

Demonstration against slaughter of mountain hares

Organised by OneKind, this event will take place outside the Scottish Parliament in Edinburgh on Thursday 17 November between 12.00 and 14.00. Tens of thousands of mountain hares are killed in Scotland annually. They are even persecuted in the national parks such as the Cairngorms for so-called "sport" and because they allegedly carry a tick borne virus which kills grouse chicks. OneKind says the killing must end and it is time to take a stand. So we are invited to help defend mountain hares by attending the demonstration. Rodney will be driving up to Edinburgh via Leeds to drop off a 1934 Wolseley fuel tank for repair and it makes sense to do the two trips in one hit. He has three spare places in his car or you could consider flying up from Exeter. Probably much less tiring! Our large banner can go on the roof rack of the car. If you are interested please get in touch on the e-mail address below and no doubt we can formulate a plan of campaign.

Green Party Policy on bloodsports.

Strengthening protections for animals including outlawing blood sports – is Green Party Policy. The relevant paragraph from The Policy is as follows:

To extend the 1911 Protection of Animals Act to protect both captive and non-captive animals from unnecessary suffering. This will be used to prohibit hunting with hounds, shooting, snaring, coursing and various other abuses of our animal population. The Green Party is fundamentally opposed to all blood-sports. We oppose the killing of, or infliction of pain or suffering upon, animals in the name of sport or leisure, and will work to end all such practices.

Petition to ban driven grouse shooting

This petition has attracted an amazing 123,076 signatures and will be debated in Parliament on 31 October. This outstanding achievement has been largely down to the efforts of one man, Dr Mark Avery, who Melissa Harrison of The Times describes as "A tireless and resolute voice for Britain's embattled wildlife." Mark is supported by Eduardo Goncalves, CEO of the League Against Cruel Sports, Chris Packham and Bill Oddie.

Grouse shooting for 'sport' depends on intensive habitat management which increases flood risk and greenhouse gas emissions, relies on killing foxes, stoats, mountain hares etc in large numbers and often leads to the deliberate illegal killing of protected birds of prey including hen harriers.

Meanwhile, our own petition for protected species status for the mountain hare is currently on 12,964 signatures, so we have a little way to catch up with Mark!

The hazards of reintroductions!

After being extinct in the UK for centuries, the recent reintroduction of beavers was celebrated as a change in our relationship with the natural world. But now an eccentric baronet has threatened to scupper the plans by posting a £1,000 dead or alive reward for beavers he claims are ruining trees on his estate. Sir Benjamin Slade, who owns Woodlands Castle, a 17th century house within 12 acres of private parkland in Somerset, says the animals are committing crimes against trees and breed like rabbits. He has put up posters on his property reading: Beaver sightings! At Woodlands Castle. Wanted dead or alive. £1,000 reward! For crimes against trees. Beavers have been cutting down our trees! Beavers were reintroduced to Scotland in 2009 after being hunted to extinction in the UK in the 16th century. In January 2015, Natural England granted a licence to Devon Wildlife Trust to release them into the wild as part of a five-year reintroduction plan. Sir Benjamin Slade's approach has been condemned by wildlife groups, who are hoping to find a solution that does not involve killing the animals.

This turn of events does show how important it is for conservationists to consult as widely as possible before reintroductions are carried out. On Dartmoor just three small remnants of the ancient deciduous forest remain and we would need to ensure that any reintroduced hares do not damage these areas of great scientific interest.

