

## Hares Preservation Act 1892

Under this legislation it is illegal for a hare or leveret or any part thereof to be sold or offered for sale from 1 March until 31 July inclusive. Hare cannot therefore be on the menu in restaurants during this period. Hares cannot be killed outside the prohibited period, frozen and then sold within it. This does not prevent hares being shot purely for "sport" but in England and Wales it is the only legislation which puts a brake on unrestricted shooting. If you see hare on sale during the prohibited period please send details in confidence to:

[technicalinfo@hare-preservation-trust.co.uk](mailto:technicalinfo@hare-preservation-trust.co.uk)

The Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011 introduced close seasons for the killing or taking of wild hares. As a result and under the amendments made to the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, it is now an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a mountain or brown hare in the close season. Close season dates for the mountain hare are - 1 March to 31 July and for the brown hare 1 February to 30 September. It is possible to licence individuals to kill or take mountain or brown hares in the close season. Licences can only be granted for specific purposes which include: preventing spread of disease, preventing serious damage to crops or forestry and "Social, economic or environmental purposes". However, applicants should note, that a licence will only be granted for control of hares in the close season in exceptional circumstances. They must be able to provide clear reasons why control outwith the close season would not resolve the problem.

## Coat colour and climate change

This could be an issue regarding the re-introduction of mountain hares to Dartmoor, but Mike Rendle of the Irish Hare Initiative says: "I don't know enough about mountain hare colour change to comment authoritatively on the impact of climate change (I don't think anyone does). However I would say that, until mountain hares are subject to better protection, I think climate change is the least of their worries. It's all relative in a very perverse way.

## A message from John Fitzgerald

At this time of year, with the so-called "National Hare Coursing Festival" casting a blot over the Irish landscape, I can't help reflecting on the human cost of fighting against animal cruelty, especially a form of legalized animal cruelty supported by powerful people in our society. I've written about this theme in *Bad Hare Days*, and the book can be downloaded freely at the following link. It focuses specifically on a period in 1980s when a "heavy gang" within the Irish police force worked closely with the hare coursing clubs in an effort to suppress opposition to the blood sport. I'm sure many campaigners for justice (whatever the cause or objective) in Ireland and elsewhere, will identify to some extent with my own experience of what happens when you rub the establishment up the wrong way!

<https://banbloodsports.wordpress.com/2011/11/25/bad-hare-days/>

## 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of last Waterloo Cup

In 2003, Sir Paul McCartney said: "If this barbaric practice were carried out on domesticated animals, the people involved would probably be sent to prison and banned from keeping animals for life. And that's as it should be. Many of us have been praying that hare coursing wouldn't survive into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century." Dr Donald Broom, a Cambridge animal welfare scientist, says the hunted hare will show physiological changes associated with extreme fear which will reduce its life expectancy, whether it is injured or not. In the late 1990s, when Andrew Marr was editor of *The Independent*, he published a front page headline banner of two greyhounds chasing a hare with the caption: "*They say this is the way to maintain a healthy hare population*", for which he received a lot of flak from the coursing fraternity. So he was pleased when we wrote to thank him and sent us a personal reply.

