

The Inglorious 12th

There should be 340+ pairs of Hen Harriers nesting in England but this year there are just 3 pairs. The difference is due to criminal activity by those who shoot Red Grouse for sport and profit. Hen Harriers are ruthlessly persecuted on their potential breeding sites and at winter roosts even though they have been fully protected by law for 60 years.

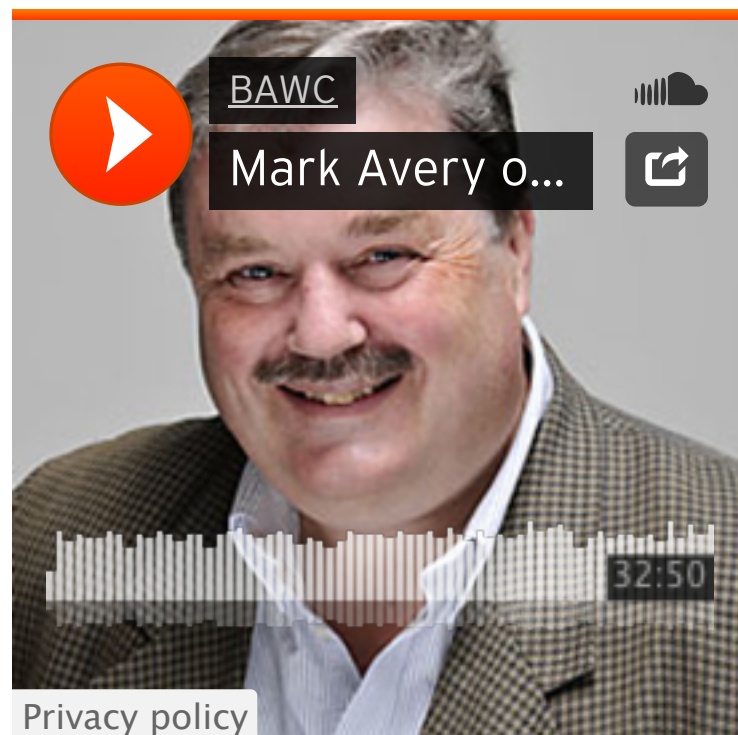
But this year the friends of the Hen Harrier are fighting back - and that includes Rare Bird Alert who sponsored the Hen Harrier pages in the BTO/BWI/SOC Bird Atlas.



On 10 August 2014 three events are planned, open to the public, where birders, ramblers, anyone who cares, can protest by raising their voice against illegal killing of this magnificent bird. The events will take place in the Forest of Bowland (Lancashire), the South Tyne Trail (Northumberland) and the Derwent Dam (Derbyshire Peak District).

Visit markavery.info/hen-harrier-day-2014 for details and updates.

Chris Packham will be attending the Peak District event. The aim of these events is simple - to publicise the plight of the Hen Harrier and to express our outrage just ahead of the opening of the Red Grouse shooting season on 12 August - the so-called 'Glorious 12th'. We are working, with the RSPB and others, on how those who cannot attend these events can also add their voices on the day through social media actions.



But here's something you can do, right now, that is already making the grouse shooters nervous and jittery - and more open to talk of change. I have launched an e-petition on the government website calling for the next government to ban driven grouse shooting in England. It's already one of the most successful of these e-petitions and passed 8,000 signatures in week 7. It would send a really strong signal to the shooting community to clean up their act if it reached 10,000 signatures by Hen Harrier Day, so please read it and sign it today. When it does get to 10,000 signatures then the government has to respond with a plan of action - it would be good if that was a subject of conversation in the grouse butts of northern England this shooting season.

Thank you to RBA for helping to publicise Hen Harrier Day, and the e-petition, and for being a friend of the Hen harrier.

Dr Mark Avery (birder, blogger, author and former RSPB Conservation Director)
July 2014

My new book, **A Message from Martha**: the extinction of the Passenger Pigeon and its relevance today, is published by Bloomsbury on 17 July in the UK and 26 August in USA.



Tweet

Rare Bird Alert at Hen Harrier Day

Along with Mark and Chris Packham we will be attending our the Peak District event on Hen Harrier Day. We would love to see lots of RBA subscribers there but if you can't make the Peak District event then remember the other two events in the Lancashire and Northumberland.

Lets all help ensure that Hen Harrier doesn't become a species we need to twitch in order to see in the future!



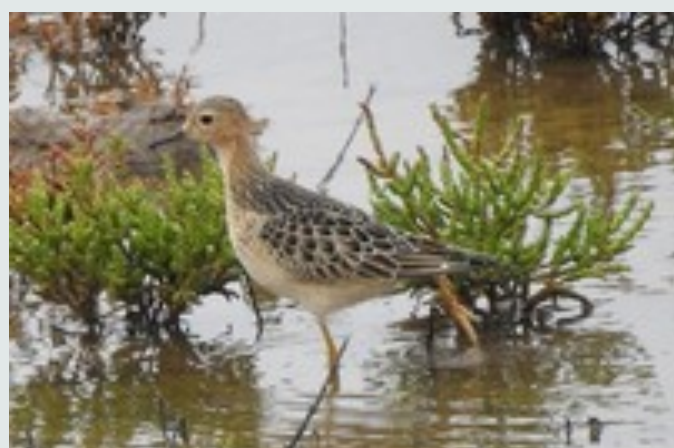
Hen Harrier, Donna Nook, Lincolnshire, (© Colin Smale)

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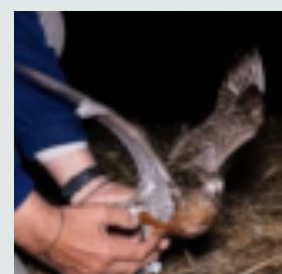
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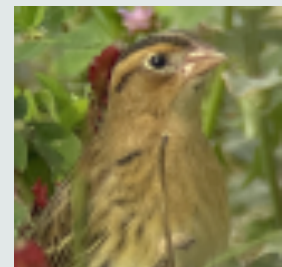
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