

The Ferret

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Of special interest to SWAFH is the work of Rob Edwards who is Chair of The Ferret and a Journalist Director. Rob is a freelance journalist specialising in environmental issues with more than 30 years experience. He is currently environment editor of the Sunday Herald and a correspondent for The Guardian. He has co-authored three books about nuclear power, produced radio and television programmes, and won awards. Rob likes muckraking, having exposed the scandal of mountain hare persecution in Scotland and the Government's lamentable lack of resolve to do anything about it. The following article by Rob was published by The Ferret on November 28:-

Gamekeepers should hide heaps of dead mountain hares in the back of their trucks to prevent photographs being taken and publicised, a leading member of the Cairngorm National Park Authority (CNPA) has said. Eleanor Mackintosh, convenor of the park's planning committee, made the suggestion at a meeting with gamekeepers after The Ferret published photos showing a shooting party with trucks piled full of dead hares at the Lecht in the Cairngorms. In the approved minutes of the meeting, released under freedom of information law, Mackintosh urged gamekeepers to do more to educate the public. But then she added: "It may assist with reducing the chance of an image getting out to public domain on social media if the keepers used covers on back of vehicles when transporting dead hares etc rather than open trucks."

The comments have infuriated wildlife campaigners, who accuse CNPA of trying to cover up the killing. This is denied by the authority, which says her remarks have been taken completely out of context. Mass culls of mountain hares have prompted increasingly fierce arguments, with wildlife groups calling for a ban and ministers backing voluntary restraint. Gamekeepers say that culls are needed to protect grouse and woodlands. Following an intervention by Fergus Ewing, the SNP MSP for Inverness and Nairn and rural economy minister, CNPA officials met with the Scottish Gamekeepers Association (SGA) in a shoot room on the Glenlochry estate near Grantown-on-Spey on 29 September. Minutes of the meeting, released to the Raptor Persecution UK blog, show that gamekeepers were very critical of some CNPA statements on grouse moor management. Though CNPA officials corrected some of the minutes drafted by SGA, they did not alter Mackintosh's comments.

New "Code of Practice" for snares in Northern Ireland

As reported in the 27 November edition of Farming Life, Countryside Alliance Ireland (CAI) welcomes the NI Assembly's Department of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Committee's decision to approve the Snares Order. The new Code of Practice that will be included with the Snares Order was drafted by the Northern Ireland Snaring Working Group of which CAI was an active member. The aim of the working group was to ensure that the Code of Practice was fit for purpose and ensured that workable solutions were included that would significantly increase animal welfare standards. Speaking after the Committee's decision, Lyall Plant, Chief Executive of CAI said: Snaring is an emotive issue. However, they are a necessary tool within the toolbox for effective countryside management and allow landowners and managers to help stop predation of ground nesting birds such as curlew and lapwing. It is anticipated that the Snares Order will be brought before the NI Assembly in the New Year.

(The UK is one of only five EU countries out of 28 where snares are still legal so it is nonsense to suggest they are essential to countryside management. We suspect that, like its English counterparts, this "Code of Practice" will have no standing in law and will therefore not be worth the paper it's written on. Ed.)

https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/nov/21/scottish-foxhunting-review-legislation

84 spare pieces

<http://bestiary.ca/beasts/beastgallery4725.htm>

Tularemia hare plague. Rabbit plague

www.scottishwildlifetrust.org.uk/article/scottish-wildlife-organisations-call-to-ban-mountain-hare-cull/

Bonomy Report

www.gov.scot/Resource/0051/00510246.pdf

Farming Life 27 November

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Truck photo taken on 25 February

Gamekeepers advised to cover up dead mountain hares. Rob Edwards November 28

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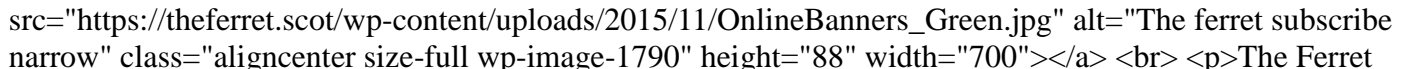
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[Rob Edwards](http://www.robward.com/)
Rob Edwards is freelance journalist specialising in environmental issues with more than 30 years experience. He is currently environment editor of the Sunday Herald and a correspondent for The Guardian. He has co-authored three books about nuclear power, produced radio and television programmes, and won awards. He likes muckraking.
Rob is a Journalist Director, and the Chair of The Ferret.

Thanks to Rob Edwards

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