



SRPBA
SCOTTISH RURAL PROPERTY AND BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

Your ref:

Our ref:

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The Editor
The Sunday Herald
200 Renfield Street
Glasgow
G23 QBY

Stuart House
Eskmills Business Park
Musselburgh EH21 7PB

T: 0131 653 5400
F: 0131 653 5401
E: info@srpba.com
W: www.srpba.com

Dear Sir

The Killing Fields

Rob Edwards' article wrongly interpreted the statistics on pesticide poisoning incidents. The implication is that there has been an increase in birds of prey illegally killed by intentional poison "abuse" but in fact most of those incidents quoted are caused by secondary rat bait poisoning which is accidental and most likely to come from other land management operations and premises - not sporting estates as suggested. About one third of those confirmed poisoning incidents each year involve allegations of illegal abuse and are subject to police investigation. It is important to analyse statistics carefully rather than fall back on easy assumptions about "slaughter" and "massacre".

The article did not bring out what land managers are doing to resolve the problem of poisoning where they are aware of it. Last year saw intensive awareness raising campaigns among rural organisations and an increase in land managers handing in to police the corpses of birds found on their land. Relationships between police and the land management community have improved in recent years and it is only through such collaboration that the problem of illegal poisoning will be finally stamped out. It is very encouraging that in the Grampian region, which has pioneered a wildlife crime liaison group involving all key parties under the Partnership Against Wildlife Crime (PAW), there have been no illegal bird of prey poisoning cases in 2010. That is the way ahead, rather than further legislation. Unfortunately, this issue is turning into a bandwagon which the anti-landownership lobby is climbing onto as well. There has been suspicion for some time that the issue of bird of prey persecution is being used for a wider political agenda and that has now been clearly laid bare for all to see.

Yours faithfully

Doug McAdam
Chief Executive