

Leveret hunting

This is similar to fox cub hunting, or “cubbing” and has a similar purpose – to train the dogs to kill, since they do not do so naturally. As in cubbing, the new inexperienced dogs are taken out early in the morning when the scent is best and encouraged to chase leverets. The young hares are easy to catch and the dogs soon acquire a taste for killing their quarry. Utterly despicable - as we have come to expect from the hunting rabble.

EU protection for wildlife and the environment

An example of this is protection for the mountain hare which makes the UK responsible for maintaining it at a favourable conservation status. But after Brexit the UK will no longer be bound by this legislation, so a campaign has been launched for all such protection of wildlife and the environment to be retained. Further details are here: <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/140238> 8HYPERLINK

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The case against bird shooting

This excellent report by the League Against Cruel Sports includes the snaring issue and therefore has an important bearing on hares. Hares comprise 33% of the 1.7 million animals caught in snares annually. The report can be found here:

<https://www.league.org.uk/~media/Files/LACS/Publications/The-Case-Against-Bird-Shooting-2016.pdf>

Economic benefits of re-introduced species

We are citing economic benefits as part of our case for the re-introduction of mountain hares to Dartmoor. In Scotland and the Peak District of Derbyshire mountain hares are a tourist attraction, mainly owing to their seasonal colour change. And research by the RSPB has found that re-introduced white-tailed eagles bring £5million of tourist money into the Isle of Mull economy every year, supporting 110 full time jobs.

Re-introduction update

Subject to approval from the relevant statutory authorities the plan is to fly a batch of hares from Manchester (Peak District) and one from Edinburgh (Perthshire) to maximise genetic diversity. This would be sometime during September or October 2017 - that is outside the main breeding period, but we would not move hares showing any sign of lactation. We will need to fit in screening for disease and parasites at some point.

Wildlife warning devices

These have been on the market for a number of years. They are fitted to the front of vehicles and designed to emit a high pitched whistle owing to the ram effect of air passing through them as the vehicle travels forward. The problem is that the animal needs a way to associate the sound with danger. Hearing it the first time may be alarming, but doesn't sound like anything else with which they are familiar. Hearing it and then having a near miss with a car might help the animal associate the sound with danger, but it may not learn well enough to help next time. So there could be a benefit, but it is probably only small.

“Please slow down for wildlife” car stickers

Speed moderation is one of the best ways to avoid wildlife casualties and will save you money on fuel. Moderate speeds and good anticipation of hazards ahead reduces the number of times you need to apply the brakes which wastes, on average, 1cc of fuel on each occasion. We still have a good stock of stickers at only £1.50 each including p&p. Please send your cheque and postal address to: SWAFH 2 Hele Cottage West Sandford Crediton Devon EX17 4PE

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