



Hen Harrier Action: Late October 2023 Newsletter



Hen Harrier Action News

Indy Kiemel Greene on 8 Out of 10 Bats

Hen Harrier Action's **Indy Kiemel Greene** is one of the key presenters this week on **Chris Packham** and **Megan McCubbin's** new show, **8 Out of 10 Bats**, broadcasting live all week on YouTube from the Rewilding Centre at Dundreggan.

Filling an Autumn-shaped hole in our wildlife viewing schedule, the show is superbly produced, and packed with fascinating science, irreverent humour, and top-quality nature films.

In Tuesday night's episode, Indy took to his soap box to rail against the ongoing illegal persecution of birds of prey on and near grouse moors, including some great footage of a male Hen Harrier sky-dancing. Then he was interrupted by a 'party-political broadcast'!

Check out this must-watch episode here:

[8 Out of 10 Bats Episode Two](#)

And find out more about the exciting rewilding project at Dundreggan here:

[Dundreggan Rewilding Centre](#)



Cathleen Thomas at the Northern England Raptor Forum Conference

Hen Harrier Action's Chair Dr. Cathleen Thomas is speaking at the NERF conference in November in Barnsley, presenting the story of the ground-breaking RSPB Hen Harrier LIFE project which she led for five years, monitoring and recording Hen Harriers and investigating the scale of illegal killing.

The conference is sold out and ticketing has closed, but you can find out more about the agenda on the NERF website.

<https://raptorforum.wordpress.com/conference/>

And you can listen to a podcast with Cathleen and Charlie Moores on the War on Wildlife website, including a link to the final report.

<https://waronwildlife.co.uk/2019/12/05/cathleen-thomas-hen-harrier-life-report/>

Restore Nature Now Rally at DEFRA

We mentioned in our last newsletter that Hen Harrier Action's wildlife and documentary filmmaker Paul Samuels added his voice to those of more than 40 conservation and environmental groups and thousands of campaigners demanding that the government acts now to restore nature in the UK last month.

He captured two films from the event, which you can watch on our YouTube channel.

In [Restore Nature Now! – Part One](#), you can hear from speakers representing River Action UK, WWT and Butterfly Conservation, among others, plus Megan McCubbin and a barnstorming off-the-cuff speech from Dr Ruth Tingay calling attention to the plight of Hen Harriers on grouse moors (see below).

In [Restore Nature Now! – Part Two](#), there are speeches from campaigners, scientists, and a rousing address from actor Samuel

West, finishing with a compelling speech from the indefatigable Chris Packham.

Dr Ruth Tingay's speech at the Restore Nature Now Rally



We were so moved by Ruth Tingay's speech on DEFRA's doorstep, that we asked her permission to transcribe and share it with you, and she kindly agreed.

"I haven't prepared anything. I didn't expect so many people to come! I've only got a few minutes to talk so I want to talk about birds of prey - they are my thing. Species like Golden Eagles, White-tailed Eagles, Goshawks, Red Kites, Short-eared Owls and particularly the Hen Harrier.

The Hen Harrier is probably the most persecuted raptor in the UK, mostly killed on grouse moors by gamekeepers, because they think that Hen Harriers are going to ruin their shoots for them.

In 2018 the grouse shooting industry announced that Hen Harriers were going to be welcome on grouse moors all of a sudden, and there was going to be no more killing. I've been keeping a record of how many Hen Harriers since 2018.

When we got to 30 illegally killed birds, I thought that the Government might say something. They didn't say anything. When we got to 40, I thought, OK, now they're going to say something. They didn't.

50...60...70...80. Nothing.

We passed 100 a couple of weeks ago. Still nothing. No response from the Government at all. We're currently on 110 Hen Harriers either missing in suspicious circumstances or found illegally killed on or close

to grouse moors.

When I say illegally killed, these birds are poisoned, they're shot, they're trapped. We've had one that had its head pulled off while it was alive. It had its leg pulled off as well, and its body was just left on the moor to be found.

There was another one carrying a satellite tag on a harness fitted to the bird. The bird disappeared, but the satellite tag and the harness were found attached to a Crow. The only way that harness could have been taken off the Hen Harrier intact would be for the bird's wings to be pulled off. Whether that was done when the bird was alive or dead...who knows?

The point is, all these Hen Harriers keep going missing, keep being illegally killed, and still the people in this building are doing absolutely nothing about it.

When challenged about it - and we've challenged Government ministers continuously - the carbon copy response we get all the time is 'we take wildlife crime seriously in this country'.

We do - they don't!

My message is for the people in Government and the people in this building behind us. They are probably watching us on that security camera, but I notice that they haven't come out to see us!

We're coming for you because we're not going to put up with this for any longer. We are sick and tired of these birds being killed.

Thank you all for coming."

And thank you Ruth, for continuing to fight so tirelessly and passionately to raise public awareness and push Government to act.

Sign up for Ruth's blog, [Raptor Persecution UK](#) here.

News roundup

"The unspeakable face of driven grouse shooting"

So says Chris Packham in response to the devastating moor burning on two grouse moors in the hills above Sheffield, damaging the city's flood defences just ahead of the worst rainfall for months that arrived with Storm Babet.

Read the full story from Charlie Moores on the [Protect the Wild blog](#) here.

Moorland Association Director convicted for burning deep peat

Grouse moor owner and Moorland Association Director (now resigned) Ben Ramsden was found guilty at Skipton Magistrates Court of three counts of burning on deep peat on a grouse moor on the Middlesmoor Estate in Nidderdale, Yorkshire in April this year.

The evidence for the prosecution came from reports by members of the public to the RSPB's Burn Recording app.

You can read the full story on [Raptor Persecution UK](#) and you can find out more about how to report a burn on the RSPB's [dedicated website](#).

Durrell Wildlife Trust plans rewilding project in Perthshire

The Jersey-based Durrell Wildlife Conservation Trust has leased a huge estate lying mostly within the Cairngorms National Park for a 100-year rewilding project. Ecological audits are already underway on the 18,500-acre Dalnacardoch estate, said to be 'degraded', the project aims to transition the estate to a nature-positive landscape. Read the [full story here](#)

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Hen Harrier Action

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