

Hounds Off

Are you affected by hunt trespass despite the ban? Is the hunt riding roughshod around your neighbourhood? Do you feel alone? You can protect your property, livestock and pets. Hounds Off shows you how with free, no nonsense, online resources designed specifically to keep the hunters in check. If you see a wildlife crime in progress, such as hunting or hare coursing, then regard it as an emergency and call the police on 999. Otherwise, call the police on 101. In addition to causing distress to private householders hunts also frequently cause mayhem on roads and railways. Visit: www.houndsoff.co.uk to find out more.

<mailto:SWAFH@actionforhares.org.uk>

Canada bans bee killing pesticide

Canada has just announced it's planning to ban perhaps the most widely used bee-killing pesticide in the world. This is a big deal: Canada would be the first country to outright ban the pesticide nationwide. But we've also just heard Bayer has pledged to fight the ban to stop it coming into force. Canada's decision to fully ban imidacloprid will be made very soon so campaigners need to act now to make sure this historic bee-killing ban takes effect, and make sure Health Canada hears all 128,000 messages gathered to save the bees.

Cameron takes up bloodsports again.

As reported in the Telegraph recently Mr Cameron appears to have so far confined his return to blood sports to shooting. He is not yet thought to have ridden to hounds with his old hunt, the Heythrop, since standing down as leader. Almost certainly Cameron will become involved with hare shooting since this is a follow-on "sport" to keep the neanderthals amused when pheasant shooting closes on 1 February.

Mountain hare PhD project gets the go-ahead

Researcher Carl Bedson has contacted us to say that approvals within Manchester Metropolitan University have been received and the study will be starting in January.

Viability of island populations or reintroductions of mammals depends upon a number of factors including: fitness of reintroduced animals; subsequent migrations or augmentations; genetic diversity; habitat scale, appropriateness, quality and safety; resource competition; predator and prey interactions; disease; and the effects of human activities.

Mountain hares were native to Great Britain before the last Ice Age, though died out in some areas, including the Peak District and Dartmoor, some 6000 bp. The present day population of mountain hares in the Peak District is the only one now occurring in England and arose from a reintroduction of hares from Perthshire, Scotland, bringing six groups of up to fifty individuals to the Peak District, during the 1880 s. There is little empirical data concerning the current health of this population. Essentially, we ideally want to know whether the Peak District mountain hares are a viable population.

Within the UK, we have an imperfect understanding of the process and effects of reintroducing species for the purpose of their conservation. Some reintroductions have succeeded; others have brought beneficial or deleterious effects to other species within the landscape; others have failed altogether. In selected UK locations, there are initiatives currently being considered to translocate individuals for the creation of new populations of small mammals including pine marten, beavers, otters and dormice. Reviewing the effects of reintroductions, including those from earlier eras, can help us understand how contemporary rewilding initiatives may succeed. By generating population viability models the PhD project will make a substantial contribution to the ongoing field of reintroduction biology, and also provide important insight into the factors

that influence the viability of isolated or reintroduced UK mammal populations. Hence the project is directly relevant to our idea of reintroducing the mountain hare to Dartmoor. A south-west regional newspaper called "The Moorlander" has replied to a short article we sent to them recently about our idea saying: "It's a lovely piece and we are going to print it."

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