

Thirsty times for small animals

During the on-going dry period rescue centres are reporting many small mammals and fledglings being brought in suffering from de-hydration. So it is a good idea to put out a shallow bowl of water in your garden. It will certainly be appreciated.

Remedy for ticks on mountain hares?

Beaphar Anti-Parasite Spot-on for rabbits and guinea pigs is a veterinary medicine containing Ivermectin as the active ingredient. It clears rabbits and guinea pigs of external parasites such as mites, lice, fleas and ticks and internal parasites such as roundworm. There seems to be no information about the use of this product on hares, but it could probably be used to clear mountain hares of ticks which allegedly carry the louping ill virus which is lethal to grouse chicks. Hence this excuse for culling mountain hares on grouse shooting estates would be removed. Widespread use of the product might require veterinary supervision, but lay people could probably be trained to administer it under licence, as they are for badger vaccination against bTB.

RSPB Cirl Bunting Project

The RSPB is looking for volunteers to help with arable plant surveys in support of their Cirl Bunting Project. They already know that arable spring barley stubbles are beneficial to cirl buntings and other farmland birds, but over time have realised that other priority species, such as arable plants, are likely to have benefited from this management but are often under-recorded. They are therefore keen to highlight the wider benefits of the arable management their farmers are undertaking, and make a link between cirls and the important arable plant sites, but to do this they need some evidence. This year they are keen to survey as many cirl bunting farms in Devon as they can to gather more data and are therefore looking for more botanical surveyors.

The survey consists of walking the edge of the spring barley crop before harvest (ie from mid June - July) and recording the presence of any important arable species. They also ask volunteers to record any other species of interest. Spring barley stubbles are also good habitat for hares and this could be a good opportunity to establish which arable plants they find attractive.

For further details please contact: Deborah Deveney, Cirl Bunting Project Officer
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Good campaigning tactic

SWAFH member John Rimington has hit on the idea of researching the relevant local newspaper for each MP contacted and copying it in to his message. The theory is that if the newspaper takes up the story then it is not so easy for the MP to just ignore his appeal.

Fox cubs discovered in a barn

Further to the discovery recently of 16 fox cubs in a barn in Malton and the subsequent arrest of a man for animal cruelty, the RSPCA have made the following statement implicating the Middleton Hunt: "North Yorkshire police are considering whether to bring charges against the Middleton hunt for keeping fox cubs in a barn. It is not clear yet what the hunt was planning on doing with the cubs". The Hunt already has has four members convicted of illegal hunting, plus another for a Badgers Act offence.

Labour Party leadership

Mary Creagh MP has contacted us to say: "Many thanks for your kind email on my leadership bid. You are right I am a great friend to wildlife and had hoped Labour in government could have introduced a (shooting) close season for hares to allow the population to recover, at least to 1990 levels as we planned." Sadly, Mary has dropped out of the leadership race.

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