

Hen Harrier day – this Sunday – at Cairngorm

Description

I am pleased to see that there is a Hen Harrier day event in the Cairngorm National Park at 1pm on Sunday at Cairngorm <https://www.facebook.com/events/253914288297410/>. I am even more delighted to see that Peter Argyle, convener of the Cairngorms National Park Authority is one of the speakers. In the last few months I have posted a number of articles about the persistent raptor persecution that has been going on in the National Park, the most recent of which was critical of the draft Park Partnership Plan for being too weak. I have called for the Cairngorms National Park Authority to take a lead on this issue – if we cannot protect raptors in our National Parks what hope for the rest of Scotland? – and I think that just by agreeing to speak Peter Argyle is sending a message to the owners of our grouse moors. I hope he will go further than this and express a willingness by the CNPA to use its powers more effectively to protect raptors and other wildlife (licensing hunting, forbidding all traps etc) but would not underestimate the difficulty of him doing this. The grouse moor owners are extremely powerful.

Not all grouse moor owners are bad, however, and its very good to see that Peter is appearing with Thomas MacDonell, Director of Conservation & Forestry, Wildland Ltd which runs Glen Feshie. Glen Feshie was the place where the Harrier that was illegally killed last year near Newtonmore was born and satellite tagged – which is why the reason for its death is known. Glen Feshie still makes an income from grouse shooting – on a “walked up” basis – but not by destroying everything else that moves. It shows what can be done but is however also the exception, not the rule. The other speakers are: Allan Bantick – former chair of Scottish Wildlife Trust; Jeep Solid – local poet; Brian Etheridge -former RSPB Raptor Monitoring Officer and Ian Thomson – Head of Investigations at RSBP Scotland.

I hope those attending this event will take the time afterwards to take a walk round Coire Cas and ponder the connections between the destruction that is going on their and the destruction of raptors and other wildlife on our grouse moors. To me, they are part of the same mindset, that the land is there to be used in whatever the person in control of it at the time likes. So, grouse moor owners bulldoze tracks across the moors (to facilitate the destructive habitat management that includes persecution of hen harriers) while Highlands and Islands Enterprise allows its tenant, Natural Retreats, to bulldoze tracks on the mountain without planning permission. Both drive all terrain vehicles all over the land without any regard for the damage this causes. Both ignore the opportunity that wildlife could offer to diversify their businesses, grouse moor owners through killing everything that could possible affect numbers of grouse, Natural Retreats by putting all its focus on trying get people to pay for the ride up the funicular when there is huge for good works around the ski area. In my view neither really care about the natural environment which our National Park was set to protect.

If Natural Retreats are in any way sponsoring or supporting this event I hope those present will make the connections and challenge them about what they are doing at Cairngorm.

Category

1. Cairngorms

Tags

1. CNPA
2. grouse moors
3. HIE
4. natural retreats
5. wildlife persecution

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