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Animal Concern is a pressure group registered as a non-profit making Limited Company  
(Co. No. SC109126) established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Ltd.  
It incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which was founded in 1876.

**To all supporters of Animal Concern, Animal Concern Advice Line and  
Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society. 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

Hi Folks,

I wrote to you earlier today (well it's still the same day for me!) regarding the curse of driven grouse shooting in Scotland.

Next Wednesday is the Glorious 12<sup>th</sup> of August, first day of the grouse shooting season. Many of you will remember those end-of-the-bulletin amusing news stories about the annual race to get the first brace of grouse from the Scottish or Yorkshire moors to the tables of top hotels in London and Paris. This year let's make sure any publicity is about the animal cruelty and environmental damage caused by driven grouse shooting.

If you live in Scotland I'd like you to write to your MSPs to express your disgust about the cruelty and persecution of wildlife which makes the 12<sup>th</sup> of August an inglorious date to be ashamed of, not applauded. Remember to include your name, address and Post Code and to ask for a reply. If your constituency MSP fails to reply to your communications after four weeks make a point of reminding them that you are still waiting for a reply. It might be worth reading up on what you can expect from your constituency MSP and what to do if s/he fails in their duty to you: <https://www.parliament.scot/msps/105597.aspx>

If you live outside of Scotland I'd like you to write to our Government Ministers to tell them that next Wednesday will not be an august day for Scotland.

You'll find the required political contact details below.

You might also want to send an email to your local or national newspaper(s) to let more people know about the shame of driven grouse shooting. If you e-mail today or tomorrow you could get something in on or around the 12<sup>th</sup>. Look out for articles about grouse shooting and try to respond immediately. If you can please alert me to such articles ASAP.

I don't want you to simply copy what I have written. If you do, politicians may regard your email as less important than a personal email from you.

Here are things to include, in your own words, in your email:

Grouse moors are bereft of native wildlife as anything which might eat grouse eggs or chicks is regarded as vermin to be eradicated by use of guns, traps and poison. Literally tens of thousands of native birds and animals are legally killed on grouse moors every year.

Unlimited numbers of around a dozen species of native wild birds can be killed legally by anyone who reads a Government General Licence on the internet and follows the guidelines given. They don't have to tell anyone how many birds they kill or why they kill them.

Shooters scatter tonnes of toxic lead shot across our moors where it remains a danger to wildlife for hundreds of years. Shooting parties bring income to a few estate owners but they deter much larger numbers of visitors who come to enjoy our countryside and prefer to use cameras to shoot animals and birds. These tourists spend money and support jobs in the wider community and not just on estate-provided shooting and accommodation.

Despite decades of effort to stop persecution of protected raptors, large numbers of these birds are still killed illegally on or near shooting estates every year. This came to a head just a few days ago when forensic tests showed that a white tailed sea eagle, found dead earlier this year near grouse moors within the Cairngorm National Park, had been killed by an illegal poison. This latest outrage surely shows that not enough is being done to curb this countryside criminality.

The total failure of legislation and other initiatives to stop these killings and to stop the likes of fox hunting shows that licencing and guide lines do not work. Instead of licencing driven grouse shooting the Government should ban it outright thus removing the excuse mindless morons use for killing protected raptors, mountain hares and dozens of other species of native wild animals and birds..

There is another option which could be considered. If someone is convicted of using a net to catch a salmon or two, the court can order confiscation of all equipment used by the poacher. That includes any cars or boats they might have used. If someone is convicted of fraud or drug dealing the court can order confiscation of anything bought from the proceeds of their crimes. That includes their home(s). If a landowner or one of their employees is convicted of committing wildlife crime to increase the number of grouse and thus boost the financial value of their sporting estate then that estate should be confiscated and brought into public ownership as an area of conservation.

I recognise that if we cannot get the current Scottish Government to stand up to land owners and big business and give proper protection to hares or seals\* we are not going to get them to confiscate the land of wildlife criminals. Thirty-five years ago we had little chance of the Government banning animal act circuses or giving animals as prizes but that did not stop us planting the seeds of the idea. A generation later those seeds resulted in enough politicians being aware of the issues to ensure legislation was passed to ban those activities. It might take another generation but let us start planting those seeds which may eventually grow into the radical new legislation required to stop our wild land and our wildlife being exploited, killed and damaged to provide a playground for the rich and infamous.

One way to raise awareness when writing to your politicians is to ask them specific questions which they in turn will have to ask of the relevant Government Ministers and agencies. Here are some you could ask. Is it true people in Scotland can kill unlimited numbers of several species of native wild birds just by reading a licence published on a Government website? What species of birds can be killed under these General Licences? What animals can legally be killed by gamekeepers to protect the birds people pay to shoot? How many birds and animals are killed by gamekeepers in Scotland every year? How long does lead shot remain in the environment?

Please do your best to write and send some emails to politicians and the media. Don't try to put all of the above into one email. Pick two or three points and one or two brief questions to ask your MSP or the Ministers. Send me copies of any replies you receive.

TCSS, Cheers4now,

John

PS We have been helping fund new investigations into conditions on those filthy floating factory fish farms which blight the waters around the Scottish west coast and islands. Find out more about that and other campaign issues on the news section of our website.

<http://www.animalconcern.org/>

**\*Scot Gov have refused our request to give seals extra protection between now and February 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, the date on which commercial fishery interests will be banned from shooting seals rather than lose access to the lucrative export market in the USA. Scot Gov has also confirmed I was right to fear that the seal shooting ban is not going to be comprehensive. I've asked further questions about that and will get back to you when I have answers.**

To find your MSPs details use this link, put your postcode into the box above the little map of Scotland and use the list that pops up on the right of your screen.

<https://www.parliament.scot/msps.aspx>

Scottish Ministers: Nicola Sturgeon MSP, First Minister of Scotland. [firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot)

Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Cabinet Secretary for the Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform [cabsececlr@gov.sco](mailto:cabsececlr@gov.sco)

Mairi Gougeon MSP, Minister for Rural Affairs and Natural Environment

[scottish.ministers@gov.scot](mailto:scottish.ministers@gov.scot)