

Campaign for hen harriers initiated by Birders Against Wildlife Crime

These iconic birds of prey are an important part of habitats which in Scotland and the Peak District of Derbyshire include the mountain hare, but face heavy persecution since they eat red grouse which the shooting fraternity wish to blast out of the air for fun. Scientists say there should be 2600 pairs of hen harrier in the UK (including c330 in England), but there are just 600-800 (only 4 pairs last year in England). So on Sunday 9 August wildlife campaigners including Dr Mark Avery, the RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts, Chris Packham, the League Against Cruel Sports, the British Mountaineering Council and many others including ourselves will join together for Hen Harrier Day. Come to a Hen Harrier Day rally. Several are planned, from Arne in Dorset to Mull and Perthshire in Scotland. Further details are here: <http://henharrierday.org/more-information.html>

Mark Avery will be attending what is likely to be the biggest rally, with Chris Packham, in the Goyt Valley near Buxton in Derbyshire. More details of this and an event at the Palace Hotel, Buxton on the preceding evening are here: <http://henharrierday.org>

Persecution of hen harriers and other species such as the mountain hare which are inconveniences to the grouse shooting industry would cease if driven grouse shooting was banned, so please sign Mark Avery's petition here: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/104441>

This is a re-run of last year's highly supported e-petition which highlighted the issue. This year over 5,500 people signed in less than a week. If 10,000 signatures are reached the Westminster Government must respond. Mark Avery's book "Inglorious - conflict in the uplands" was published recently. This sets out Mark's campaign with Chris Packham to gain support for the proposal to ban grouse shooting, culminating in "Hen Harrier Day", timed to coincide with the so-called "Glorious 12th". www.bloomsbury.com/uk/inglorious-9781472917423/

Labour Party leadership

Jeremy Corbyn, MP for Islington North since 1983 and a contender for the leadership has topped the Labour constituency vote. SWAFH member Peter McCarthy says: "He supported me when I walked the South West Coast Path many years ago to raise funds for the British Union Against Vivisection. I am sure that his record is good on hunting and goes a long way back." Peter was accompanied on his epic 630 mile walk by his Patterdale terrier Mutley.

MSP calls for complete ban on hunting with hounds in Scotland

Christine Grahame MSP said recently: "The current laws on fox hunting are unworkable and the Scottish Government needs to consult on banning the practice outright." The Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002 was initially introduced in 1999 as a Members Bill, not a Government Bill. I initially signed up to the proposal, as I am wholly opposed to fox hunting, but once the actual bill was drafted, I did not support it as I felt it was a badly drafted law and was unworkable. This has been proven as it is difficult, if not impossible to police, particularly in our remote Borders valleys. It disturbs all wildlife and, indeed, heaven help any domestic animal caught up in the hunt. I would like to see the Scottish Government consulting on banning the practice of hunting outright and this would allow a proper discussion on the issue of pest control as distinct from hunting for sport." And SNP MP for Berwickshire, Roxburgh Calum Kerr, defended his party's decision to scupper UK Government plans to relax the ban on fox hunting in England and Wales. "We're fulfilling our promise to be a force for progressive politics whenever we can," he stated.

The Government e-petition service

This is now back running and there is one "Save the Hunting Act" <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/104637> Please sign and share.

Wonderful hare footage from the Irish Council Against Blood Sports (ICABS)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZk2hX8iRrw&feature=em-uploademail>

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SWAFH@actionforhares.org.uk