

ANIMAL AID CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

We have received confirmation of a stand at Animal Aid's Christmas Without Cruelty Festival on Saturday 21 November from 10am to 4:15pm at the Corn Exchange, Market Street, Exeter, EX1 1BU. Free entry. This event is always extremely well attended and we look forward to updating the public on our endeavours for hares in the South-West where they have suffered a population decline exceeding that in most other regions of Britain during the past century.

WORLD ANIMAL DAY - 4 OCTOBER

Regarding our letter to all 650 MPs about snaring we received a reply from Dr Caroline Lucas, Green Party MP for Brighton Pavilion, yesterday 30 September, so our targeting of 4 October proved to be fairly accurate. We also saved around £200 by sending the letters by bulk delivery directly to the security firm which scans all correspondence to the House of Commons. Caroline Lucas has connections with the South-West, having gained her PhD from Exeter University in 1989. We have corresponded with Caroline several times in the past regarding a shooting close season for hares and she encouraged us to raise our sights to full protection, with culling allowed only when significant damage to crops is proven on a case-by-case basis.

RE-INTRODUCTION OF MOUNTAIN HARES TO DARTMOOR

We have received a response from the Dartmoor Commoners Council to say that the proposal falls outside of their remit, but they will be pleased to inform their members of our feasibility study and encourage them to contact us with their views. At the time of writing we await a reply from the Dartmoor Preservation Association. We will also be asking members of the public for their views at the Animal Aid Festival in November.

DETECTION OF LEVERETS AND OTHER WILDLIFE USING DRONES.

We understand that although we will be operating outside of built up areas and altitudes of only a few metres we will need to arrange suitable insurance which in turn will require our attendance on a training course. However, the use of drones to inspect the roofs of listed buildings, for example, is rapidly expanding and we could possibly undertake such work to raise funds.

ILLEGAL HARE HUNTING AT WEST SANDFORD

We asked the League Against Cruel Sports for an opinion on the legal position of a farmer who allowed this on his land and received this reply:

A person commits an offence if he knowingly permits land which belongs to him to be entered and used in commission of an offence under Section 1 of the Hunting Act. This could include hare hunting as distinct from hare coursing. It may be a difficult offence to prove to a criminal standard as it would be necessary to find evidence to show beyond a reasonable doubt that the landowner or person in charge of the land knew that illegal hunting was taking place and allowed it; if he gave permission for exempt or trail hunting, for example, and didn't know the hunt were using that as a cover then he would not commit an offence. SWAFH@actionforhares.org.uk

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