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May 2020



### Hen Harrier Action: May newsletter



Dear Subscriber,

Welcome to our second newsletter, and a special welcome if this is your first: thank you for signing up to receive it. How the world has changed since our first, it seems an age ago now, somewhere in a distant past. For obvious reasons, Covid-19 bears on what follows but we've got some really exciting and positive news.

#### **Hen Harrier Day goes online**

We've been really busy for the last few weeks setting up the online Hen Harrier Day mentioned briefly in the last newsletter. And it's going brilliantly well. We can't say too much about some aspects right now, we are sworn to secrecy, but it will be a live event on 8 August hosted by leading presenters and with lots going on. Unsurprisingly the hen harrier and its persecution will help us shape the day and there will be some brilliant film,

talks and more information about the bird and the raptors and other animals affected by abuse of the uplands. We'll look at the uplands more widely too, and offer new visions and ideas for how they could be so much better for nature and for people. And much more too: songs, poetry, arts and crafts and some competitions and other activities for young people. Our aim is to make it busy, interactive and fun.

Hen Harrier Days are all about building public awareness and engagement and our online event offers great scope for that. So we're very keen to build lots of community activity beforehand, through activities related to our themes, which can feature on the day. We're organising a T shirt design competition, a children's writing competition and we hope that a couple of rather large hen harriers will appear on a graffiti wall in Aberdeen.

And we're still looking for new ideas and offers. Do you belong to a group or organisation that might be excited to take on a related challenge. It could be poetry, painting or drawing, a craft activity, photography, anything where our 'theme' could engage people, perhaps especially in these times of lockdown. We'll aim to find a way to showcase everything, with the best featuring at the event on the day. We also have a some ideas still in our back pocket, waiting for someone to organise them and bring them to life. If you are that person, please get in touch.

For all ideas and offers, please reply to this email or else use the [Contact](#) form on the website.

There'll be lots more information on the website and in future newsletters as we move towards the event.

### **Hen Harrier Days around the country**

We still have some great events organised around the country. All that were in train earlier still are: from lovely Purbeck to the Scottish Highlands. And more are still quietly in the planning stage. In reality, though, most are 'on hold' pending greater clarity on the coronavirus situation. We are still hoping that most or all will go ahead, but of course it's not yet clear whether or not they will be able to. It's possible that some may be able to go ahead (because of date, location and so on) and others sadly not. We'll be looking at this together very soon and probably for most events a decision point will be reached in early June. So do keep in touch via the website.

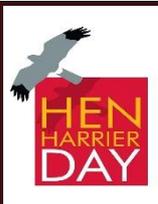
## Other news

Sadly, some in the grouse shooting community seem to have taken the lockdown as an opportunity to step up their criminal persecution of wildlife. On 15 May, the RSPB Investigations Team reported a “surge” in raptor persecution incidents reported by the public. 56 birds of prey had definitely or were suspected as having been illegally killed since the lockdown started – the majority on or near land managed for game bird shooting. Is there an ironic silver lining to this? We will not know for a while but there do seem to have been a number of investigations and arrests: the criminals were perhaps being watched more than they thought and they got careless.

The RSPB press release was linked to a virtual Operation Owl day of action. Led by Nick Lyall, Chair of the National Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group, this aimed to highlight bird of prey persecution and encourage members of the public to be alert and report any suspected incidents when in the countryside.

## Get in touch

Please let us know what you think of this newsletter and what you’d like to see included in future editions, via the [Contact](#) page on the website.



Visit the Hen Harrier Action [website](#)

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