

At present, grouse are caught up and medicated for worms. It begs the question as to why they are not treated for ticks with some sort of spot-on compound. Some poultry keepers use Ivermectin to treat flea infested chickens although it is not licensed for use in poultry. If a spot-on for ticks on grouse is possible the estates would have no excuse to shoot mountain hares which allegedly carry the tick borne virus louping ill.

A hare-raising experience.

This amazing footage was captured by an ITV producer as she took a walk in the summer sunshine on the Somerset Levels recently: <http://www.itv.com/news/westcountry/update/2016-07-18/a-hare-raising-experience/>

Upland exposure

In this case on the Clune grouse shooting estate. No mention of mountain hares – maybe they are long since extinct here. Please be warned, you may find some of the content very upsetting.

www.uplandexposure.co.uk/2016/07/clune-estate/

Commons debate on snaring

Using Government figures an estimated 1.7 million animals are caught in snares annually. That is nearly 200 animals every hour, 365 days per year. Under current legislation animals can be left unattended in a snare for 24 hours without food, water or shelter and helpless to attack from predators. And the most appalling injuries often result as the animal thrashes around in a desperate bid to escape. Foxes are the main target, to protect “sport” shooting interests, but in fact they account for only 25% of the animals actually caught. 33% are hares, 26% badgers and 14% other species, including domestic pets.

On 21 July Jim Dowd MP (Lewisham West & Penge)(Lab.) moved the following motion:

That this House notes the indiscriminate and cruel nature of snares, the failure of previous attempts at voluntary and self regulation amongst operators, and the continued suffering caused to thousands of animals every year by these traps; and calls on the Government to implement a full ban on the manufacture, sale, possession and use of snares at the earliest opportunity.

In his opening remarks Jim Dowd mentioned that animal welfare is: “one of the subjects on which constituents most regularly contact us.” George Howarth (Knowsley)(Lab.) confirmed that with regard to snaring: “most people are appalled by the barbarity of the practice and the cruelty inherent in it.” According to an Ipsos MORI poll in 2014 77% of British people think snares should be banned.

Simon Hart (Carmarthen West & South Pembrokeshire)(Con) claimed that “foxes kill young lambs, piglets reared outdoors and free range and domestic poultry”. But snares are currently completely legal in only 6 out of 28 EU countries – Belgium, France, Ireland, Spain, Latvia and the UK, so the idea that they are an essential means of animal control is clearly not true. Simon Hart was Chief Executive of the Countryside Alliance from 2003 to 2010 so his attempts to legitimise bloodsports or their associated activities such as snaring are entirely as expected.

Gamekeepers have shown themselves incapable of of complying even with DEFRA's current voluntary code of practice on snaring which includes snare inspection twice a day – still totally inadequate, yet all that is on offer shortly is a new code of practice. As Jim Dowd said: “to coin a phrase, I have heard it before”.

Mammals in ever steeper decline

The latest (up to 2015) analysis of BTO mammal sightings in Britain for the red fox indicate a further rural decline in the animal, now down by 34% between 1995 and 2015. Previously, up to 2014, the reduction had been 29%. Wild rabbits are now down by 59% during 1995 to 2015. Up to 2014 it had been 57%. The brown hare decline up to 2015 is recorded as 5%, as against 3% to 2014. The mountain hare decline is now stated as 32% to 2015: previously to 2014 it was given as 26%. Thanks to John Rimington for sending us this info.

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