. During the working life of the GMMG, ‘Phase 1’ of this research into the socio-economic and biodiversity impacts of driven grouse (Brooker et al, 2018) was completed and the GMMG considered the results. The GMMG’s [final report and recommendations](#) to Scottish Ministers’ was published in December 2019 (GMMG, 2019).

This ‘[Phase 2](#)’ of the socioeconomic and biodiversity impacts research, along with the study of gamekeepers’ rights, provides new evidence that addresses some of the knowledge gaps identified during the Phase 1 research and in the evidence collated by the GMMG.

2.2 Aims and Tasks across this body of research

The aim across this commissioned body of research (Phase 2) was to build on the existing research knowledge base regarding grouse moors and to understand in more detail the rights, attitudes, motivations and behaviours driving gamekeepers’ employment.

The part of the wider body of research reported here is Task 2 – one of four distinct Phase 2 Tasks. The aims for each of these Tasks are set out below with Task 2 highlighted.

1. Examine the extent and impact of economic connections between grouse shooting estates and surrounding businesses and communities (Task 1a – conducted by SRUC).
2. Evaluate the socioeconomic impacts of alternative land uses for moorland and how they compare against land used for grouse shooting (Task 1b – conducted by SRUC).
- 3. Understand the employment rights and benefits available to the gamekeepers involved in grouse shooting, as well as their working conditions, attitudes, behaviours and aspirations for the future (Task 2 – conducted by SRUC).**
4. Provide a more up to date assessment of the area of grouse moors in Scotland under management for driven grouse, mapping clearly the areas of moorland that are actively managed for grouse and the intensity of current management regimes (Task 3 – conducted by JHI).
5. Understand further the impacts of driven grouse shooting on biodiversity making use of more up to date estimates of grouse moor management intensity and linking it with the best available biodiversity data. Introduction (Task 4 – conducted by JHI).

⁴ See, for example, coverage in [The Guardian](#) (01.07.19).

⁵ Scottish Government news: [Golden eagle deaths](#) (31.05.2017).

3 Introduction

Gamekeepers are often thought of as a ‘hard to reach’ group (both in terms of working in remote locations and as a profession) that are extremely important in the management activities of large areas of Scotland, particularly moorland areas. Often living in tied housing and with other non-pecuniary benefits (access to estate vehicles, clothing, fuel, game etc.), they are an integral part of how large tracts of estate land is managed and they play a pivotal role in management of game and wildlife for sporting interests (including driven grouse).

Little evidence exists on gamekeeper attitudes, motivations and behaviours, although a recent survey conducted by the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA), the National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO) and the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) explored conservation activities and gamekeeper outreach, such as the use of social media and shoot/talk walks (Ewald and Gibbs, 2020).

In Phase 1 (Thomson et al., 2018) it was noted that grouse shooting and related activities are important to some remote and fragile local economies. The review of evidence suggested that around 2,500 FTE jobs (both direct and indirect) were reliant on the grouse moor sector in 2009, with £14.5 million spent on wages related to grouse moor management and supporting activities. There appears to be no evidence on the informal wage market driven by gratuities, nor on non-pecuniary benefits (e.g. tied housing, use of estate vehicles) from those undertaking grouse shooting, nor on gamekeepers’ working conditions, attitudes behaviours and aspirations. It was also highlighted in Phase 1 that gamekeepers on estates are often engaged in other activities than grouse moor management and therefore trying to understand the varied roles that some gamekeepers play in more detail, and the interlinkages between activities, would be beneficial from a policy perspective. Thomson et al. (2018) concluded that most of the evidence to date regarding estate and moorland activity focussed on owners and managers rather than those undertaking the daily land management activities, recommending that there should be:

“Independent research to engage with gamekeepers on motivations, behaviours and support needs. There is limited evidence on why certain management methods are utilised in the management of game on sporting estates, or attitudes to biodiversity and conservation. This important group of land managers are understudied and developing a greater understanding of their drivers, concerns and motivations would likely be beneficial.”

This report examines the employment rights and benefits available to the gamekeepers involved in driven grouse shooting (and those not), as well as their working conditions, attitudes, behaviours and aspirations for the future. Acknowledging the multifunctional roles that gamekeepers undertake, this report provides evidence about the working lives, employment rights of gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies across Scotland. Key findings specific to the driven grouse sector are drawn out where appropriate. As grouse are not raised in pens like other game birds, grouse management and grouse moor management are used synonymously throughout this report.

It is acknowledged that only the views of those gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies that chose to participate in the survey are provided and that the views of the wider public, or those with competing ideologies, are not presented.

4 Methods

Little is published on Scotland’s gamekeeping population, which makes this survey one of the first attempts to investigate the profession and develop a profile of the people involved in the sector, their terms and conditions of employment and sentiments they have on factors that impinge on their working lives. To that end, the research team co-constructed a questionnaire with representatives of the Scottish Government, the SGA and BASC Scotland, which was then shared with the project’s Research Advisory Group for comment, before being piloted with SGA and BASC members.

Whilst the primary focus of the research was on gamekeepers involved in the grouse moor management, the multifaceted nature of the work undertaken by many gamekeepers, as well as a lack of 'grouse moor gamekeepers' meant that it was decided to open the survey to all gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies working in Scotland.

In order to identify the principal role of the respondents in the game and deer management sector, there was an initial question asking about their main role (e.g. gamekeepers, stalkers, land and river ghillies, wildlife managers and ranger members). The survey was based on topics that the research team had discussed with the Research Advisory Group and evolved around the following survey topics:

- Age, gender, education, length of service, experience and family ties.
- Activity mix (driven grouse, walked-up grouse, deer, other gamebirds, pest control, maintenance, etc.) and proportion of shooting time (private vs. commercial).
- Line of command/responsibility (i.e. who instruction is taken from).
- Terms of employment, including salary, tied housing, gratuity, holidays, post-retirement housing, pensions, etc.
- Family size and numbers of school age children, partner/spouse income.
- Formal/informal training undertaken and perceived training needs.
- Crime witnessed and incidence of abuse.
- Attitudinal/awareness questions relating to job satisfaction, changes in the sector and outlook.

After the initial list of questions was developed, further iterations of the questionnaire were evolved to ensure that: survey length and content were appropriate and proportionate to deliver the requirements of the research; the survey did not place an unnecessary data burden on participants; and questions were unambiguous, concise and used plain English. Whilst the questionnaire was designed to take 15-17 minutes to complete, the likelihood is that it took longer for many due to the large amount of qualitative feedback that they provided.

4.1 Type of survey

Whilst some of the questionnaire focused specifically on grouse management activities (and the analysis specifically drew out responses from those involved in driven grouse), it was decided that there was added value, at little cost, in offering the questionnaire to all Scottish gamekeepers to complete, regardless of whether they are engaged in grouse management/shooting activities.

The rationale for using an online survey reflected the available budget for the overall research project, as well as the time frame available to complete the project. Experience shows that telephone surveys are comparatively expensive, and postal surveys are also costly and require more staff time in preparing and enumerating responses. The online survey was designed to be compatible with multiple platforms (computer, smart-phone, tablet, etc.) to maximise participation opportunities. Paper copies were also available upon request from the research team or membership organisations.

It was decided that the survey would be fully anonymous (i.e. no locational or personal data was collected) to encourage participation and openness from participants. Due to perceptions that there was a risk that some people with negative attitudes towards gamekeepers could potentially submit non-genuine responses and bias the results, it was decided that the survey would be hosted behind a firewall – where genuine gamekeepers would be provided details of how to access the survey (this was acknowledged as potentially reducing participation rates amongst genuine gamekeepers).

The electronic survey was hosted on JISC Online Surveys⁶, which is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and certified to ISO 27001 standard. The questionnaire was uploaded

⁶ JISC is a membership organisation, providing digital solutions for UK education and research organisations <https://www.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/>

and tested on multiple electronic platforms for compatibility and ease of use. The time taken for completion was also estimated.

4.2 GDPR compliance and survey approval

A full Data Protection Impact Assessment⁷ was undertaken to identify any risks associated with collecting, using and storing personal data from gamekeepers and set out ways to mitigate those risks. During this phase, following discussions with Scottish Government officials, the survey methods evolved through a number of iterations to ensure GDPR⁸ compliance. Further, a data Privacy Notice⁹ was prepared to provide participants with details of the purpose of the data collection, and how their data would be collected, stored, used and deleted.¹⁰ Participants were neither obliged to answer all the questions, nor to complete the survey if they chose not to. Approval to conduct the survey was attained from SRUC's Social Science Ethical Committee and from the Scottish Government.

4.3 Disseminating and publicising the survey

As the research team did not have access to a contacts database of Scottish gamekeepers, building support from the key representative bodies (SGA and BASC) was vital. These organisations facilitated dissemination of the survey to the gamekeeping sector, hosting the survey on their websites and promoting the survey to their gamekeeper members. Access to the online survey required a password (which was available to non-SGA and BASC gamekeepers on request) and the JISC Online Surveys tool was set to ensure the survey was 'not found by search engines'. These measures were included to reduce the possibility of the survey receiving non-genuine responses. Paper copies were available to gamekeepers upon request. The full survey questionnaire can be seen in Appendix A.

The image shows three components of the survey dissemination strategy:

- SGA-backed Survey Login:** A web form with fields for Email and SGA Member Number, and a Login button.
- Twitter Post:** A tweet from Scottish Gamekeepers (@ScottGamekeepers) asking for help with the survey, mentioning a 18-day deadline and providing the URL scottishgamekeepers.co.uk/survey/. It includes a 'Follow' button and a 'Members' section with a photo of a man in a cap and the text 'We Need YOU'.
- Survey Questionnaire:** A screenshot of the 'Scottish Gamekeeper Survey' showing 'Page 4: Your Work'. It includes a progress bar at 20% complete and a question: 'On a day-to-day basis, which person do you mostly take your instruction from?' with radio button options: Owner, Factor/land agent, Sporting agent, Head keeper, Sporting tenant, Nobody, and Other. Below this is another question: 'Does that person live on the estate/your place of work?' with radio button options: Yes, No, and N/A. At the bottom, there is a table for question 13: 'What proportion of your work time is spent focused on activities (e.g. game management, stalking, shooting, maintenance) related to each of the following?'. The table has columns for 'None', 'Less than 10%', '10-15%', '20-30%', '40-50%', '60-75%', and '80% and over', and rows for 'Driven grouse', 'Walked up grouse / over pointers', 'Other game birds', 'Deer', 'Fishing', and 'General estate work /'. Each cell contains a radio button.

Example of SGA survey firewall, online survey & social media engagement

The survey was launched in early December 2019 and available until the first week in February 2020. To maximise awareness of the survey within the gamekeeping community, a short news article explaining the research, and its rationale, was produced. Gamekeeper members of BASC Scotland and the SGA were individually sent details of how to participate in the survey by these membership bodies, who also took actions to encourage uptake through newsletter articles, social media campaigns (Facebook and Twitter) and a radio interview (BBC Radio Scotland Out of Doors – January 2020).

4.4 Participation rates

After the survey closed on 6 February 2020, the data was extracted and then 'cleaned' by removing any reference to individuals or the participants' place of work. After cleaning the database, 152

⁷ See <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/accountability-and-governance/data-protection-impact-assessments/>

⁸ See <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-data-protection/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation-gdpr/>

⁹ See: <https://ico.org.uk/global/privacy-notice/>

¹⁰ The Gamekeeper Survey Privacy Notice can be seen here:

https://www.sruc.ac.uk/downloads/file/4482/gamekeeper_information_sheet

responses were received and it is estimated anecdotally that the survey achieved a participation rate of between 10-13%.

To put this survey response rate in context, it is noted that Ewald and Gibbs (2020) reported that the 2019 gamekeepers conservation and wildlife survey undertaken by the National Gamekeepers' Organisation (NGO), SGA and the Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust (GWCT) yielded 965 responses from 6,160 contacts (a response rate of 15.6%). In Scotland, Ewald and Gibbs (2020) noted 125 responses from 982 contacts (a response rate of 12.7%). The NGO estimate that there are approximately 3,000 full-time and 3,000 part time gamekeeper across the whole of the UK.¹¹ Further, the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust 2019-20 survey yielded 329 useable responses from across the UK (Kerr, 2020) which, based on the NGO figures above, suggests a response rate of 5%.

4.5 Survey caveats

A number of caveats should be made about the survey results. Whilst the questionnaire was designed to exclude leading questions that may have biased the results, most survey bias is difficult to eradicate in this type of research. The following biases should be taken into account when considering the results:

1. The survey suffers from **voluntary-response bias**, whereby there was no control over who participated from within the Scottish gamekeeping profession. This may lead to biased opinions being offered, as those participating may have had concerns, issues or grievances that they wanted to publicise. To mitigate this, participants were actively encouraged from all parts of the profession to ensure a broad spectrum of views and data were collected.
2. As there is no official list of registered gamekeepers, the survey link was shared via member-only areas of the websites of SGA and BASC and, as a result, the dissemination and promotion of the survey was essentially out of the hands of the researchers. This means there may be **under-coverage bias** of any potential participants that were non-SGA and non-BASC members. To mitigate this, social media, press releases (picked up by trade press) and radio were used to increase awareness levels of the survey among those who could complete it.
3. The use of an electronic survey may have embedded **non-response bias** in the results if some groups did not participate due to the methodology (those without internet connection, those without skills to engage). The offer of paper copies of the survey was designed to mitigate the likelihood of non-response, but there were only limited requests for paper copies.
4. There may be **social desirability/response bias** in the responses received. This is where participants try and present themselves or their profession favourably because they are reluctant to portray their profession in a negative light, for example relating to illegal activities. To mitigate this, the survey was designed to be fully anonymous with no personal, workplace or geographic details collected that may restrict responses to some questions.
5. **Extreme responding bias** may exist for some respondents to scale-type questions (such as Likert scales) whereby some respondents provide bias in the results by choosing the extreme options on the scale. To try and mitigate this, the use of scale questions was minimised and those used were generally limited to a 'negative', 'neutral' and 'positive' option. This limited the opportunity to over-emphasise the importance of 'very important' or 'not important at all' types of responses.
6. **Question order bias** was limited by using randomised answer options where possible and by minimising scale-type questions. However, randomisation of questions to eliminate question order bias completely was not possible in this case as the survey sections and questions often followed a structure with logical follow-on questions that would make sense to participants.

The survey was only of the gamekeeping profession and therefore is inherently biased in that it does not provide data or opinions from wider society or from those with alternative ideologies regarding

¹¹ <https://www.nationalgamekeepers.org.uk/about-gamekeeping>

game, deer and wildlife management. This, however, was not a survey design fault – rather, it was the intended focus of the overall project research questions to be answered on behalf of the Scottish Government.

5 Findings

This chapter presents the results of the survey. During the data analysis process, gamekeepers who had any role in driven grouse shooting were identified from their activity responses. This enabled the presentation of data, where possible, to differentiate responses of those involved in any aspect of driven grouse as part of their job from those not engaged in driven grouse activities at all. It should be noted that individuals within each group are unique as there is significant variation in the extent of involvement in ‘driven grouse’ and associated activities within that group, just as there is significant variation in the daily activities of the ‘no driven grouse’ group.

The data was analysed in a number of different ways (e.g. by respondent age) but the results presented in this chapter focus on driven grouse and non-driven grouse workers in order to deliver the research objective. Qualitative statements provided by the respondents are used to provide context beyond the quantitative data where appropriate.¹²

The chapter presents the results based on key questionnaire themes:

- **Personal characteristics** – age, gender, length of time in the profession, familial connections to profession, family members.
- **Working lives** – lines of command, working hours, work tasks and representing employers.
- **Employment packages** – terms of employment, wages, other household earnings, housing, gratuity, holiday and sickness benefits.
- **Training** – formal qualifications, on-the job training, identified training needs.
- **Job perception** – job satisfaction, rating aspects of the work, witnessing of crime, incidence of abuse, things to make the job better.
- **Outlook for the profession** – perceptions of change on different aspects of the work, sentiments about the future of the profession.

5.1 Working in the game and deer management sector

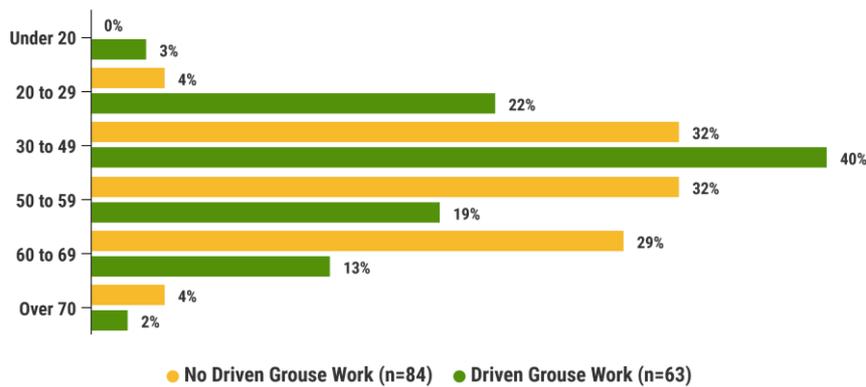
This section provides details of the personal characteristics of the survey respondents, including looking at their home lives and familial connections to the game and deer management profession.

5.1.1 The people behind the profession

The profession is well-known as being male dominated and the vast majority (95%) of the respondents self-identified as male, compared to 1% female and 4% choosing not to say. Figure 2 shows the age profile of the respondents involved in game and deer management. Those respondents working in the driven grouse sector had a younger age profile in general, with 25% under 30 years of age and 65% under 50 years of age. This compared to only 4% under 30 and 36% under 50 in the respondents not involved in driven grouse activities at their workplace. Overall, a quarter of the respondents were 60 years of age.

¹² Respondents were provided a number of opportunities to add qualitative statements through the questionnaire (see Appendix A).

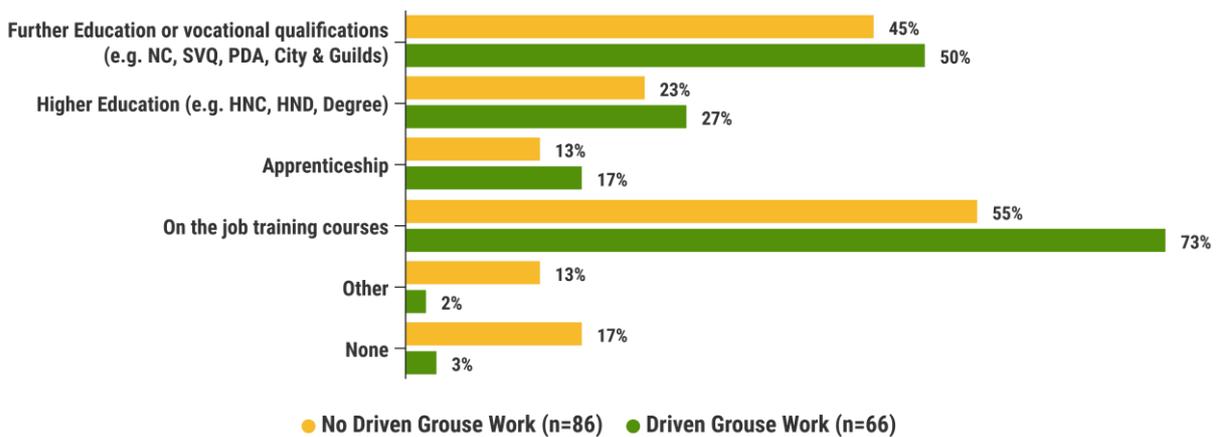
Figure 2 Age of gamekeepers



Overall, 63% of respondents had received ‘on-the-job’ training, whilst 8% had received ‘other’ forms of training. Higher education qualifications related to the profession (e.g. HNC, HND, BA/BSc) had been attained by 25% of the respondents and 47% of respondents had achieved further education or vocational qualifications pertaining to game and deer management (e.g. NC, SVQ, PDA, City and Guilds qualifications). 14% of respondents confirmed that they had undertaken a gamekeeping apprenticeship whilst 11% stated that they had no formal qualifications relating to their work.

Figure 3 reveals how the profile of work-related formal training compares between those working to varying extents on driven grouse and those with no driven grouse roles. Those respondents working in the driven grouse sector generally had marginally higher exposure to formal qualifications and training related to their work, something that is correlated to the lower age profile of the group (with perhaps more recent emphasis on education and training needs within the younger workforce, etc.). This also reflects that a slightly higher proportion of those not involved in driven grouse are not employees, nor working for single private estates.

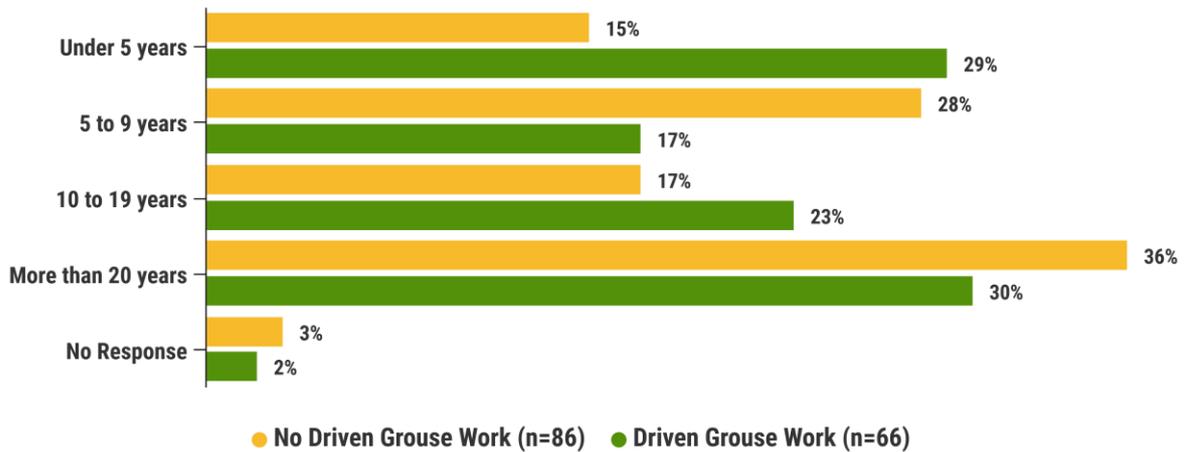
Figure 3 Formal training related to the profession



Whilst a small proportion had limited training other than “40 years’ experience from others who had lifetimes experience”, there was a wide range of on-the-job training that had been undertaken by the respondents, as illustrated in Figure 4. The most common training was Deer Management Qualifications (DMQ) such as Deer Stalking Certificates (DSC1 and DSC2), with over 80 respondents revealing they had DSC1 and over 60 with DSC2, and about a dozen were DSC Approved Witnesses. All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV)/Argocat training had been completed by over 75 respondents whilst about 50 had First Aid and chainsaw certificates. A number of respondents had completed trapping/pest control training as well as a variety of game and meat handling and hygiene courses.

the respondents had only been in their current position for less than five years and 23% for between five and nine years. Nearly three-quarters of the head keepers and single-handed keepers had been working for the same business for over 20 years (and 52% of stalkers). Beat keepers and under keepers had been in situ for shorter periods of time on average, reflecting the fact that they are more junior roles. Figure 6 highlights that the respondents in the driven grouse sector were almost twice as likely to have been working for their current employer for under five years, compared to those with no driven grouse activity at their workplace.

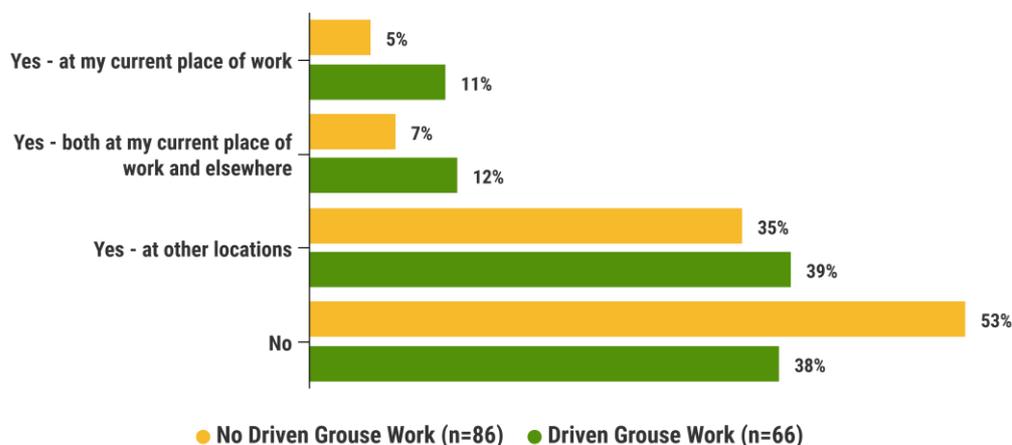
Figure 6 Length of time in current position



5.1.2 Families of game and deer managers

Over half of the respondents had relatives who have worked or currently work within the game and wildlife management sector. Specifically, 16% had relatives who had worked or currently work alongside them at their place of work (9% of these also had some relatives that had worked/are working elsewhere within the sector). Further, 37% of the respondents had relatives who had worked or are working within the profession but on other businesses, whilst 47% had no relatives who previously worked or currently work in the profession. Figure 7 reveals that familial ties within the profession were more prevalent within the driven grouse sector, with 23% having a relative who had worked or currently works at their own workplace. Over half (53%) of the respondents with no driven grouse work had relatives in the sector (compared to 38% for those working on driven grouse to some extent). This perhaps suggests that there is evidence of ‘succession’ within the game and deer management sector where more than one generation of a family works on the same estate.

Figure 7 Family relatives who have worked or previously worked in the sector

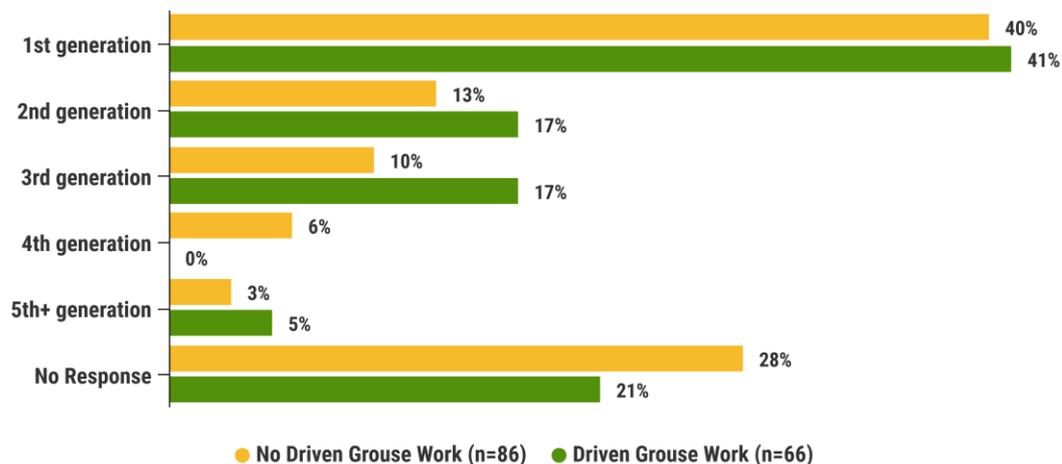


This concept of gamekeeping ‘being in the blood’ is partially borne out by the results of the survey. Whilst 25% of the respondents did not say how many generations of gamekeepers/stalkers/ghillies

they belonged to, 20% of the respondents were at least third generation game and deer managers, with a further 14% reporting that they were the second generation from their family involved in the sector. This means a third of the sample had parental connections within the profession. 40% of the respondents expressed that they were a first-generation gamekeeper/stalker/ghillie, showing that the profession remains an attractive career for people unconnected with the sector. Figure 8 reveals that 39% of respondents from the driven grouse sector had previous generations that worked (or still work) in the profession, compared to 32% that work on businesses with no driven grouse work. The pride in the inter-generational aspect of the 'job' was expressed by a few respondents in their general comments:

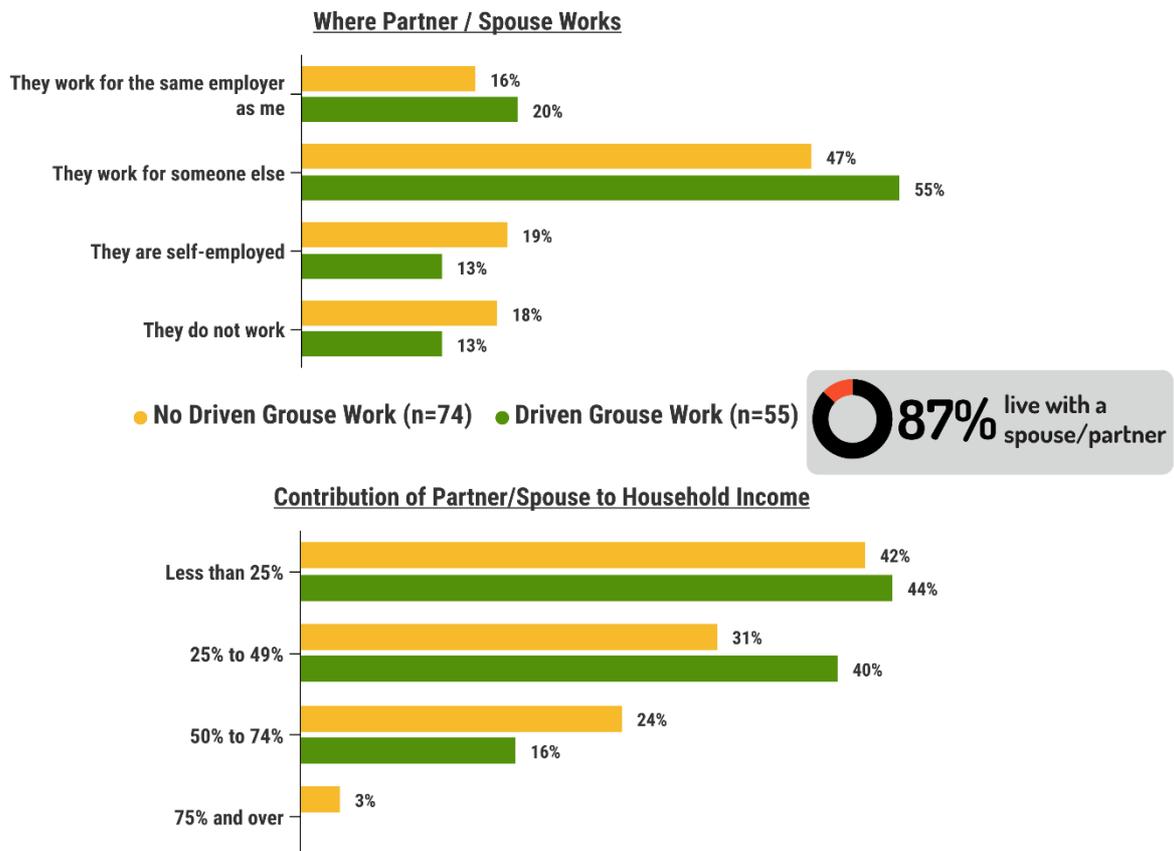
- *"I am totally proud and delighted to have been able to be a gamekeeper for the past 43 years. I sincerely hope my two sons are able to say the same."*
- *"I became a gamekeeper through my father who was a head keeper for 20 years. My ambition and love of the way of life I've chosen hasn't diminished since my early days of helping my father."*
- *"My job is my life...I was brought up on a sporting estate and it's all I have ever wanted to do."*

Figure 8 Number of generations of gamekeepers/stalkers/ghillies respondents belong to



The vast majority of the respondents (87%) lived with a partner/spouse and in 18% of the cases they also worked at the same estate/business as the respondent (highlighting that job opportunities beyond game and deer management exist on some estates). Half of the partners/spouses worked for other employers, 16% ran their own business and only 16% were not economically active. Figure 9 highlights that whilst levels of self-employment amongst partners and spouses were slightly lower in respondents working with driven grouse (13% compared to 19%), a fifth worked for the same employer as the respondent and 55% worked elsewhere (compared to 16% and 47% respectively for respondents not engaged in driven grouse).

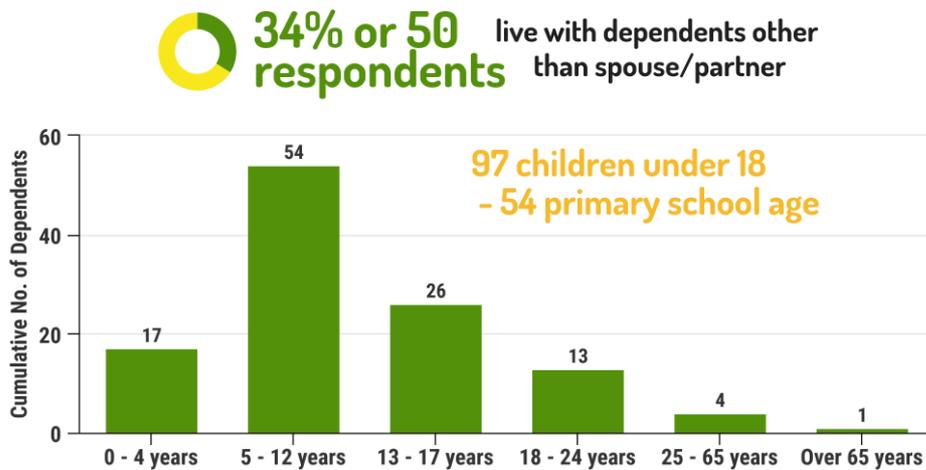
Figure 9 Partners and spouses, their work and contribution to household income



For 23% of the respondents with partners/spouses, that person provided over half of the total household income (remembering that many stay in tied housing that can effectively produce an artificially lower take-home wage for those working in such situations). Figure 9 also shows that for respondents whose work involved driven grouse activities there was a markedly lower proportion of partners/spouses contributing the biggest proportion of total household income – perhaps reflecting life stage, part-time employment, or fewer non-estate employment opportunities existing near remote ‘grouse’ estates.

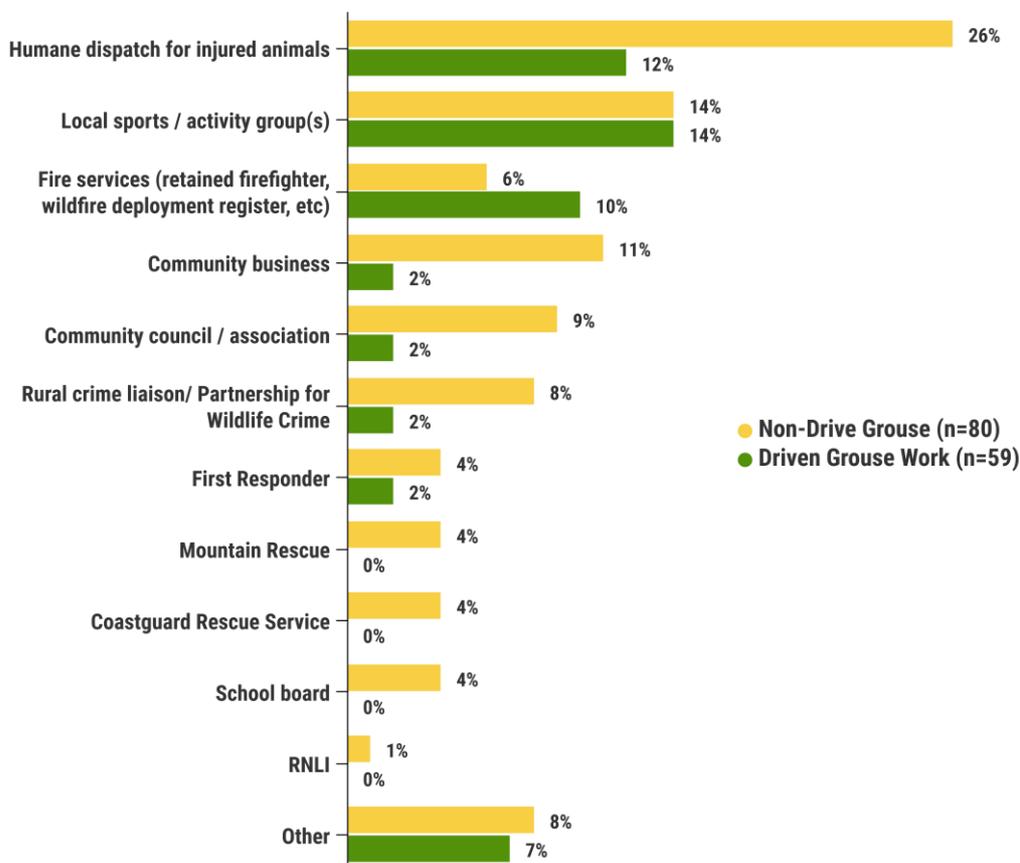
Perhaps the combination of remote location, fewer employment opportunities, children and limited childcare offerings limit the earning potential of some gamekeepers’ partners/spouses. A third (50) of the respondents reported that they lived with dependents who were financially reliant on them (and their partner/spouse). Of those, 28% had children under five years of age, whilst 62% had children of primary school age, 34% had children of high school age and 16% had young adults (18-24 years) living with them. Figure 10 highlights that there were 17 children of pre-school age, 54 of primary school age and 26 of high school age amongst the 50 respondents that had dependants – an average of two school age children each.

Figure 10 Dependents living with respondents



Whilst 55% of the survey participants said they had no official roles within the wider community, half of the non-driven grouse work respondents and 37% of those involved in driven grouse work reported having community responsibilities (see Figure 11) with 18% having more than one community role. One in five participants were engaged in humane dispatch of injured animals (much more prevalent amongst those not working on driven grouse) and other official roles included: local sports groups (14%), fire services (8%), community business (7%), community councils/associations (7%) and rural crime liaison/ partnership for wildlife crime (8%).

Figure 11 Official roles in the wider community



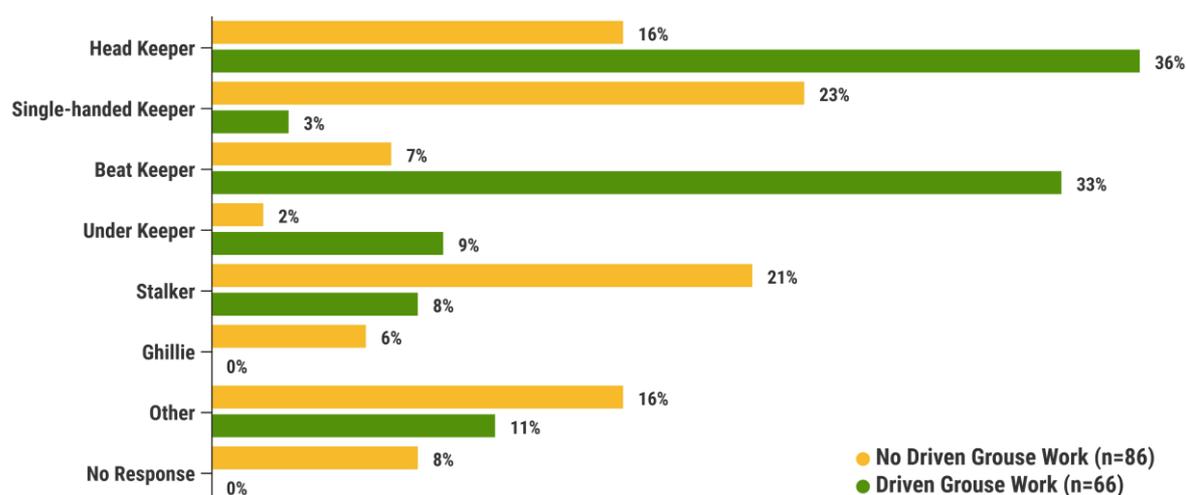
5.2 Position held and employer

This section provides details of the positions held by the survey respondents, the type of employer that they work for, and the regions of Scotland in which they operate.

5.2.1 Position

Of the 152 respondents, 25% self-identified as a ‘head keeper’ (similar to Kerr’s 2020 findings across the UK) – generally reporting to the estate manager/owner and being responsible for all gamekeepers and their activities on an estate. A further 14% said that they were ‘single-handed keepers’ who are the sole keeper responsible for all game management activities on a smaller estate. 18% identified as ‘beat keepers’ that are largely responsible for grouse moor management and support during grouse shooting events – reporting to the head keeper. Only 5% reported that they were ‘under keepers’ participating in a wide range of game and habitat management activities on an estate under the direction of the head keeper or estate manager. None of the respondents identified as being trainees. Further, 15% reported that they were deer stalkers and 3% were ghillies (someone who supports clients fishing, deer stalking, etc.). The 14% that had ‘other’ roles included: water bailiffs, wildlife rangers, estate managers, shooting syndicate manager, part-time gamekeepers, etc. Figure 12 highlights that for those engaged in grouse activities 36% of the respondents were head keepers and 33% were beat keepers (compared to 16% and 23% respectively for non-driven grouse respondents).

Figure 12 Position in game and deer management sector



5.2.2 Employer type

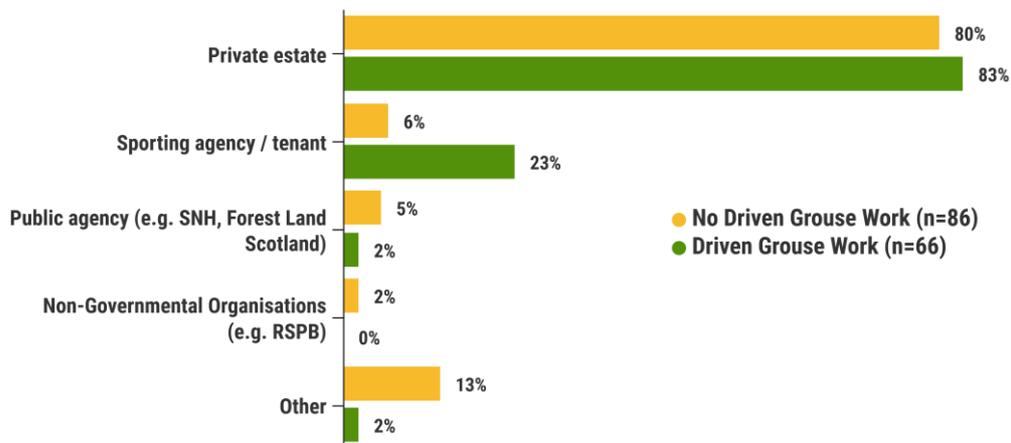
Three-quarters of the respondents worked solely on private estates (74%)¹³, with 8% working on private estates in conjunction with other types of business/agency. 9% of the respondents solely worked on/owned sporting agencies or are sporting tenants (with an additional 4% working on private estates) and 2% worked for public agencies.

There was little difference in the type of employer/business the respondents worked for/owned between those engaged in driven grouse work and those not working in driven grouse, other than a higher proportion of the respondents who were undertaking driven grouse tasks were working for/owned sporting agencies or were sporting tenants (23%)¹⁴.

¹³ This is very similar to Kerr’s (2020) UK survey of gamekeepers where 79% of respondents worked for estates.

¹⁴ Note that the proportions exceed 100% as some respondents work or own more than one type of business, reflecting the nature of contract work or part time / seasonal employment

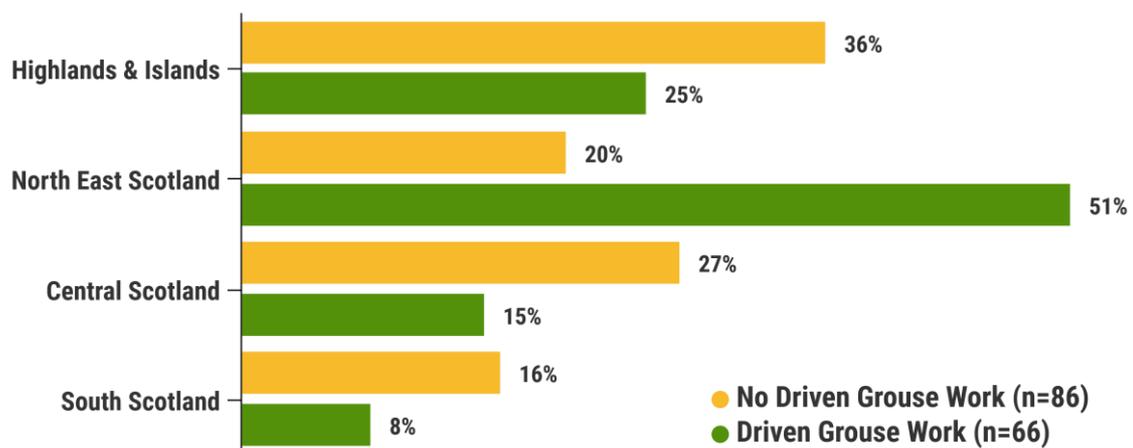
Figure 13 Type of employer currently working for



5.2.3 Geographic regions of work

Overall, 35% of the respondents worked in the North East of Scotland and 31% worked in the Highlands and Islands. Central Scotland was the place of work for 22% and the South of Scotland was where 13% of the sample worked. A very small proportion of the respondents worked in more than one region, and invariably they were self-employed. Figure 14 shows that half of the respondents working on driven grouse were working in the North East of Scotland, and a quarter were working in the Highlands and Islands. This reflects the main geographic locations of driven grouse moors, as reported in [Part 3 Assessing grouse moorland intensity](#).

Figure 14 Work region of respondents



5.3 The working lives in game and deer management

It is recognised that gamekeepers, ghillies and stalkers are multifunctional, invariably engaged in multiple tasks throughout the year, rather than working on single species game. This section therefore provides some insight into the working lives of gamekeepers: the number of hours they generally work, the mix of activities they are engaged in and who they report to on a daily basis.

5.3.1 Work management

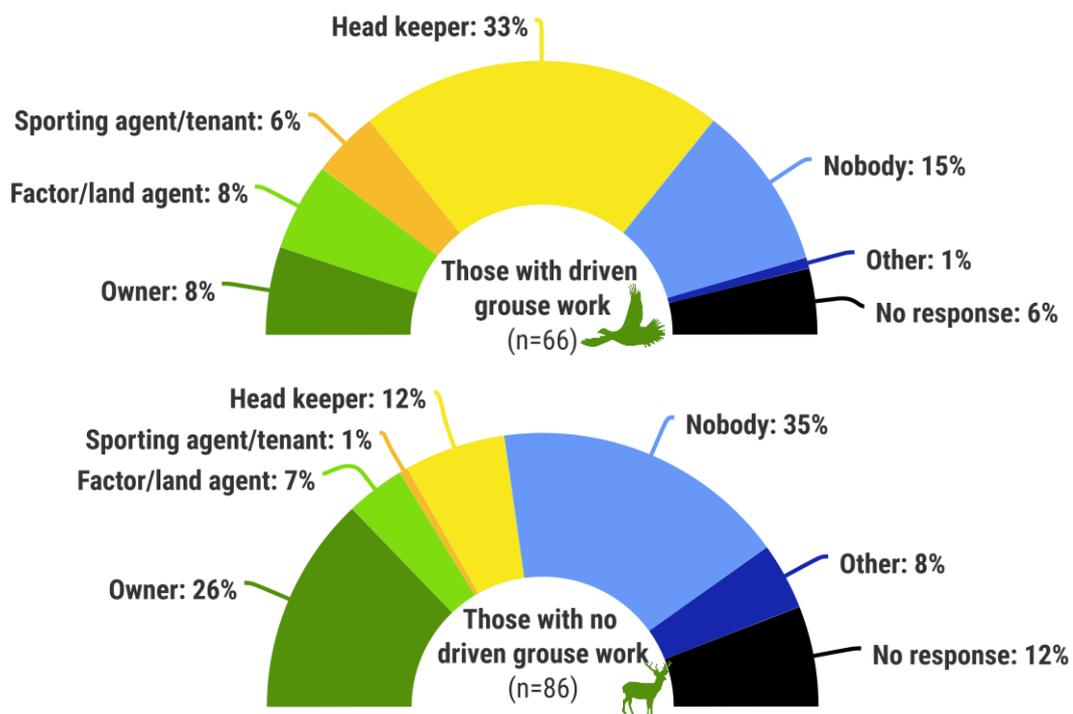
On a day-to-day basis, 30% of the respondents claimed that they took instruction from no one. This included 26% of head keepers and 55% of single-handed keepers, 11% of beat keepers and 22% of

stalkers. The head keeper provided daily instruction for 25% of the sample, whilst 19% took instruction from the owner of the estate/business that they worked and 9% took instruction from a factor/land agent responsible for decision making. This illustrates the freedom to undertake daily work for a proportion of the profession, whilst instruction was only regularly received from owners or factors by 28% of the sample (with 4% receiving instruction from sporting agents / tenants).

Figure 15 shows that those working in the driven grouse sector were much more likely to take instruction on daily activities from their head keeper (33%) than in the non-driven grouse sector (12%) where it was more likely that they were left to their own devices (35%) or took instruction from owners/factors/land agents (33%). When respondents were being given daily instruction from someone, that person resided on the place of work two-thirds of the time, meaning a third were non-resident decision makers (there was no difference between the driven-grouse workforce and the non-driven grouse cohort). For some respondents there was a high level of trust shown by their employers, for example:

- *“The freedom my boss gives me to get on with the job and the trust she has in me to carry it out in a responsible manner.”*
- *“Working on my own initiative and helping to conserve the environment”*

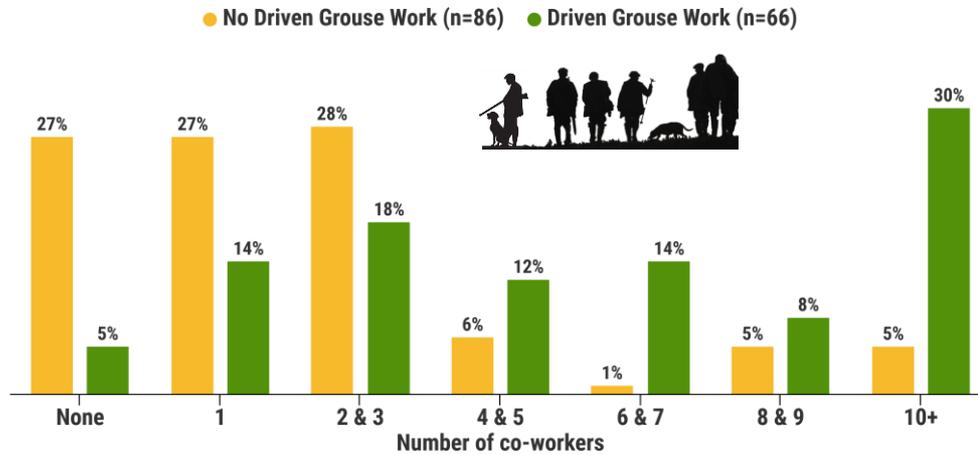
Figure 15 Person respondents took daily instruction from



Game and wildlife management activities are often undertaken within teams on estates. However, for 17% of the respondents they were the sole game and deer manager at their workplace. Figure 16 shows that only 5% were sole workers for those involved in driven grouse activities, compared to 27% in the rest of the sector (relating to self-employment, single-handed keepers, etc). Overall, 21% reported that they had one other gamekeeper/stalker/ghillie working alongside them (14% of those engaged in driven grouse activity and 27% of the others). Nearly a quarter of the respondents had two or three other game sector employees at their workplace and 22% had between four and nine regular co-workers. Perhaps indicative of the scale of some sporting estates in Scotland, 16% of the respondents reported there were more than 10 part and full-time game sector employees at their workplace. Figure 16 illustrates that respondents who had some driven grouse moor activities were

much more likely to have large numbers of co-workers, with 52% reporting that they had more than five other full and part-time game and deer management colleagues with nearly a third reporting 10 or more gamekeeper colleagues.

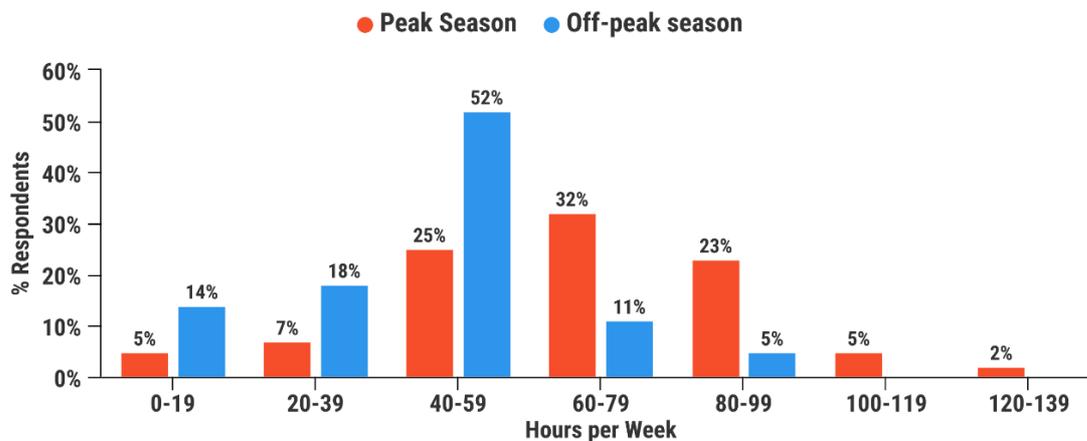
Figure 16 Number of other gamekeepers/stalkers/ghillies regularly employed (part-time and full-time) at workplace



5.3.2 Work hours

The respondents were asked the average number of hours they worked during peak and off-peak periods (self-defined). On average¹⁵ the respondents reported that they worked 63 hours per week during peak working periods and 41 hours per week during off-peak periods¹⁶. The distribution of weekly working hours is shown in Figure 17, which illustrates that 50% of the respondents reported 40-59 hours working weeks in off-peak periods, whilst 30% reported 60-79 hours working weeks in peak periods (Figure 43 in Appendix B illustrates that within this sample those working on driven grouse reported to be working longer hours on average in both peak and off-peak periods). The actual peak/off-peak hours reported per respondent are provided in Figure 18, illustrating the extremely long working hours reported by some. The part-time workers engaged in game and deer management are evident from these figures, and the length of their working week needs to be remembered when considering annual earnings from the profession.

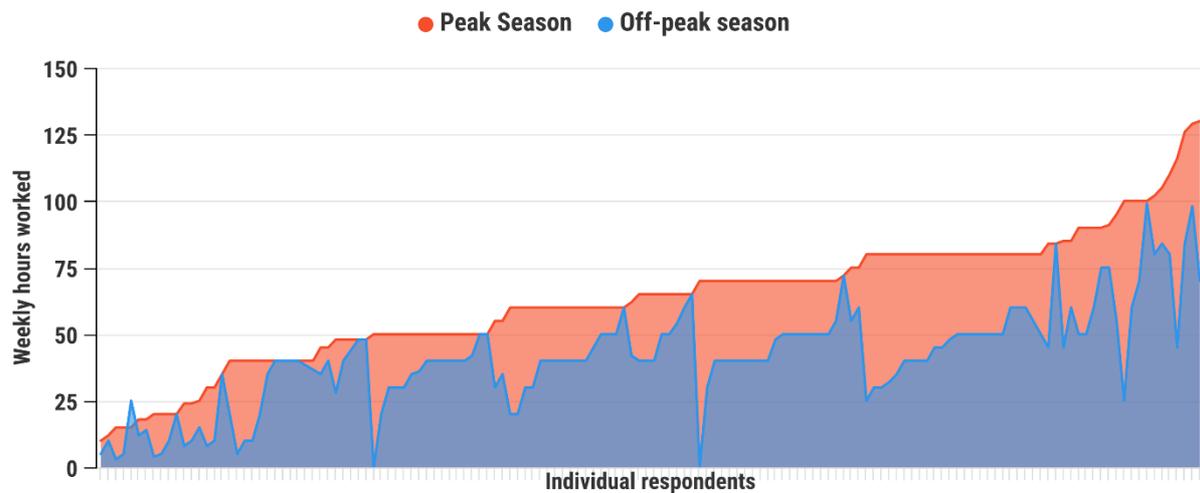
Figure 17 Frequency distribution of number of hours worked per week in peak and off-peak periods



¹⁵ Both the mean and median were practically identical indicating the responses were not skewed

¹⁶ Kerr (2020) reported that 55% of gamekeeper respondents to a Gamekeepers Welfare Trust UK survey worked more than 60 hours in an average week

Figure 18 Actual number of peak and off-peak hours reported by respondents



The respondents were asked to reveal the proportion of their time engaged in different game and deer management activities. This is used to illustrate how an individual's work priorities are rarely the same as others, with different emphasis on different tasks. Figure 19 shows the individual work profiles of respondents (columns) where darker red colouring indicates a high proportion of time, fading to dark blue (a low proportion of time), with blanks indicating none of their job required them to partake in that activity. The diversity of job profiles in the profession is clear to see.

Figure 19 Individual labour profile of respondents highlighting diversity of tasks undertaken

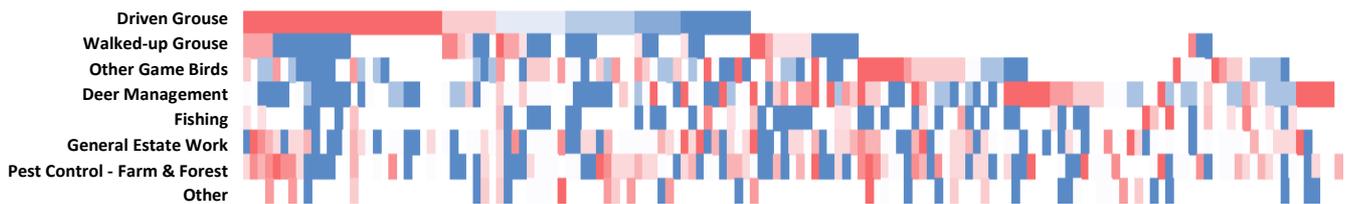
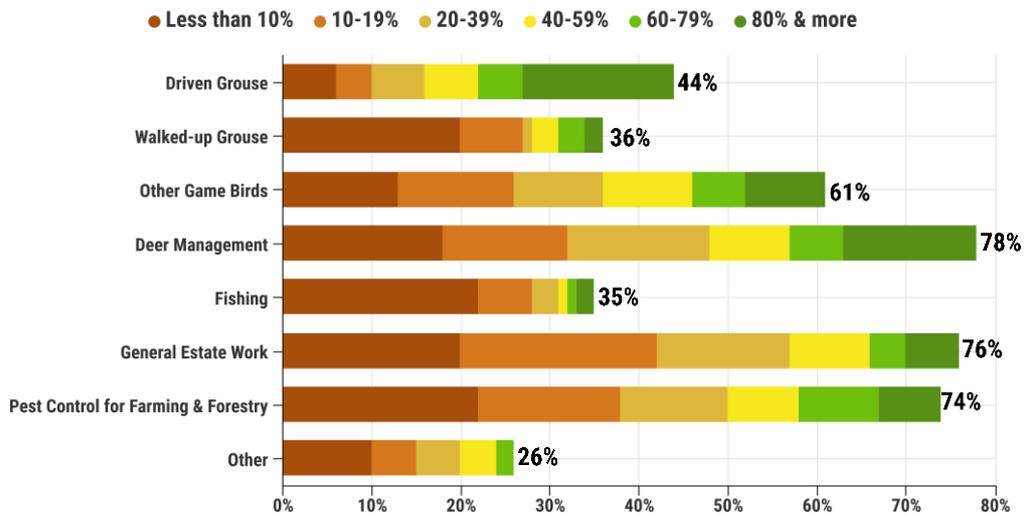


Figure 20 highlights the proportion of the respondents who reported some engagement in the various game and deer management activities. Deer management was the most common activity reported (78%), followed by general estate work (76%), pest control for farming and forestry (74%) and non-grouse game birds such as pheasants and partridge (61%). Only 44% of the sample were involved in driven grouse activities and only 36% in walked-up grouse. 22% of the respondents were engaged in activities relating to driven grouse for over 60% of their time. 21% were engaged in deer management activities for over 60% of their time, whilst 15% had a heavy focus on non-grouse game birds and 16% were heavily involved in pest control for farming and forestry. It is noticeable that across most activities quite a large proportion of respondents were involved in the activity for less than 10% of their time.

Figure 20 Summary of time spent on different game and deer management activities



Over one third of respondents (34%) stated that they regularly undertake a form of pest control on other farms and forests (i.e. not their place of work), whilst 22% confirmed that they occasionally do so (see Figure 21). For 14% of the sample they only undertook external pest control when there is a problem and 2% said they only did so at lambing time (see Figure 21).

Figure 21 Frequency of undertaking pest control on external farms and forests

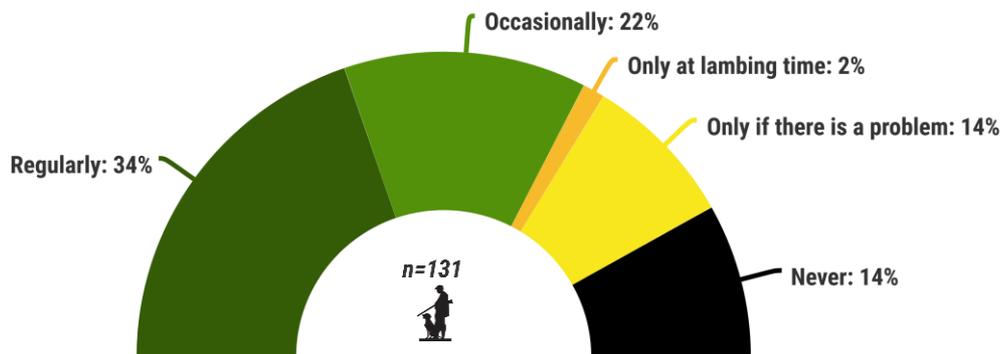
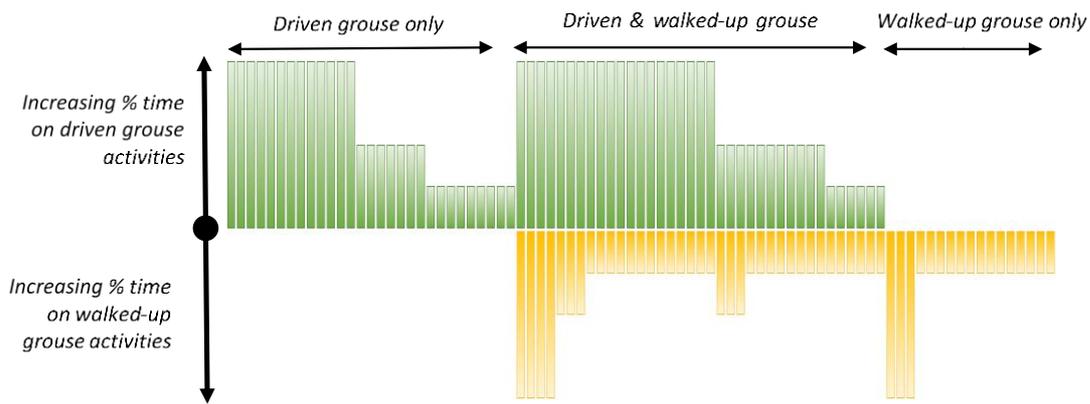


Figure 22 illustrates the mix of driven versus walked-up grouse, where respondents reported they were involved grouse activities. Each bar represents an individual and the length of the bar reflects the amount of the respondent's time that was allocated to that activity (the longer the bar the greater the amount of time spent). It is clear that there was a group that spent most of their work year focusing on driven grouse activities, with a second group split between driven and walked-up grouse, with a third group significantly, or exclusively, focused on walked-up grouse (this reflects the grouse moor management case studies reported in [Part 1 of this research](#)).

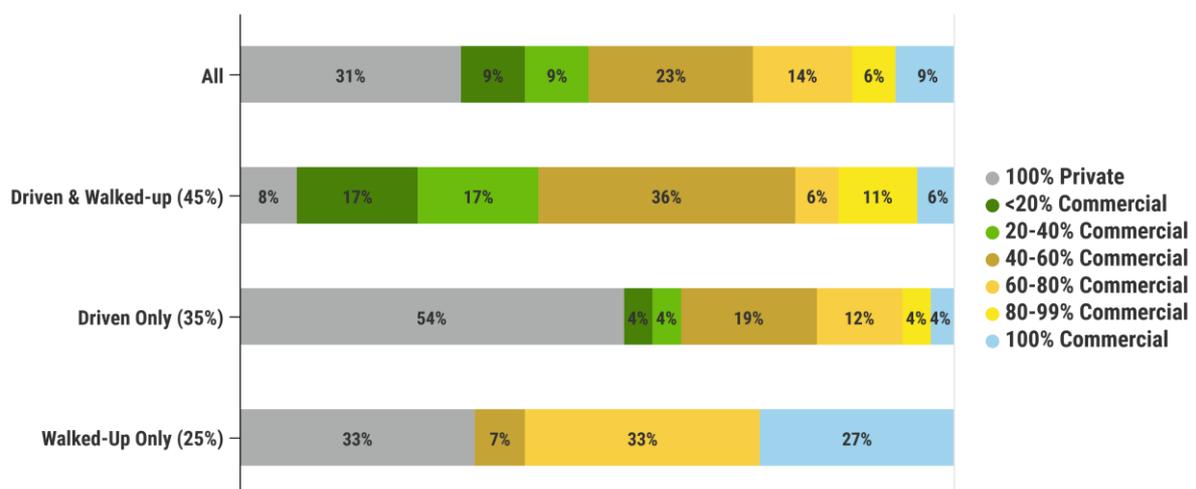
Figure 22 Mix of driven and walked up activity by respondents reporting some grouse work



The gamekeepers involved in grouse management activities were also asked about the proportion of their grouse shooting activity at their place of work that was private (for owners, family and friends) or commercial (paying guests). For the 83 respondents that were engaged in grouse shooting to some extent the grouse work undertaken was exclusively driven for 35% of respondents whilst 25% were only engaged in walked-up grouse and 45% were involved in both driven and walked-up activities (remembering they also have other non-grouse activities to undertake). There was a real variety of private and commercial focus between the respondents (showing that no two estates are the same – with different owner motivations). Acknowledging the small sample involved, Figure 23 highlights the relative importance of private versus commercial grouse activity. This perhaps reiterates that many owners of sporting estates are often motivated by being able to partake in hunting activities with friends and family. For those gamekeepers whose grouse work was exclusively focused on driven grouse, 54% said that the shooting was wholly for private (owners’) interests, with only 6% having all their grouse days sold commercially. This contrasts with the gamekeepers whose grouse work was exclusively focused on walked-up grouse where 27% said the shooting was exclusively commercial and 33% said the shooting was exclusively for owners. For those involved in mixed grouse shooting there was a much more even spread of private and commercial grouse shooting, as highlighted by some respondents:

- “[We] produce grouse for my boss to shoot and seeing the benefits this has to all the other wildlife that lives on the moor”
- “[We] provide the sport for the boss and occasional paying clients.”

Figure 23 Estimated proportion of grouse shooting activity for private and commercial guests¹⁷

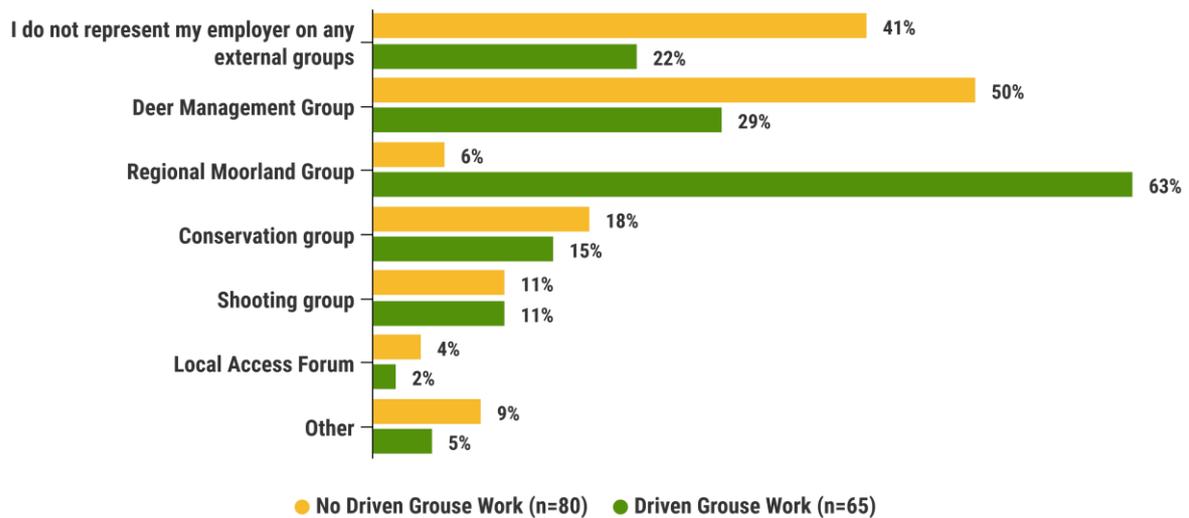


¹⁷ This is a derived indicator taking a ratio of range of commercial focused time and private focused time

5.3.3 Representing employers

Respondents were involved in a range of external groups as part of their work (see Figure 24). They were most likely to represent their employer on a deer management group (39%), followed by a regional moorland group (30%). 16% of respondents confirmed that they represented their employer in a conservation group, 11% in a shooting group and 3% in a Local Access Forum. Respondents were also involved in other groups, including: an upland advisory group, a fisheries group and fisheries trust, a community group, a community council, two biodiversity/species groups, and a public body steering group.

Figure 24 Representing employers on external groups



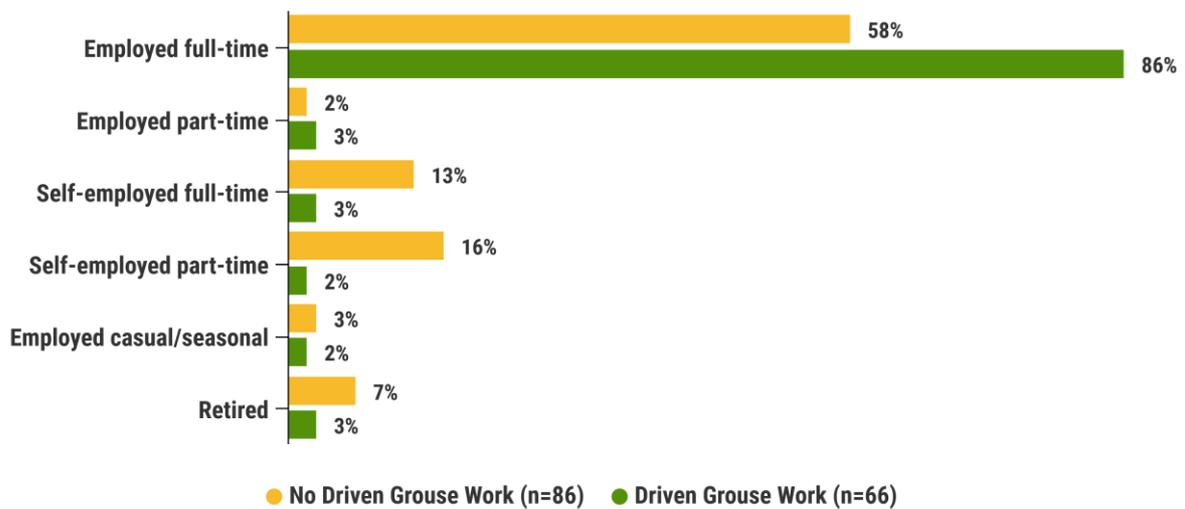
5.4 Employment package

In the discourse about grouse moor management there is often reference made to employment terms, wage rates, tied housing and gratuity as factors that may influence gamekeeper behaviours. Much of this discourse is anecdotal and financial data that is frequently cited has extrapolated data from economic impact studies without consideration of the nuanced assumptions behind the economic data. This section therefore examines the employment packages of the survey respondents – looking at type of employment, employment contracts, gamekeeper and other earnings, tied housing, gratuity, annual leave and sickness entitlements.

5.4.1 Type of employment

Head keepers, beat keepers and under keepers were largely employed on a full-time basis (over 90%), and ghillies were the most likely to be employed casually or seasonally and also to describe themselves as retired (albeit there was a very small sample of them). Full-time self-employment numbers were greatest for single-handed keepers and stalkers. Additionally, 30% of stalkers were self-employed part-time and 17% self-employed full-time, perhaps indicating more contract work being available for deer management. Figure 25 highlights that those involved in the driven grouse sector are much more likely to be employed full-time (86% compared to only 58% in the non-driven grouse sector). The findings are similar to Kerr (2020) who reported 72% of the respondents to the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust UK-wide survey were employed full-time, with 5% seasonally employed and 5% self-employed.

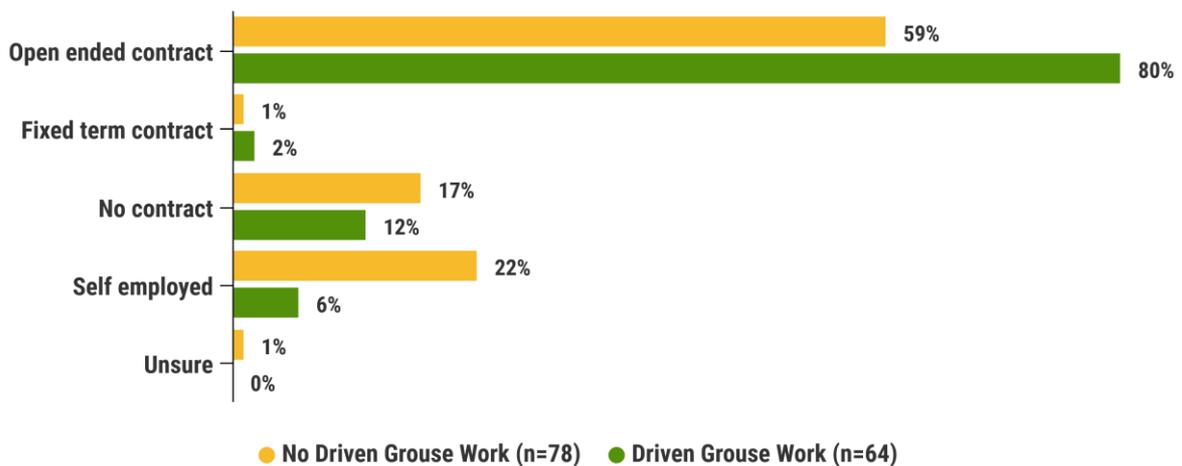
Figure 25 Type of employment



5.4.2 Term of employment

Whilst 64% of the overall sample reported that they had open ended (permanent) employment contracts, Figure 26 shows that those with driven grouse work were more likely to be on an open-ended contract (80% compared to 59% in non-driven grouse). Respondents indicated that they had no employment contract in 13% of cases with 14% self-employed (being higher in the non-driven grouse sector as previously discussed).

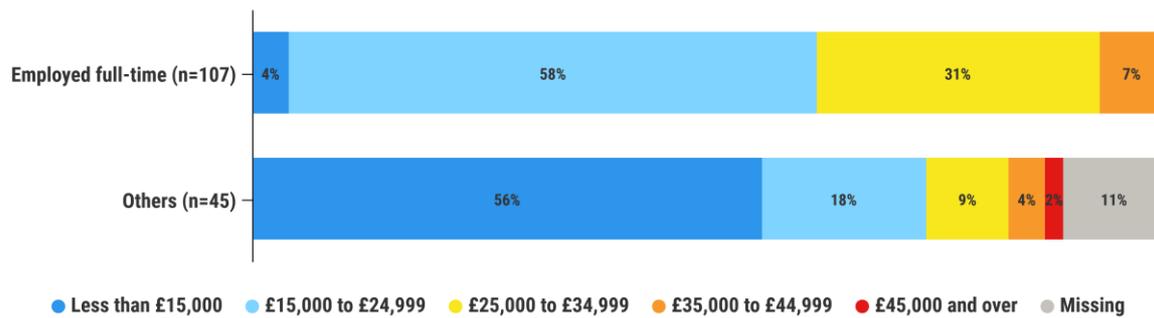
Figure 26 Type of employment contract



5.4.3 Wages

In assessing wages in the sector, it is vital to understand that a proportion of the respondents were part-time, semi-retired or casual/seasonal workers. Overall, 19% reported that they earned less than £15,000 per year from their game and deer management position and Figure 27 highlights that low income from the sector was most commonly reported (56%) amongst the 30% of respondents who were not employed full-time (only 4% of full-time workers reported having incomes of under £15,000 and they were all young adults). Amongst the full-time employees, 58% earned £15,000-£24,000, 31% earned £25,000 to £35,000 and 7% earned £35,000 to £45,000.

Figure 27 Game and deer management salary



For 53% of the respondents their game and deer management wage was their only source of income, but 47% had other, often significant, incomes that they could rely on. Figure 28 shows that 64% of the full-time employee respondents had no other income sources, but 23% had earnings of up to £15,000 from other sources with 11% reporting earnings of more than £15,000 from other sources. For those who were not employed full-time, 27% reported that their only source of income was from game and deer management, with 24% reporting ‘other earnings’ of up to £15,000 and 18% reporting earnings of over £15,000. The highest ‘other income’ earners were generally self-employed or were only working part-time in the game and deer management sector.

This research did not attempt to focus on peripheral staff for game and deer management – such as the wider members of the rural community who engage in ‘beating’ for grouse and other game bird sporting days, but the level of payment for beaters was offered by one respondent:

- “[I would like] people to respect our industry for the work we do for conservation and employment we provide to local people. I paid 2,400 beaters wages (£50-60 per day) out last season. How many other employers can boast that? Not to mention all the economic benefits that come with our estates.”

Figure 28 Salary earned from other work



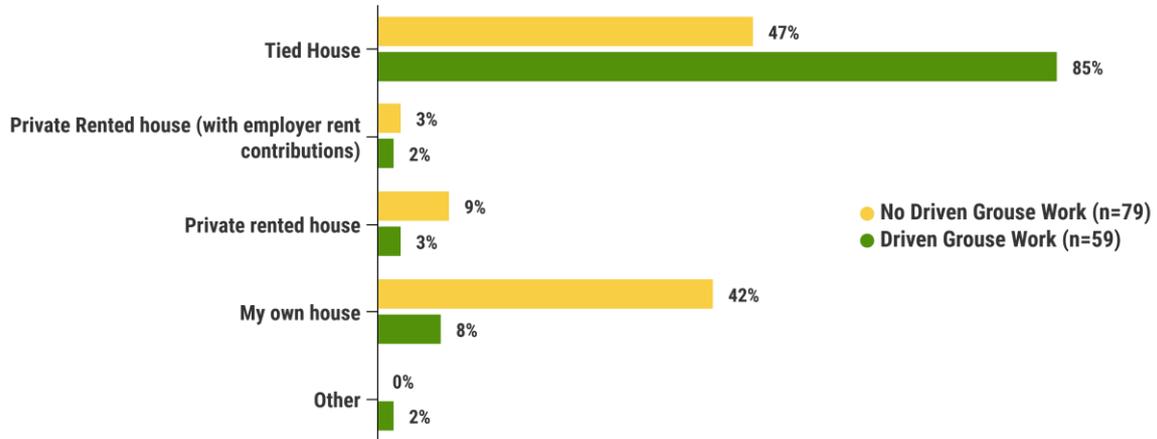
5.4.4 Tied housing

In the game and deer management sector, full-time employees (and occasionally retirees) often reside, rent-free, in houses on the estate as part of their overall remuneration package in addition to their salary – referred to as tied housing. 60% of the respondents lived in tied housing (57%), or in privately rented accommodation with employer contributions (3%)¹⁸. For full-time employees, 88% were in tied housing (this was 99% of full-time employees who work with driven grouse) with the majority of the rest residing in their own ‘owned’ house. Figure 29 highlights that those respondents with driven grouse work were much more likely to stay in tied estate housing (85%) compared to those

¹⁸ This is similar to Kerr (2020) who reported 68% of the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust survey respondents from across the UK stayed in tied housing.

respondents not engaged in driven grouse work (47%), where 42% stayed in their own house. It is important to remember that a larger proportion of this cohort was self-employed or only worked part-time in the game and deer management sector. All of the eight retired respondents lived in their own house or rented accommodation privately.

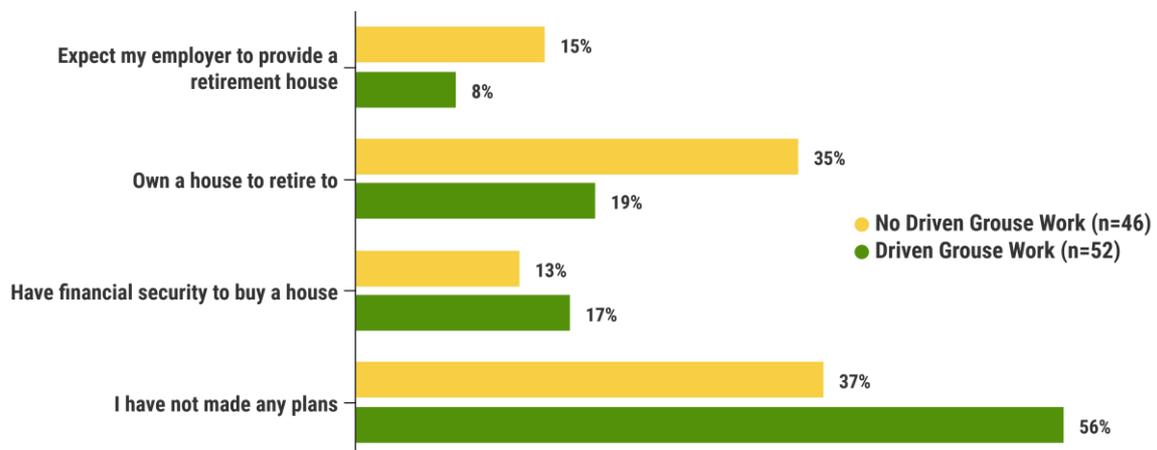
Figure 29 Type of housing



The respondents who currently live in tied or rented accommodation were asked about their housing plans for when they retire. Overall, 47% of the respondents had not made any plans for housing in their retirement (there was a negative correlation with respondents' age, where younger respondents were least likely to have made plans). Employers were expected to provide housing upon retirement for 11% of the respondents (Figure 30 shows this is marginally higher amongst those working in driven grouse). Whilst 15% reported that they had the financial security to buy a house, 27% already own a house to which they can retire (this was 35% of the respondents with tied housing working in driven grouse).

- “On retiring I was given the opportunity to rent a house from the estate, which I do. This has allowed me to continue being closely involved in game shooting, etc. As a retired person it keeps my interest active and keeps me healthy through activity and in contact with old and new colleagues. Without all this I have no idea what life would be like in isolation somewhere else.”*

Figure 30 Housing retirement plans for those living in tied or rented accommodation¹⁹

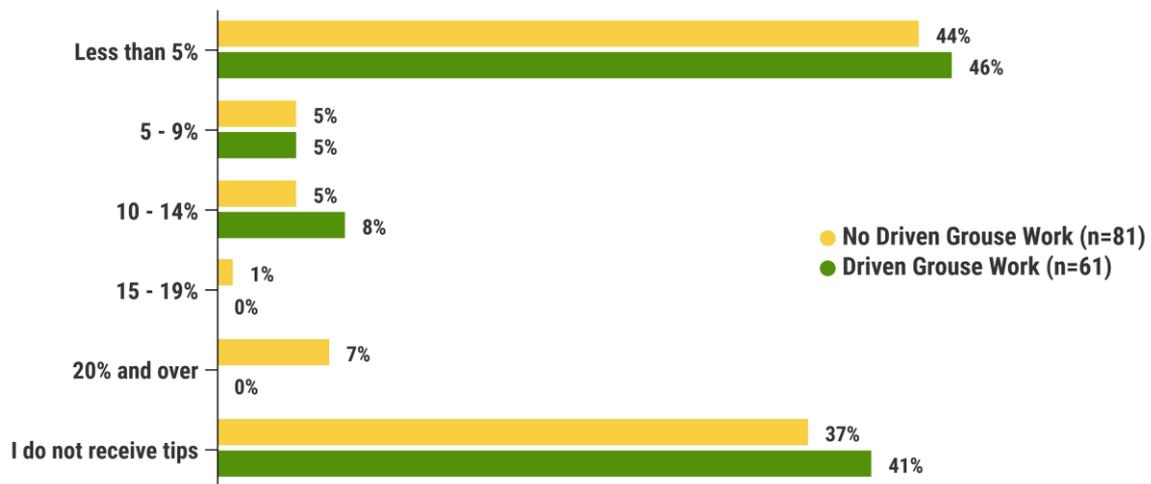


¹⁹ Kerr (2020) reported 34% of the Gamekeepers Welfare Trust survey respondents from across the UK either had a house, or the means to buy a house to retire to.

5.4.5 Gratuity

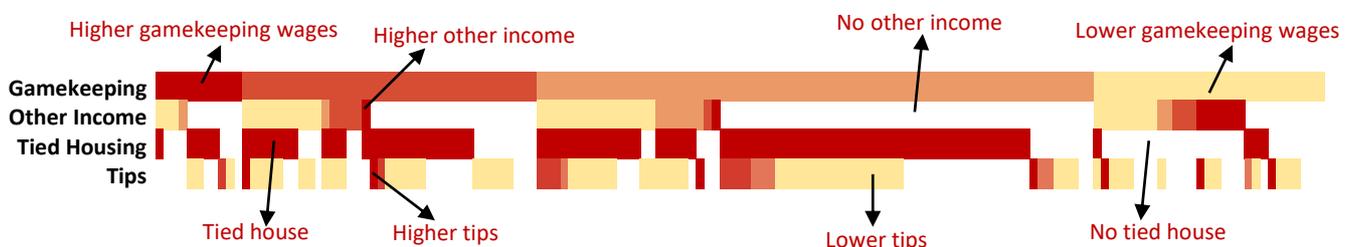
It is often reported that gamekeepers receive gratuity (tips) from sporting guests²⁰ with the suggestion that “on a big commercial estate, where they shoot 300 to 400 birds perhaps four or even five days a week with eight guns, maths suggests that tips in the order of £30,000 a season are changing hands”²¹ or that “on driven grouse days of 100-200 brace expect to tip £100.”²² However, 39% of the respondents claimed that they ‘do not receive tips’ although this was corroborated to an extent in qualitative responses where a number of respondents reported “I don’t receive much in the way of work allowances.” For 45% of the respondents, tips made up less than 5% of their total income from game and deer management, and 5% of respondents received 5-9% of their income from tips with 11% reporting more than 10% of their income came through gratuity (see Figure 31). For 7% of those who did not have driven grouse work, over 20% of their income came through this informal channel.

Figure 31 Extent of any gratuity received



It is challenging to establish a picture of the overall package (including tied housing) that individual gamekeepers are deriving, particularly when the nature of employment patterns differ, and other income sources are considered. That said, Figure 32 illustrates the overall benefits derived from the sector through gamekeeper wages, tips and housing alongside the extent of other income sources. Each column represents a respondent and the lighter colours reflect lower income levels or tips and for housing tied housing and rented accommodation with employer contributions are shown. This illustrates the range of different mixes of income and non-pecuniary benefits that respondents generate.

Figure 32 Summary of overall ‘package’ received by respondents (darker colours represent larger benefit, blanks indicate no benefit)



²⁰ For example: See <https://www.gunsonpegs.com/articles/shooting-talk/how-much-to-tip-the-keeper>

²¹ See: <https://www.shootinguk.co.uk/features/are-gamekeepers-being-tipped-too-much-10780>

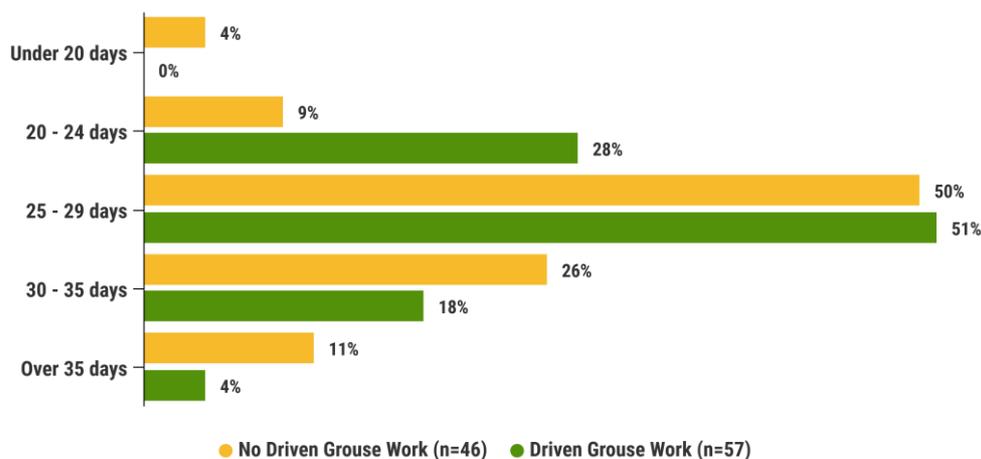
²² See: <https://www.shootinguk.co.uk/shooting/shooting-etiquette/tipping-on-a-shoot-93159>

5.4.6 Holiday and sickness benefits

Half of the respondents reported that they were entitled to full pay if they were off work due to illness. About 20% of the sample reported that they were only entitled to Statutory Sick Pay with 3% stating they got reduced pay from their employer. A quarter of the respondents were unsure of any sickness benefits they were entitled to from their employer.

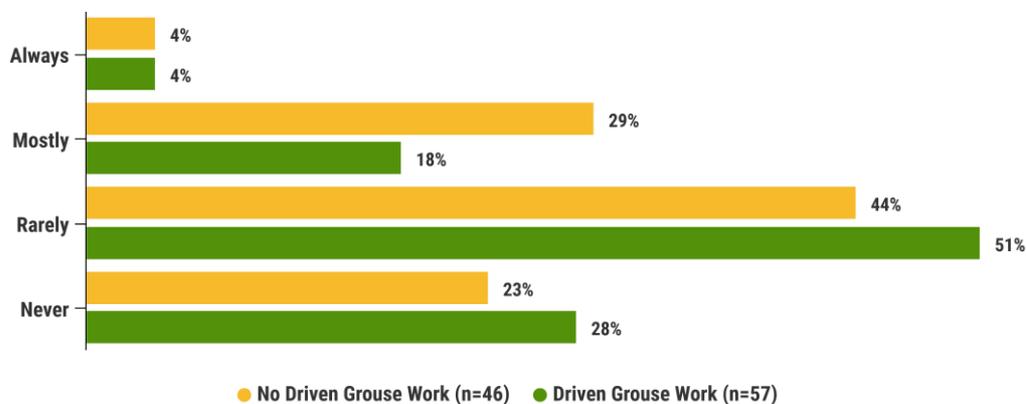
The 25% of respondents who were self-employed or not a regular employee did not receive holiday entitlements. A small proportion of part-time employees received less than 20 days annual leave per year and for 50% they received between 25 and 29 days (see Figure 33). A higher proportion of those working with driven grouse received 20-24 days (reflecting that the cohort has a higher proportion of younger workers who had been in position for shorter periods of time). Entitlement to over 30 days of annual leave was reported by 22% of the sample.

Figure 33 Annual Holiday Entitlement



Being able to take all holiday entitlements can be challenging in many workplaces, and it appears that the vast majority of respondents are unable to/choose not to take all of their holiday entitlement. Only 3% reported that they always use their full annual leave entitlement, while 21% mostly do. However, 43% stated that they rarely utilise their full entitlement and 23% said they never use up all their holidays. A higher proportion of respondents from the driven grouse cohort were regularly not taking all the annual leave they are entitled to (see Figure 34).

Figure 34 Use of full holiday entitlement



5.5 Training

This section provides details about the training needs identified by respondents and whether their employers actively encourage participation in vocational training – something important for maintaining professional and compliance standards.

When asked to identify additional areas of training that would be beneficial for respondents (see Figure 35), habitat impact assessment was identified most frequently on average as an area where further training would be helpful (30% of respondents with driven grouse work and 40% of those with no driven grouse work). Access laws were the next most frequently selected choice, identified by 33% of all respondents. Training in conflict resolution, habitat protection and wildlife monitoring followed for those with driven grouse work, all at 32%. Those with no driven grouse work opted for training in conflict resolution, habitat protection and wildlife laws (at 26%, 23% and 21% respectively). Some respondents added short comments to explain their responses. One gamekeeper noted that “any relevant training would be welcome” while another suggested “trips to other estates or even countries to see different ways of doing things”. Other suggestions provided included: processing game meat for sale/the table, habitat improvement, public relations skills, mountain rescue liaison, police search liaison, chainsaw use and tractor driving/maintenance. One respondent stressed that:

- “Training for any of the above is always useful and refresher courses keeping up to date with current legislation and new techniques can only be beneficial.”

Figure 35 Areas of future training topics identified as beneficial

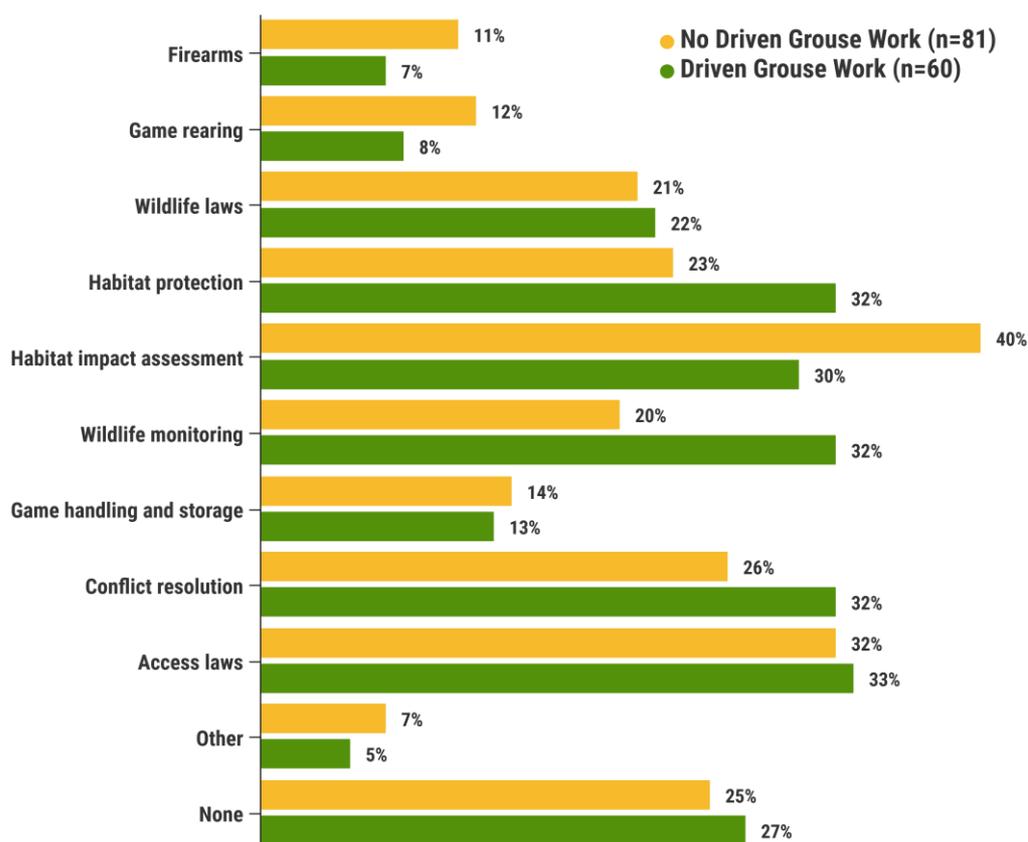
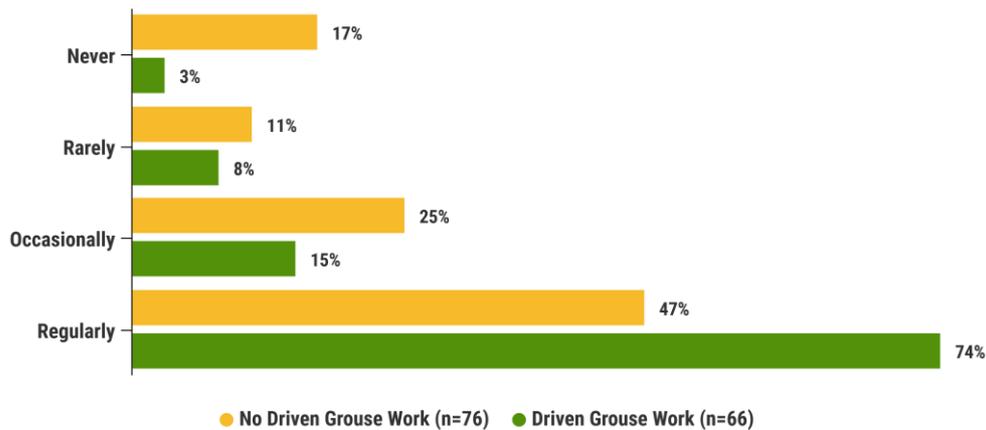


Figure 36 illustrates that 56% of respondents answered that their employer actively encourages participation in training courses regularly and 19% that their employer occasionally encourages such opportunities. 9% answered that their employer rarely encourages these opportunities and 10% reported that they are never encouraged.

Figure 36 Whether current employer actively encourages participation in training courses



5.6 Job perception

This section provides a summary of how the survey respondents perceive their work, including aspects of the work they enjoy as well as things that are more challenging. The section includes a look at job satisfaction, the rating of different aspects of gamekeeper work, change that would make the job better, witnessing of crime and receiving abuse/threats as a result of their profession. Within this section of the questionnaire there was a lot of scope for the gamekeepers to provide qualitative feedback and that is used where appropriate throughout this section to contextualise the quantitative data and to give the respondents ‘a voice’, by letting their statements help describe the sentiments behind the data.

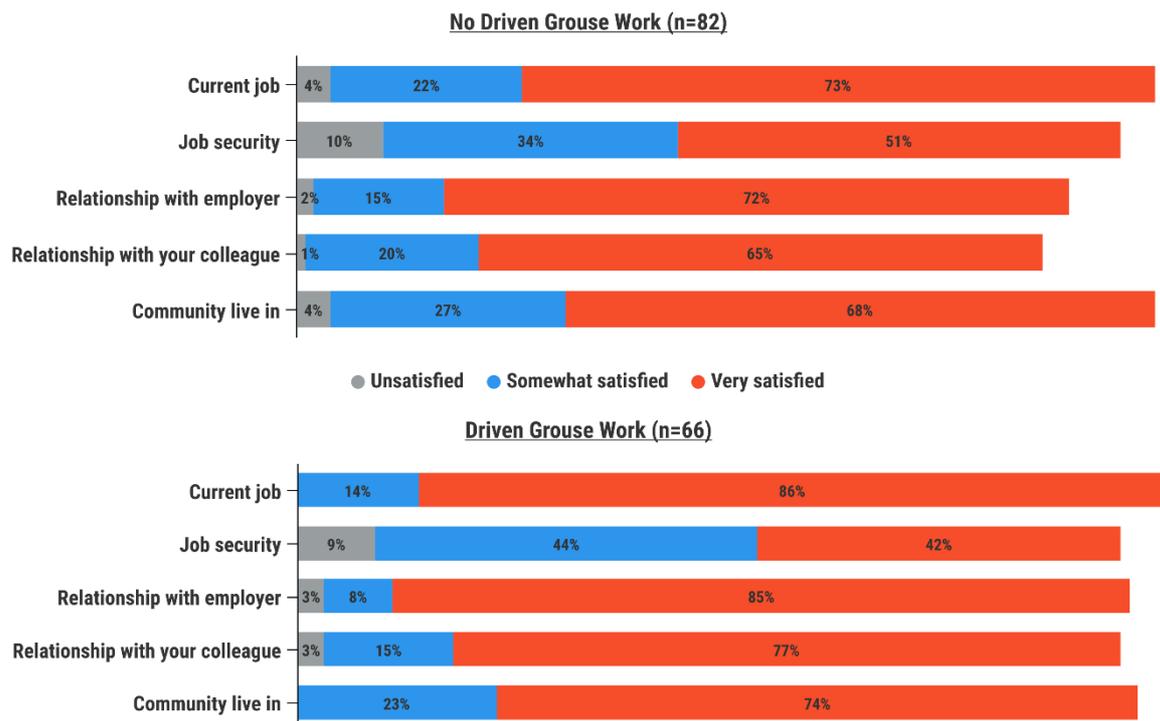
5.6.1 Job satisfaction

There was a high level of job satisfaction expressed by the respondents, with three-quarters stating that they were ‘very satisfied’ with their current job (86% of those with driven grouse work and 73% with no driven grouse work were ‘very satisfied’ – as illustrated in Figure 37). This sense of job satisfaction is well-illustrated by the following statements:

- *“The job isn’t a job to me it’s a way of life - and in this day and age you have to have passion and heart to work the land and hours we do. But [I] wouldn’t change it for the world”*
- *“I have a strong passion for my work meaning there is never a day I feel like I’m going to work.”*

Three-quarters of the respondents also noted that they were generally ‘very satisfied’ with their relationship with their employer (85% of those with driven grouse work and 72% of those without). Levels of satisfaction were lowest for job security – about 10% of respondents in both groups were ‘unsatisfied’ for this aspect with 44% working with driven grouse (and 34% with no-driven grouse work) only being ‘somewhat satisfied’ with their job security. Respondents were also asked to state their levels of satisfaction with their relationships with their colleagues and the community they live in. For both types of respondent, the majority were ‘very satisfied’ with these aspects, perhaps revealing positive integration with work colleagues and wider community members.

Figure 37 Levels of satisfaction with aspects of employment, team and community

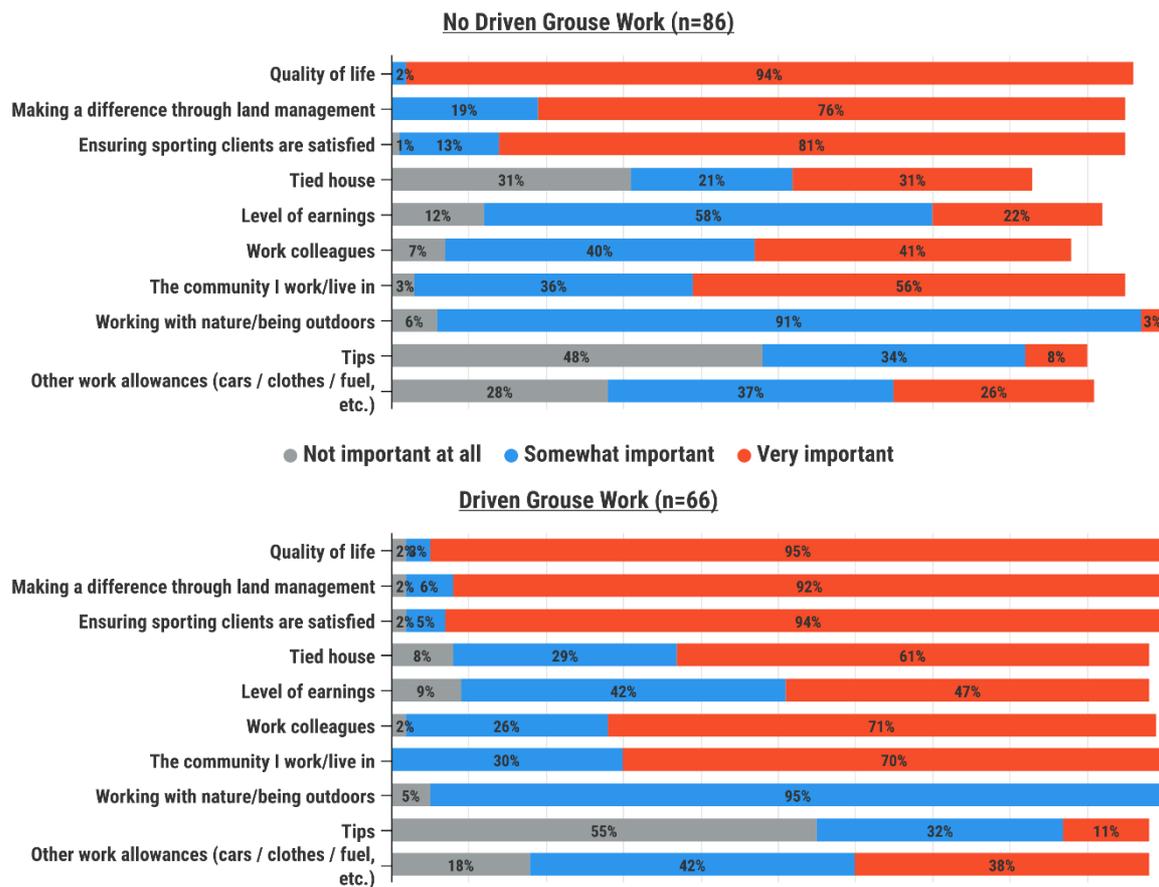


5.6.2 Rating of different aspects of gamekeeping

Figure 38 shows that 'quality of life' was rated the highest 'very important' aspect of their current job by 95% of all respondents. 'Ensuring sporting clients are satisfied' was rated 'very important' by 94% of those with driven grouse work and 81% of those without driven grouse work. 'Making a difference through land management' was also rated 'very important' by 92% of those with driven grouse work (76% of those without driven grouse work). Other aspects rated as very important by over 50% of respondents were: 'the community I live/work in' (for all respondents) and 'work colleagues' and 'tied house' for those respondents with driven grouse work.

The aspect of their current job that was perceived as 'not important at all' for the highest proportion of respondents was tips and other non-pecuniary benefits derived from their employment in the sector. For example, 55% of those with driven grouse work and 48% of those with no driven grouse work said tips were 'not important at all', with a third of both groups of respondents saying tips were 'somewhat important' and only about 10% said that it was 'very important'.

Figure 38 Rating of different aspects of current job



When explaining in their own words the two things that they like most about their job, respondents across all categories of experience (from under five years to over 20 years) and across the different types of employer frequently referred to “being outdoors”, “quality of life”, “conservation” and “working with nature/wildlife”. Being outdoors was noted in the comments as one of the two most important things about the job by 56 respondents (37%). Coupled with comments about quality of life, observing wildlife, a sense of freedom, adventure and solitude, working outside has clear appeal. Examples of the positive comments provided relating to ‘quality of life’ aspects of gamekeeping included:

- “Being alone on the hill or forestry”
- “Freedom of being out in countryside enjoying all weather's and all times of year. Meeting new people associated with job and estate business.”
- “Freedom of the outdoors and working with nature.”
- “Lifestyle and working with deer, game, wildlife, guests and community.”
- “Satisfying a client and being able to be at one with the natural world.”
- “Self-employment freedom and working in an environment I like.”
- “Working and living in the environment and watching and learning the ways of all wildlife.”

Forty-five respondents (30%) noted conservation and/or wildlife protection as one of the two most important things, with comments demonstrating a sense of pride in their work and the positive impacts that it has on the natural environment. “Making a difference to wildlife”, “working for wildlife” and “working in an environment I care about” illustrate the types of statements that respondents made about this aspect of their work. Respondents referred to the positive impacts their work has on “red-listed species”, “grey partridges”, “ground-nesting birds” and a “good, healthy deer herd”, as well

as *“trying to improve habitat/environment for all species not just grouse”*. Examples of the positive aspects of the job related to wildlife included:

- *“Ability to make a difference for struggling wildlife, such as breeding waders.”*
- *“Managing a population of deer to ensure those beasts will always have a place on the hill.”*
- *“Caring for the environment. Seeing a more diverse range of fauna on the estate as a result of my efforts.”*
- *“Looking after the flora and fauna of our hills.”*
- *“Management of the countryside. Creating a rich environment for animals to thrive”*

Enjoyment of sport and/or providing a good sporting experience for the owner/clients was deemed one of the two most important things for 16 respondents (11%), with interaction with clients on the hill also noted as adding enjoyment to their work. The ‘way of life’ associated with being a gamekeeper, and maintaining that way of life, was important for nine respondents, illustrated by comments about the *“gamekeeping tradition”*, *“being part of our rural heritage”* and *“the feeling that I just might be doing something to maintain a traditional way of life”*.

5.6.3 Witnessing crime

There was little difference related to having witnessed crime between those who were engaged in driven grouse activities and those who were not. Overall, 37% of the respondents stated that they had witnessed wildlife crime on the ground they had worked on (see Figure 39).²³ When asked to provide some details of the types of wildlife crime they had witnessed, many responses were provided. 35 respondents (23%) had witnessed incidents of deer poaching, hare coursing and/or fish poaching (salmon), with two of these respondents commenting that the police had not attended the incidents after they were reported. Five respondents referred to disturbance of nesting birds, particularly as a result of dogs not being under control, with another respondent noting a case of raptor egg theft. Examples of the responses include:

- *“Anti-blood sports activists oiling duck ponds to stop them from being shot.”*
- *“Deer, game and salmon poaching.”*
- *“Disturbance to nesting birds. Poaching of deer and game birds. The felling of trees for firewood. Wildfires caused by wild camping.”*
- *“Hare coursing is a regular event sadly and no real help from police in dealing with them.”*
- *“Raptor disturbance.”*
- *“Raptor egg thefts reported.”*
- *“Unintentional snaring of a badger about 20 years ago.”*
- *“During spring time I have witnessed on many occasions people with dogs not under control disturbing nesting birds.”*

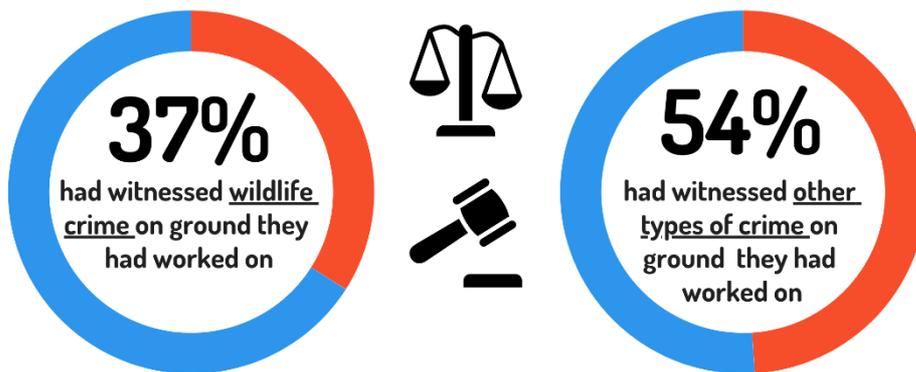
Figure 39 also shows that 4% of the respondents had witnessed other types of crime on the ground they had worked on. In providing more detail about the nature of the types of other crimes they had witnessed or experienced, theft and/or deliberate damage of legally-set traps was noted by 31 respondents (20%), particularly in relation to snares, traps and crow cages (including incidents of crows being released). Thirty-two respondents (21%) had experienced vandalism and/or theft, particularly theft of machinery and quads, and eight respondents had seen evidence of fly-tipping. Seven respondents noted unlawful vehicular access and two reported wildfires caused by wild camping or campfires left burning. Other incidents reported by individual respondents included: people felling trees for firewood; disturbance of farm animals; dumping of stolen vehicles; drones flying intrusively over the property; illegal use of CCTV; and local river pollution.

- *“Tampering with and damage to legally set traps”*

²³ Some incidents had been classified incorrectly as ‘wildlife crime’ or ‘other crime’ by respondents. The responses were re-classified accordingly, depending on the nature of the detail provided.

- *“Sheep worrying by unleashed dogs”*
- *“Diesel theft from forestry tank, breaking and entry to holiday home, vehicle trespass.”*
- *“Illegal placing of cameras pointing into two private houses occupied by gamekeepers and their wives/partners and young children”*
- *“Vandalism, fly tipping, theft.”*
- *“Off-road motorcycles damaging SSSI and trespassing.”*
- *“People flying drones over both me at work and my home.”*

Figure 39 Have you ever witnessed unlawful activity on the ground worked on?



5.6.4 Target of abuse or threats

Figure 40 illustrates incidents of abuse or threats that respondents had experienced from people outside of their profession, due to their occupation. 56% of respondents had experienced abuse/threats ‘rarely’ (once or twice per year), with 7% reporting ‘occasional’ abuse/threats (once or twice a month) and 1% ‘often’ (one or twice per week). 35% of the respondents had not experienced abuse/threats as a result of their occupation.

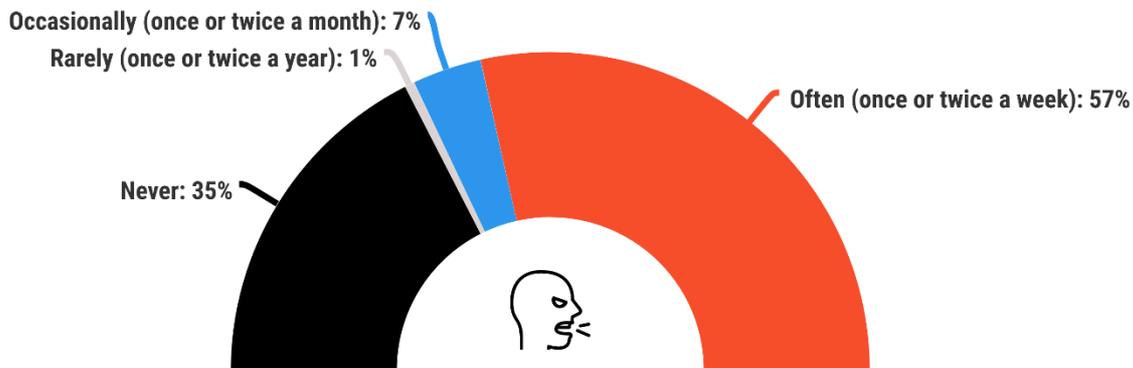
When providing more detail about the nature of the abuse/threats, 62 respondents (41%) described experiences of verbal abuse and two had experienced physical violence. Abusive and threatening remarks were generally experienced while working on the property, with comments relating to killing animals (particularly grouse and deer), alleged criminality within the profession, and reactions to requests by gamekeeping staff to access the area responsibly (e.g. avoiding disturbing nesting birds). Abuse and threats were also reported to extend to gamekeepers’ and owners’ families. Examples of the responses include:

- *“[I was] physically beaten up by deer poachers.”*
- *“Verbal abuse about ‘cruelty’ when managing deer.”*
- *“Verbal and physical abuse towards myself and my family”*
- *“My analogy is that it feels like you have axe murderer tattooed to your forehead as regards the looks and comments we receive.”*
- *“Threats to burn down my house and kill all my dogs from illegal hare coursers.”*
- *“We have ‘antis’ leave death threats on the estate office phone. We’ve had death threats to the owners’ children by letter.”*
- *“The overbearing threat to our profession from well-meaning urban communities and intransigent attitude of government agencies makes the job increasingly harder. Additionally, I never imaged having to deal with threats made to my family and team by anti-hunting groups and individuals.”*

Seven respondents had also experienced abuse/threats via social media. For one respondent, this involved their personal details being shared on an anti-shooting Facebook page without permission and abusive comments being made about the individual. Examples of responses include:

- *“Ignorance of my role as a Gamekeeper through verbal abuse. Online abuse toward me and my family because of my job.”*
- *“Threats of violence/death to myself, family and colleagues - internet and telephone based.”*
- *“Online threats and abuse following an appearance on [national TV] discussing wildlife matters.”*

Figure 40 Experience of abuse or threats from people outside of sector, because of occupation



5.6.5 Things to make the job better

All respondents were asked to explain in their own words the two things that they would like to change about their job. Although 16 respondents (11%) said that they would change “nothing” about their job (except maybe the Scottish weather, as noted by six respondents), 39% wrote comments about how they would like to change negative public opinion and media coverage about the profession. They also made a range of comments about the need for better public understanding of the work they do, and recognition of the benefits that they deliver. As respondents explained:

- *“[I] would like some acknowledgement for the good we do rather than continually having to fight our corner against prejudice generated by a lack of practical knowledge.”*
- *“Many communities in the Highlands and Islands are very different now and are made up of those from originally out with the native community and this brings many challenges with perceptions of the game keeping role.”*
- *“Balanced information by media regarding gamekeeping.”*
- *“Better public understanding of the environmental economic and social balance land management provides”*
- *“Having to constantly defend my profession against negative stereotypes.”*
- *“More acknowledgement for the good we do for biodiversity.”*
- *“I feel constantly pressured to defend our profession as we seem to be constantly portrayed as bad people. Where in fact what we try to do is hold a proper balance in the countryside carry out a lot of conservation and get no thanks for it.”*
- *“Less ‘silo’ thinking. If the rural sector is going to deliver in a meaningful way it needs a wide and deep strategic approach. If not it will be relegated to a carbon sink where urban recreation takes place.”*
- *“Have the decision makers better understand our role and the positive impact that 99% of keepers make to Scotland’s wildlife.”*
- *“I would however like to see a recognition by government regarding the benefits and positives my efforts have given to wildlife...efforts have increased brown and white hare numbers, ensured wader and hare populations buck the downward trend elsewhere and increased other red and amber listed species.”*
- *“For people to be more respectful of the fact that the area they use for recreation is where we work and try to make a living.”*

The level of intervention/interest of government, NGOs and other non-rural actors linked to this sentiment and was referred to in the comments by 13% of the respondents. Noting “*interference*” and “*lack of practical knowledge*”, comments expressed frustration about the lack of “*understanding from the government*” and a desire for keepers to be “*celebrated, not vilified*”. Eighteen respondents (12%) also expressed a wish for the amount of ‘red-tape’ and ‘bureaucracy’ to be reduced/relaxed such as “*not having to fill in a form to set a snare*”. For example, a sample of the responses included:

- *“Misconceptions around the way privately owned land is managed and the benefits this management brings to all flora and fauna.”*
- *“More interaction with groups who don't recognize the importance of the knowledge from folk who have worked in our industry all their lives.”*
- *“I think the people with the experience ‘on the ground’ should have more say in the making of wildlife laws. Their knowledge is underestimated, and their motives misunderstood.”*
- *“Less interference from people with no knowledge other than a degree and no hands-on knowledge influencing policy makes, instead of people with life-time experience on the ground.”*
- *“The disregard from government agencies staff of the value of the knowledge and experience held within the sector.”*
- *“Land access laws with fines or penalties to public and tighter laws on dogs off leads in spring and summer.”*
- *“Licenses to control common predators.”*

Reflecting the results shown in Figure 37, more job security was noted by six respondents. Other changes noted by five or fewer respondents included: a higher salary; more free time/time off; more protection from criminal activity/abuse; more affordable/better equipment and clothing; the ability to control common predators (e.g. badger, pine marten, ravens, piscivorous birds); better accommodation; year-round work (rather than seasonal); more grouse to enable more shooting days; living in a less remote location; more training facilities in Scotland for Lantra courses; raised awareness of the benefits of eating game meat; and challenges with work colleagues. For example, respondents offered the following:

- *“I would like to have a bit more freedom from work. I would like to live a little closer to civilization, but not too close.”*
- *“I would like to work all year round rather than just seasonally. I would like better accommodation.”*
- *“Management have little time for us and appreciation for the contribution we make.”*
- *“Better understanding from some employers of the commitment from their employees.”*
- *“Afford the best wet weather gear.”*
- *“The stress and I put myself and my family through the long summer months. The estate having a better and more understanding foreman.”*

5.7 Outlook

This concluding section provides the respondents’ perceptions of how the gamekeeping profession has changed in the last decade and the levels of optimism about the future of the profession.

5.7.1 Perceptions of change

Generally, the respondents reported that their working lives have become more challenging over the last decade, particularly for those working with driven grouse. Figure 41 reveals that dealing with ‘public perceptions of gamekeepers’ was rated as the most ‘more challenging’ aspect of working in game and deer management over the past 10 years by all respondents (95% of those with driven grouse work and 83% of those with no driven grouse work).

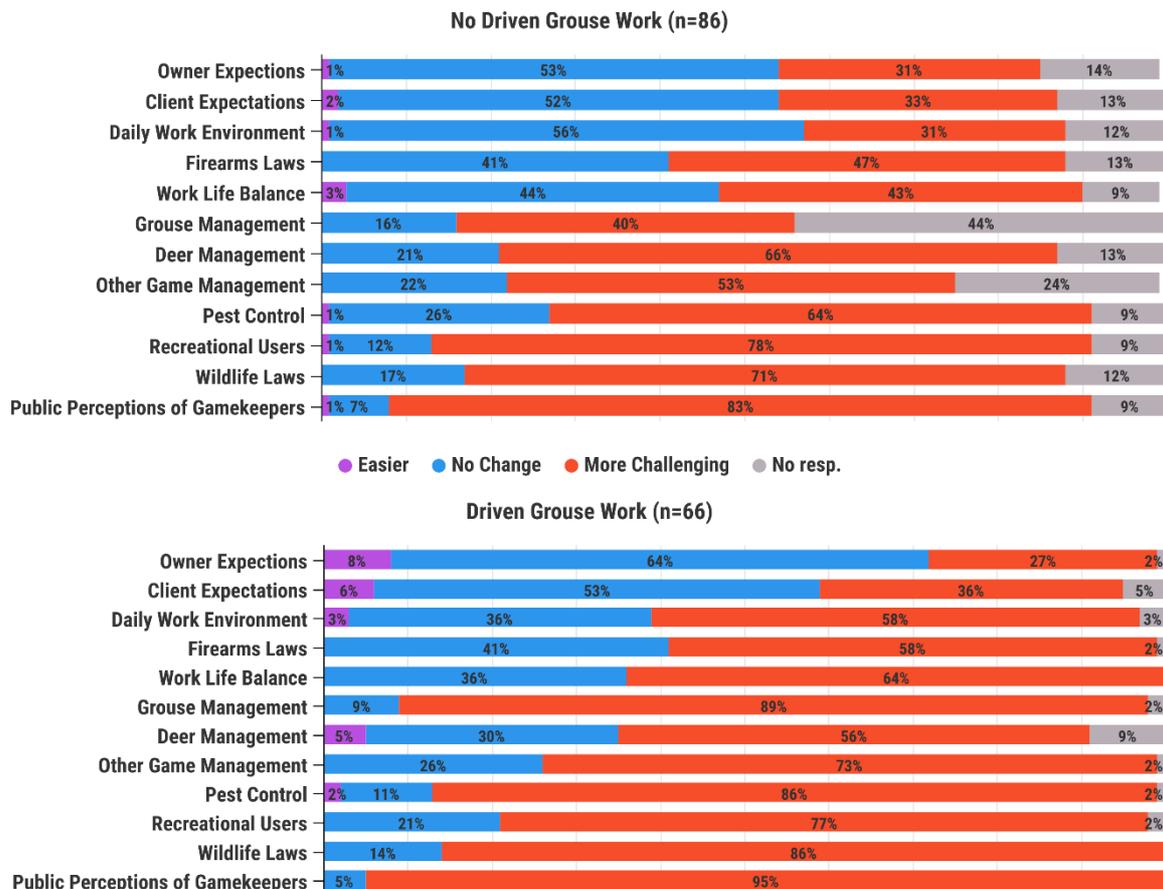
- *“The public need educated, we need to teach in schools about the countryside and stalking game management & river fishing etc.”*
- *“We have to abide by the statute laws of the country and move away from the past. Unfortunately, the few who don’t are giving ammunition to the ‘antis’ and will lead to our downfall.”*
- *“I am proud to tell people I am a gamekeeper and the large majority are supportive however I do believe there is a growing groundswell of ‘antis’ which I believe is largely down to social media.”*

Dealing with ‘grouse management’ (89%), ‘wildlife laws’ (86%) and ‘pest control’ (86%) were considered the next most challenging changes faced in the last decade by those with driven grouse work. For those without driven grouse work, the changes in the last decade that were also frequently cited as having become more challenging were ‘recreational users’ (78%), ‘wildlife laws’ (71%), ‘deer management’ (66%) and ‘pest control’ (64%). There was a difference in attitudes towards the ‘daily work environment’ of respondents with 58% of those working with driven grouse reporting it had become more challenging compared to only 31% not working with driven grouse. A number of respondents also referred to positive changes (including of working practices) that they perceived as beneficial to the profession and to nature:

- *“Most changes are for the better except the demonising of game management...and the ease in which government accepts this.”*
- *“Scrutiny and expectation have risen exponentially. This has benefits, but can be an additional stress on people who chose a line of work for its sense of freedom from the 9-5 and desk based work.”*
- *“Fundamentally gamekeeping has not changed but has benefited from changes in wildlife laws, making it much clearer and easier to assert peer pressure where necessary. With very large and stronger penalties for wildlife crime, a tightening up of snaring etc. it has given good guidance and tidied up many grey areas and sloppy bad practices of the past.”*
- *“I feel that there have been massive changes in our industry in the last ten years, but to be honest it has been for the good of us - we have made massive improvements especially in the grouse industry.”*
- *“Vicarious liability has had a positive effect on the industry and in my opinion has definitely done its job - but the extremists just want to see keepers and owners in jail.”*

‘Owner expectations’ and ‘client expectations’ received the greatest number of respondents describing these aspects as not having changed or having become ‘easier’ over the past 10 years – over 50% of all respondents.

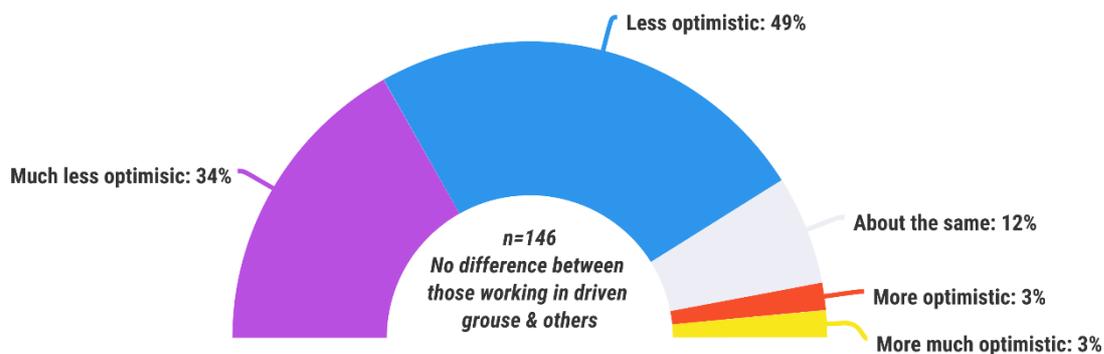
Figure 41 Perceptions of change in aspects of game and wildlife management in last decade that impact on respondents' work



5.7.2 Feelings about the future

Figure 42 illustrates how respondents' outlook on the profession had changed since they started their career in game and deer management (there was very little difference in the response profile between those engaged in driven grouse activities and those that are not). Only 6% of respondents had a more optimistic outlook, with 3% feeling 'much more optimistic' since starting their career in the sector. Relatively few respondents (10%) stated that their outlook on their profession was unchanged. The outlook for the profession was less optimistic for 79% of those replying: split between 32% with a 'much less optimistic' outlook and 47% with a 'less optimistic' outlook.

Figure 42 Outlook on the profession since started career in game and wildlife management



For those who were 'much less optimistic', explanatory comments strongly reflected negative 'targeting' of the industry and a perceived lack of support from government/policy actors, anti-shooting campaigns/campaigners and the wider media. As participants explained:

- *"I feel as if the government gives the profession no support. They are imposing more regulation and restrictions [...] making the job much harder to do [...] while giving no protection or backing against people who come to interfere, damage, disrupt and disturb both the work we do and the wildlife that thrives on the land we manage."*
- *"The people who make this way of life what it is have had enough. I see, and encounter demoralised people every day due almost exclusively to the campaign waged against us...we need some positive signs from Holyrood."*
- *"The political and commercial pressures have definitely increased (especially as you climb the career ladder) in the job since I started, and the public perception of the gamekeeper now is challenged more, whereas I believe it used to be a more respected position. I believe that aspects of the profession could change dramatically, but also believe that there will always be a future in sport and wildlife management combined."*

Concerns were also raised about over-regulation, declining species numbers, tourism impacts, declines in upland agriculture and the impacts of land use change on the industry. A common theme in the comments was the perceived mismatch between the opinions/knowledge of 'us and them' when referring to high profile campaigners who have publicly challenged the integrity of the gamekeeping profession. Examples of the sentiment offered by those who felt 'less optimistic' about the future, include:

- *"[I] constantly feel our way of life and jobs are under threat due to misled and misinformed individuals."*
- *"A small group of people [...] when it comes down to it, we are not given a fair portrayal in the media which I feel is biased towards the anti [shooting campaigners]."*

Political interest and involvement in the industry was regularly cited as a reason for feeling 'less optimistic' about the future. Frustration was aired that *"people making decisions on our jobs have no real understanding of what we really do and how wide our role is"* and that *"politicians hate the industry"*. For example:

- *"Government and social media pressure on the game industry by people with little to no knowledge is making me worry about the future. Gamekeepers are no different to farmers and the countryside would be a very different place without us."*
- *"After being doing this job for over 50 years, I find it very disturbing that animal activists with no experience in hand on management of species management in the protection of red listed species are listened to more intently by politicians and policy makers than people with a lifetime of experience on the ground."*
- *"I would like to see a time where gamekeepers, stalkers and everyone involved in country sports aren't having to go through the stress and anxiety that the current political climate is heaping on them. I came into this way of life because I believed deeply in the benefits it had for wildlife and nature as a whole. Our way of life and the positive impacts it has should be protected and not be a political football!"*

For the very few respondents who felt 'about the same', 'more optimistic' or 'much more optimistic' about the future of the profession, their optimism linked to the benefits that the profession delivers. As four respondents explained:

- *"I remain optimistic because I cannot believe any government would stop or severely compromise an industry which earns so much money and employment for the country"*.
- *"If this [anti-keeper sentiment] does not change the profession is doomed along with much of our wildlife and we will lose massive stores of knowledge which has never been appreciated."*

Such knowledge is celebrated and respected in many other communities world-wide but not in Britain.”

- *“As an industry, we need to have a bigger voice, we need more backing from politicians and the public need to see the bigger picture. To the city people, the countryside is their playground, their place to go at the weekend, drop their litter, let their dog run wild and go where they want on their mountain bike! They forget that people work and manage the countryside for a living, to them we are just a hindrance.”*
- *“Being able to look at the land and the wildlife and thinking, I helped to do that, cannot overstate the feeling of that.”*

6 Conclusions

Little is published on Scotland’s gamekeeping population meaning this report provides unique insights on the working lives, terms of employment terms and changes experienced within the profession in recent years. Whilst the survey response was relatively low (11-13%), and there are a number of caveats around sampling and response biases, the results were considered a ‘good representation’ of the profession by key stakeholders. This survey, by design, is focused on the profession and where it comes to sentiments and opinions there are likely many protagonists who would offer different opinions – that is the nature of surveys.

A number of key themes that emerged from participant responses:

- Nearly 90% of respondents lived with a partner/spouse and 34% also were responsible for children living at home (where there was an average of two school age children). These partners and spouses also make contributions to the rural economy with only 16% were not economically active. Indeed, for 23% of these households the gamekeeper income was less than half total household earnings, although this does not take account of the implicit value associated with any tied housing. About 16% of partners/spouses were self-employed and 18% of them they also worked at the same estate/business as the respondent. This perhaps illustrates that there are job opportunities beyond game and deer management on some estates, and this is vital for families living in remote rural glens, perhaps with difficult access to childcare facilities.
- Often with strong familial ties, many in the sector see gamekeeping as a ‘vocation’ or ‘way of life’ as opposed to a career. Invariably the respondents stressed that they enjoy their work, preferring to be outdoors working with nature rather than being ‘stuck’ in an urban environment working in an office. Indeed, a large proportion of the respondents took great pride in their work, believing that they are working to improve habitats for the betterment of wildlife (with endangered species often being referred to as benefiting from game, deer and wildlife management).
- Assuming the respondents reflect the wider population of gamekeepers, there is a range of full-time employed, part-time employed, self-employed and casual and seasonal workers engaged in the sector. This means that average salaries (as implied by extrapolations from economic impact assessments²⁴) are difficult to impute. The vast majority of the full-time gamekeepers earned over £15,000 per year, 58% earned £15,000 to £24,999 and 31% earned £25,000 to £34,999 per year from their gamekeeping job.
- It is, however, challenging to establish an accurate picture of the overall ‘income package’ that individual gamekeepers derive from their employers – particularly when the nature of

²⁴ For an overview see [Part 1 report of Phase 1](#) where it was concluded that: *“Although accurate data on wage rate is limited, Fraser of Allander Institute (2010) staffing and wage spend figures can be used to calculate an annual wage of £13,526 (in 2009), with exact wage rates likely to be lower for seasonal staff and higher for permanent staff.”*

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Appendix A. Online Questionnaire Text

Scottish Gamekeeper Survey

Why we are gathering this data

Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) is undertaking a survey of gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies working in Scotland as part of a larger research project for the Scottish Government. The survey will help inform the Scottish Government on "how best to protect the valuable role of gamekeepers in rural Scotland" and their commitment to better understand the gamekeeping and associated profession and their employment terms and conditions.

The survey, fully endorsed by the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA), the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and the Scottish Government, is designed to take around 15 minutes to complete. **The survey is fully anonymous and we do not ask for any personal information that can identify you or your employer.**

None of the data you supply will be passed onto third parties (including the Scottish Government) and the data will only be reported in a summarised format.

Please note that you are not obliged to answer all the questions and can leave the survey at any time.

If you want to skip a section scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Next'.

By participating in this survey you consent to us using your anonymous responses in our report to the Scottish Government.

To start the survey scroll down and, click Next

Any questions about the survey can be directed to:

SRUC - Steven Thomson steven.thomson@sruc.ac.uk or GamekeeperSurvey@sruc.ac.uk For information about your membership organisation's promotion of this survey please contact:

SGA - Kenneth Stephen kenneth@heartlandmediapr.co.uk

BASC (Scotland) - Colin Shedden colin.shedden@basc.org.uk

Further details of why we are doing this work, how we will store and use the data can be accessed at www.sruc.ac.uk/researchpersonaldata.

Working in Scotland

Q1. Which best describes your position in the game and deer management sector?

- Head Keeper Single-handed Keeper Beat Keeper Under Keeper Trainee Keeper Stalker
 Ghillie Other

If you selected Other, please specify: _____

Q2. Which region(s) of Scotland do you currently work in? (tick all that apply)

- Highlands & Islands North East Scotland Central Scotland South Scotland
 I don't work in Scotland at the moment

Your career

Q3. How many years total experience do you have in working in game and deer management (i.e. over your lifetime)?

- Still a trainee Under 5 years 5 - 9 years 10 - 19 years Over 20 years

Q4. How long have you been in **your current** game and deer management role?

- Under 5 years 5 to 9 years 10 to 19 years More than 20 years

Q5. Which best describes your **primary** role in the game and deer management sector?

- Employed full-time Employed part-time Self-employed full-time Self-employed part-time
 Employed casual/seasonal Retired

Q6. What type of employer / business do you work for / own? (tick all that apply)

- Private estate Sporting agency / tenant Public agency (e.g. SNH, Forest Land Scotland)
 Non-Governmental Organisations (e.g. RSPB) Other

If you selected Other, please specify: _____

Q7. Do you have close relatives that have been / are involved in game and deer management?

- Yes - at my current place of work Yes - both at my current place of work and elsewhere
 Yes - at other locations No

Q7a. If yes, how many generations of gamekeepers/stalkers/ghillies do you belong to?

- 1 - I am the first generation of my family to be a gamekeeper 2 - my parents generation started
 3- my grandparents generation started 4 - my great grandparents generation started 5+

Q8. How many other gamekeepers / stalkers / ghillies are regularly employed (part-time and full-time) in the same place as you?

- None 1 2 – 3 4 – 5 6 – 7 8 – 9 10 and over

Your Work

Q9. On a day-to-day basis, which person **do you mainly** take your instruction from?

- Owner Factor/land agent Sporting agent Head keeper Sporting tenant Nobody Other

Q9a. Does that person live on the estate/your place of work? Yes No N/A

Q10. What proportion of your work time is spent focused on activities (e.g. game management, stalking, shooting, maintenance) related to each of the following?

Activity	% of your time						
	None	Less than 10%	10-19%	20-39%	40-59%	60-79%	80% and over
Driven grouse	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Walked up grouse / over pointers	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Other game birds	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Deer	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Fishing	<input type="checkbox"/>						
General estate work / maintenance	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Pest control for agriculture & forestry	<input type="checkbox"/>						
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>						

Q10a If you are **involved in pest control for agriculture and forestry**, how often are you involved in it beyond your workplace (e.g. on local farms)?

- Regularly Occasionally Only at lambing time Only if there is a problem Never

Q10b. If you are **involved in grouse management**, what proportion (%) of the grouse shooting activity at your work is for private and commercial guests?

	% of grouse shooting days						
	None	Less than 10%	10-20%	20-40%	40-60%	60-80%	More than 80%
Commercial (paying guests)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Private (family / friends)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q11. Please select any of the following external groups that you represent your employer on?

- I do not represent my employer on any external groups Deer Management Group
 Regional Moorland Group Conservation group Shooting group Local Access Forum Other

If you selected Other, please specify: _____

Education and Training

Q12. Have you had any formal training related to your job?

- Further Education or vocational qualifications (e.g. NC, SVQ, PDA, City and Guilds)
 Higher Education (e.g. HNC, HND, Degree) Apprenticeship On the job training courses Other None

Q12a. Please provide more detail of **on-the-job training** (e.g. safety/competence certificates such as DSC1, BASC small game hygiene) _____

Q13. Does your current employer actively encourage you to go on training courses that you could benefit from?

- Never Rarely Occasionally Regularly

Q14. Are there any areas where you think you could benefit from training?

- None Firearms Game rearing Wildlife laws Habitat protection Habitat impact assessment Wildlife monitoring Game handling and storage Conflict resolution Access laws Other

If you selected Other, please specify: _____

Your Employment Rights

Q15. Do you have a written contract of employment?

- Yes - open ended Yes - fixed term No Self-employed Unsure

Q15a. If fixed term – what is the length of your contract (years)?

- 1 2 3 4 5 Over 5

Q16. How many days of holiday (including public holidays) are you entitled to each year?

- None - I'm not a regular employee None - I'm self-employed Under 20 days 20 - 24 days
 25 - 29 days 30 - 35 days Over 35 days

Q16a. Do you generally use all of your holidays?

- Yes - always Yes - mostly No - rarely No - never

Q17. Do you have a private pension plan / investments for your retirement? (tick all that apply)

- Yes - I have pension with my employer Yes – I have my own private pension Yes – I have investments
 No – I have neither Unsure

Q18. How many hours a week do you generally work (type in a number - e.g. 40)?

High season _____ Low season _____

Q19. Are you entitled to sick pay if you are off ill?

- Yes - full pay Yes - reduced pay No - only entitled to Statutory Sick Pay Don't know

Q20. How satisfied are you with:

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.	Unsatisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Very satisfied
Your current job?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your job security?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your relationship with your employer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Your relationship with your work colleagues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The community you live in?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Your Earnings

Q21. What salary range (before tax, excluding benefits and tips) are you paid / earn per year **for your game and deer management role?**

- Less than £15,000 £15,000 to £24,999 £25,000 to £34,999 £35,000 to £44,999 £45,000 and over

Q21a. What salary range (before tax, excluding benefits and tips) are you paid / earn **from other jobs / businesses?**

- I don't have any other earnings Less than £15,000 £15,000 to £24,999 £25,000 to £34,999
 £35,000 to £44,999 £45,000 and over

Q22. Are you entitled to overtime pay? Yes No

Q23. Approximately what proportion (%) of your annual take home wage is made up from tips?

- I do not receive tips Less than 5% 5 - 9% 10 - 14% 15 - 19% 20% and over

Housing and Other Benefits

Q24.What type of accommodation do you currently live in?

- A house tied to my job A rented house (with employer rent contributions)
 A rented house (without employer rent contributions) My own house Other

If you selected Other, please specify: _____

Q24a. If you **live in a tied or rented house**, do you have a plan for housing after your retirement?

- Yes – I expect my employer to provide a retirement house Yes – I own a house to retire to
 Yes - I have financial security to buy a house No – I have not made any plans

Q25. Please rate the following in terms of how important they are to your current gamekeeping job:

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.	Not important at all	Somewhat important	Very important
Quality of life	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Making a difference through land management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensuring sporting clients are satisfied	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tied house	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Level of earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work colleagues	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The community I work/live in	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Working with nature/being outdoors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tips	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other work allowances (cars / clothes / fuel, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q25a. Please add any comments you'd like to make: _____

You and your family

Q26. What is your gender?

- Female Male Other Prefer not to say

Q27. Which age group do you belong to?

- Under 20 20 to 29 30 to 49 50 to 59 60 to 69 Over 70 Prefer not to say

Q28. Do you live with a partner / spouse? Yes No

Q28a. If you live with a partner/spouse, are they employed / do they run a business?

- Yes - they work for the same employer as me Yes - they work for someone else
 Yes - they are self-employed No

Q28b. If you live with a partner/spouse, what proportion of your household income is generated by your partner/spouse?

- Less than 25% 25% to 49% 50% to 74% 75% and over

Q29. Do you live with dependants (other than a partner / spouse) that are financially reliant on you / your partner? (tick all that apply)

- Yes - parent(s) Yes - children Yes - other adults No

Q29a. If you live with dependants other than a partner or spouse, how many are in the following age groups?

Age	Number of dependants					
	None	1	2	3	4	5+
0 - 4 years	<input type="checkbox"/>					
5 - 12 years	<input type="checkbox"/>					
13 - 17 years	<input type="checkbox"/>					
18 - 24 years	<input type="checkbox"/>					
25 - 65 years	<input type="checkbox"/>					
Over 65 years	<input type="checkbox"/>					

Q30. Do you have any official roles in the local community (e.g. community council, emergency services, etc.)?

- None Fire services (retained firefighter, wildfire deployment register, etc) RNLI First Responder
 Mountain Rescue Coastguard Rescue Service Rural crime liaison/ Partnership for Wildlife Crime
 Humane dispatch for injured animals Community council / association School board
 Community business Local sports / activity group(s) Other

If you selected Other, please specify: _____

Your industry

Q31. Are you more or less optimistic about the future of your profession since you started working?

- Much less optimistic Less optimistic About the same More optimistic Much more optimistic

31a. Please elaborate if you wish: _____

Q32. In the past 10 years how do you think dealing with the following aspects of your job have changed?

Please don't select more than 1 answer(s) per row.	Easier	No change	More challenging
Owner expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Client expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deer management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Grouse management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other game management	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Public perceptions of gamekeepers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recreational access users	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Daily work environment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wildlife laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work/life balance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Firearms laws	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pest control	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Q32a. Feel free to comment on these changes if you like: _____

Q33. During your working experience, have you ever witnessed any unlawful activity on the ground you work on?

	Witnessed Crime		If yes, please provide some details:
	Yes	No	
Wildlife crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other crime	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q34. Have you ever encountered verbal or other abuse/threats from people outside your sector, because of your occupation?

- Never Yes – rarely (once or twice a year) Yes - occasionally (once or twice a month)
 Yes - often (once or twice a week)

Q34a. What was the nature of the threats you have felt? _____

Q35. What are the two things you like most about your job? _____

Q36. What are the two things you would like to change about your job? _____

Q37. This is the end of the survey. Please feel free to add any more comments that you have here. _____

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this survey.

The results will be used in presenting facts about the gamekeeper profession to the Scottish Government and we will release summarised results through short articles with SGA and BASC once our report has been approved by the Scottish Government. If you have any questions about the survey please contact Gamekeeper.Survey@sruc.ac.uk.

Appendix B. Additional summary graphics

Figure 43 Employment type by employment position (all respondents)

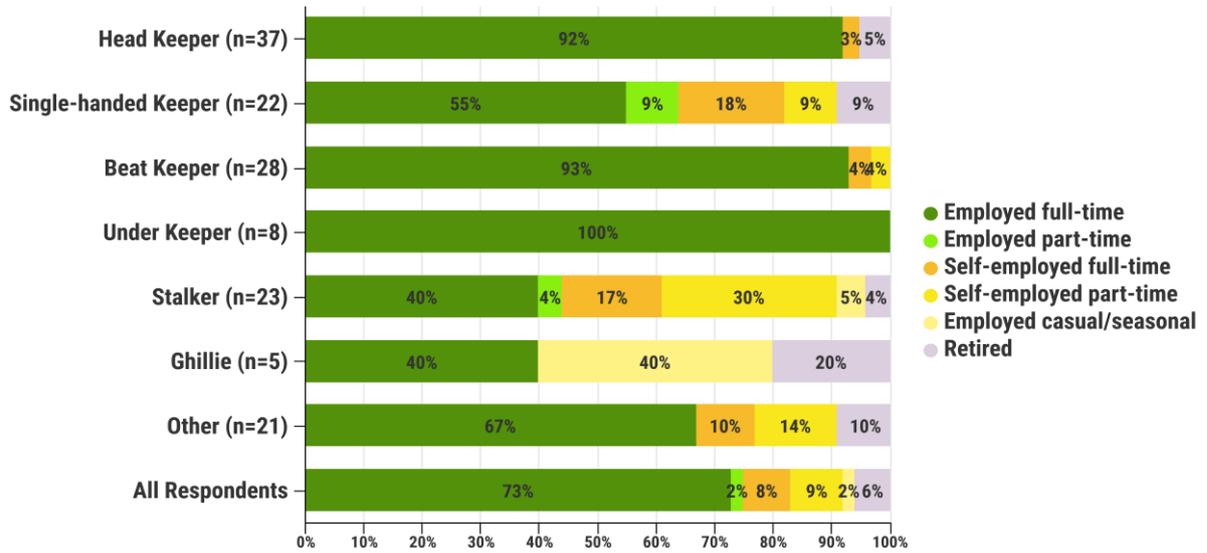


Figure 44 Weekly hours worked split by those working with driven grouse and those that are not

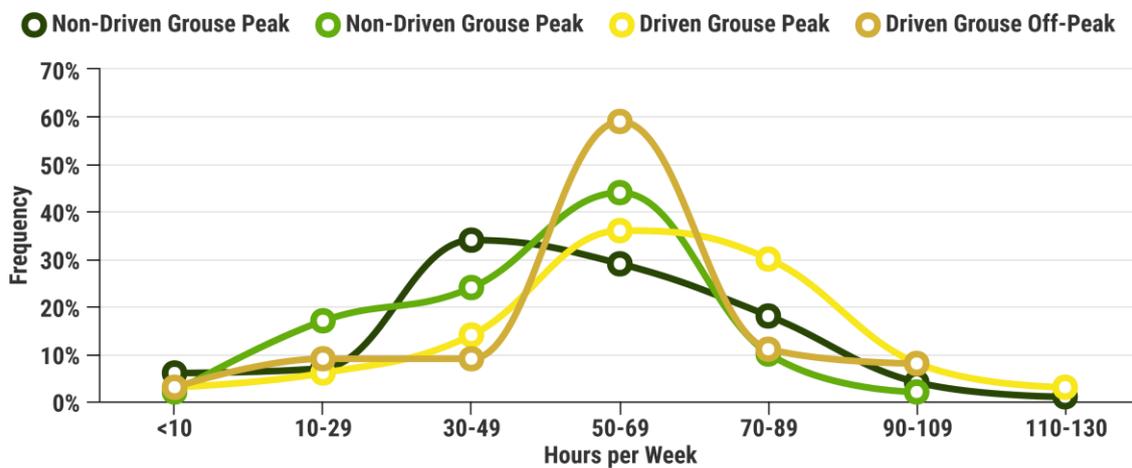


Figure 45 Earnings from gamekeeping and other sources split by those working with driven grouse and those that are not

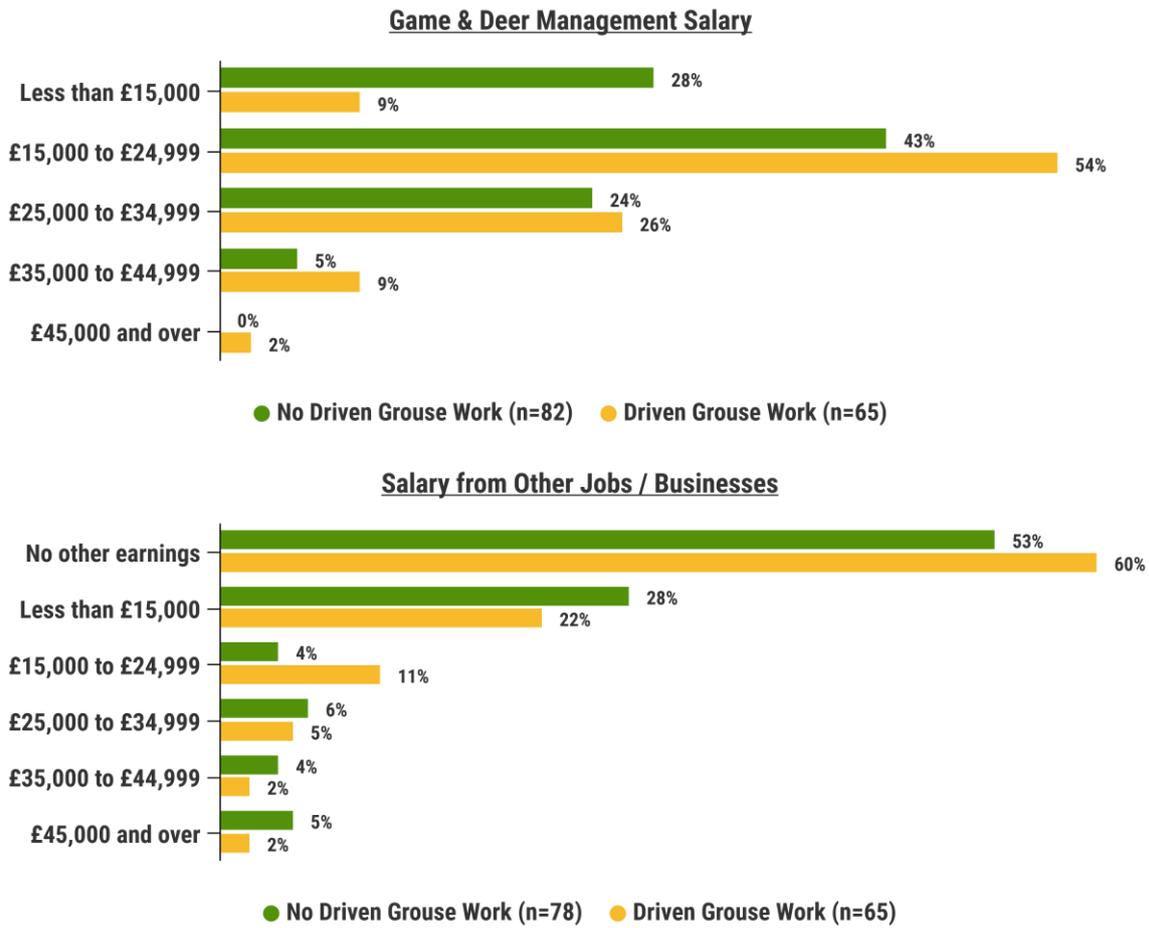


Figure 46 Levels of satisfaction with aspects of employment, team and community (all respondents)

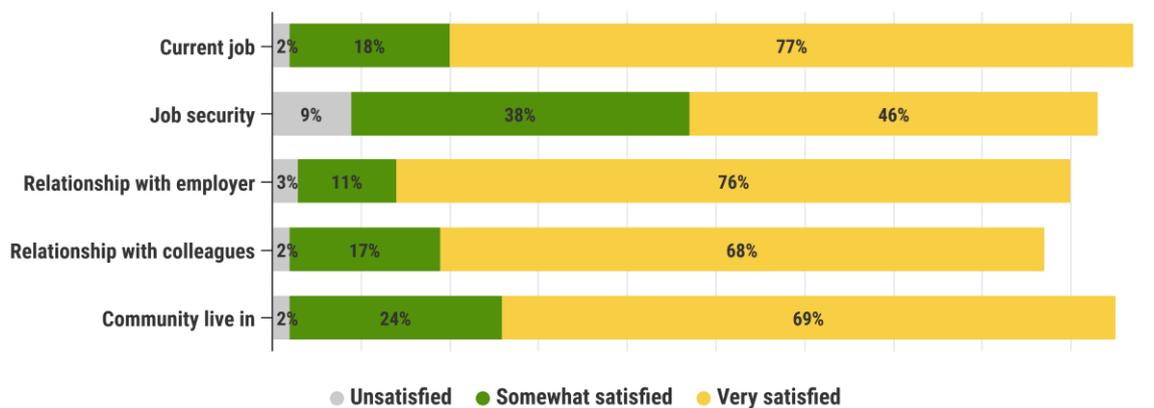


Figure 47 Rating of different aspects of current job (all respondents)

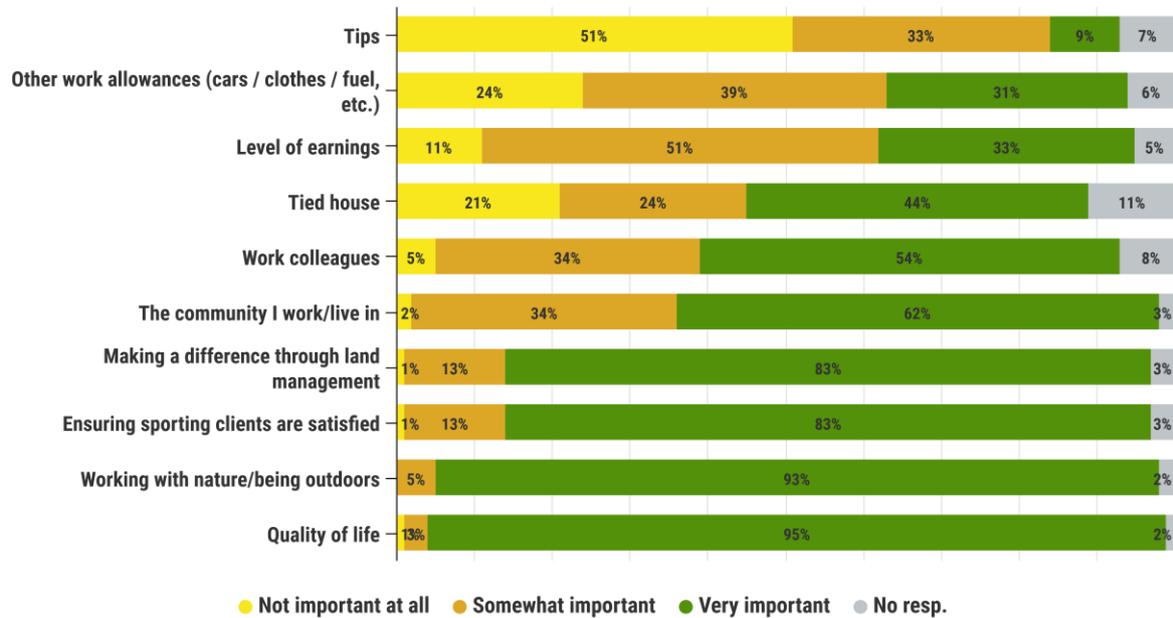


Figure 48 Perceptions of change in aspects of gamekeeping in last decade that impact on respondents' work (all respondents)

