

## Mountain Hare massacres, Balmoral and the Cairngorms National Park

### Description

Following the parkswatch post last week on what the Cairngorms National Park could do to stop mountain hare massacres, claims have been made about another massacre on Balmoral

[http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/14371147.Queen\\_urged\\_to\\_stop\\_mass\\_killing\\_of\\_hares\\_at\\_Balmoral](http://www.heraldscotland.com/news/14371147.Queen_urged_to_stop_mass_killing_of_hares_at_Balmoral)

Ever since Queen Victoria bought Balmoral, the royal family have set the standard about what is acceptable in terms of hunting. Deer hunting used to be conducted with dogs – stag hounds – and although inefficient, because the hounds were hard to control and tended to scatter the deer, this practice continued until, so the story goes, Prince Albert let it be known he frowned on it. Roll on to 2007 and two hen harriers were reported to have been shot at Dersingham Nature Reserve near Sandringham, the royal estate in Norfolk, when Prince Harry was out shooting. Whether true or not the point is that for the people who persecute hen harriers, the fact that the royal family might be doing it is an important justification of their cause. It's the same for mountain hares. So perhaps the Queen, besides clearly stating that killing hares on her land is unacceptable, could let it be known that there will be no royal invitations to any estate owners who allow hares to be massacred.

It's been great to see a significant shift in the statements from the Cairngorms National Park over the last week. The Conservation Director, Hamish Trench, has been quoted as saying the balance between wildlife and grouse shooting needs to be re-set (whereas a week ago he was saying could be done without more data) and Councillor Bill Lobban has been openly critical of grouse shooting interests. I hope that they will now openly ask for a meeting with Balmoral to discuss a ban on mountain hare culls. I hope too the CNPA will commit to producing a paper for the next Board Meeting of the CNPA about how the National Park can use its powers to – re-set – the balance between grouse moor management and conservation: even better would be a special meeting of the National Park Authority to consider what it might do. I suspect it would be well attended by the public.

### Category

1. Cairngorms

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