

Dear Andrew,

As you will be aware following a petition which garnered over 100,000 signatures, there is to be a debate in Parliament on 31 October in respect of banning driven grouse shooting.

The constituency which had the second highest amount of signatures was High Peak so I hope that you will attend the debate and support the calls for banning driven grouse shooting.

Such a "sport" surely has no place in the modern world, its supporters allege that because it has always happened it is traditional and should carry on. They also allege that it provides jobs and investment to the areas in which it takes place. In actual fact grouse shooting is a huge cost to the economy generally as a result of environmental destruction by the "management" of the grouse moors:

1. The burning of the heather destroys a vital carbon store and releases more carbon into the atmosphere.
2. It is also hugely detrimental to the hydrology of the uplands meaning that more has to be spent on water purification further down the line.
3. The destruction of heather and natural habitats leads to flooding lower down the hills as particularly has happened in Hebden Bridge which lies beneath the Walshaw estate where intensive moorland management for grouse shooting takes place.
4. Grouse moors are in fact subsidised by this government at a cost of £56.00 per hectare!

In this respect, if you have not already done so please consider the report by Leeds University, Ember Project: <http://www.wateratleeds.org/ember/> which provides the detail.

Then there is the illegal persecution of all the grouse' natural predators to encourage more birds to breed. In particular the Hen Harrier which has been virtually wiped out of England. A few years ago there was a hen Harrier seen over the Upper Derwent Valley and it is prime territory for the birds, but in fact there are none here now. Where they exist they are killed or their nests destroyed by game keepers acting on the behest of the moor owners. According to the RSPB there are now only 3 active nests in England, whereas the land could support 300 pairs of bird and the bird is heading for extinction.

If such birds of prey were allowed to return to the uplands; and the ecology of the area returned to how it should be so there was a greater diversity of all wildlife, the High Peak could become a major ecological tourist are. This would attract people to the areas at all times of the year and so really benefit the area in the way that grouse shooting, which attracts a few wealthy people who do not really contribute to the general economy (eg: visit local shops, local pubs etc) do not.

Please read the Ember report and also look at the statistics published by the RSPB who have recently withdrawn their support from the DEFRA initiated scheme to manage the grouse moors because of their concerns. Please support the large number of your constituents who want to see this practice stopped.

I will be following the debate and look forward to your response.

Kind regards

Charlotte Farrell