

## Hare friendly tips for farmers

Reduce dominance of ryegrass species (*Lolium* spp.)

Delay grass cutting, preferably until the end of September, to reduce leveret mortality.

Cut fields from the centre outwards, giving hares and other wildlife a better chance to escape.

Reduce livestock stocking levels, especially cattle and sheep.

Reduce applications of nitrogen based fertilisers that stimulate competitive grasses. It is also possible that high nitrogen levels inhibit digestion or cause other physiological problems for hares.

Manage hedgerows for biodiversity. Do not cut every year. Further information here:  
[www.cfeonline.org.uk/hedge-cutting/](http://www.cfeonline.org.uk/hedge-cutting/)

Maintain habitat variety with plenty of cover, including woodland where hares will retreat to in harsh winter weather.

## Blackstone's Police Manuals

This comes in four volumes and the Preface to the book says Blackstone's is the only official study guide for the Police Promotional Examinations – if the law is not in the Manuals, it will not be in the exams. SWAFH member, John Phelps, has bought a copy of the Manuals and contacted the Police saying he is: “surprised and disappointed that I am unable to find any reference to the Hunting Act 2004. I would welcome an explanation why such an important piece of legislation appears to be excluded from Volume 4.”

*In his memoir, “A Journey”, Tony Blair said he deliberately sabotaged the Hunting Act 2004 to ensure there were enough loopholes to allow hunting to continue. He also told then Home Office Minister Hazel Blears to steer police away from enforcing the law. I think this is why the Hunting Act is not covered in Blackstone's. Also, Blair's instruction to Hazel Blears regarding an Act of Parliament came perilously close to perversion of the course of justice. Ed.*

## Neonicotinoids moving up the food chain

Neonicotinoids are a type of insecticide, developed by Bayer in the last 20 years to control a variety of pests, especially sap-feeding insects, such as aphids on cereals, and root-feeding grubs. It has been known for years that neonicotinoids have been decimating bee colonies but they have recently been linked to a fall in farmland bird numbers. Research has been conducted at Radboud University in the Netherlands and all other plausible explanations have been eliminated. Just 20 nanograms of neonicotinoid per litre of water led to a 30% fall in bird numbers over 10 years, but some water had contamination levels 50 times higher. There seems to be no evidence so far that neonicotinoids are affecting mammal populations, but continued fall of hare numbers in some areas remain unexplained.

## Spaniel dog caught in a snare

This recent case of the indiscriminate nature of snares occurred when the dog was being walked on the Tarka Trail, near Barnstaple. She was caught by her foot, but her owner was able to remove the snare. Devon County Council were notified and they found eight snares in the area. They put up signs warning people to be vigilant and they would take legal action against anyone setting snares on DCC land.

[SWAFH@actionforhares.org.uk](mailto:SWAFH@actionforhares.org.uk)

Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of South-West Action For Hares.