



9. Anecdotally, we are aware of an increase in the number of chickens presenting in first-opinion small animal practices since the Covid pandemic started, suggesting an increase in 'pet' chicken keeping. Keepers of any size flocks mic

be registered, rather than the specific species (eg pigeons, falconry birds, parrots) to provide additional protection and confidence to those with especially valuable species.

14. Wildlife rehabilitation is not adequately covered in the consultation, potentially still allowing for the risky practice of members of the public rescuing and keeping sick wild birds as pets, which under this exemption would not need to be registered. Addressing the keeping of wild birds is essential for limiting the risks to both people and other animals from infectious diseases. Anyone keeping wild birds should be registered to do so, with the exception of keeping a bird for a very short period of time (eg 24hours), before veterinary care or a registered wild bird keeper can be found. Keeping a wild bird as a pet outside of a wildlife rehabilitation centre should require a licence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. To prevent a potential loophole of wild birds becoming pets which can be kept indoors without a licence, a full definition of 'pet bird' will be required, making a clear distinction from rescued wild birds. There will also need to be clarity around when a wild bird becomes 'captive', eg after how long, under what circumstances, and in what type of housing. Clarifying these regulations in relation to wild birds could bring the added benefit of creating a useful way to register premises keeping wild birds, including wildlife rehabilitation centres and individuals caring for them. The practicalities of how the procedures outlined above will work needs to be made clear perhaps by means of guidance, covering how the system is intended to be monitored, enforced and the consequences of non-compliance. Again, a government