

HARE PRESERVATION TRUST

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The shocking toll of hare shooting.

Although the brown hare has no shooting close season most shooting commences as pheasant shooting closes on 1 February. Hares are not generally shot because of economic damage to crops, but for so-called "sport". Around 300,000 hares are shot annually in the UK, mainly in East Anglia where they are relatively abundant. 75,000 are wounded, but retrieved and 30,000 wounded escape to an uncertain fate. At least 37,000 orphaned leverets die of starvation. In the 18 March 2007 edition of *The Independent* this slaughter was described as: "*one of the country's last great wildlife scandals.*" Protected Species status for the brown hare being sought by the HPT would virtually eliminate this toll and also nullify any repeal of the Hunting Act with respect to hares. A repeal is almost certain should the Conservatives win the general election.

Coursing convictions - update.

In News Bulletin 80 we reported that three men had been convicted for hare coursing at Cummertrees, in Dumfriesshire. When the trio appear again in court next month a forfeiture order on the van involved in the offence may be obtained and costs recovered for the dogs being kept in the care of the SSPCA. On at least ten previous occasions vehicles used by coursers have been confiscated and crushed. As a condition of bail the men cannot purchase or borrow a dog or accompany any person walking a dog outside a one mile radius of their homes. They are also not to enter Dumfries or Galloway unless attending court or a pre-arranged meeting with their solicitor.

Novel Writing Workshop - generous fundraising offer to HPT.

Heidi Stephenson, a Totnes based writer and animal welfare campaigner contacted us recently to say she is willing to teach a one-day novel writing workshop and donate all the proceeds to the HPT. Heidi has been writing for the past 17 years, as well as working as a television producer. Heidi's teaching includes work for the Arvon Foundation and Exeter Phoenix. She is currently writing a novel. The workshop will run from 10.30 am to 5.30 pm on Saturday 27 March in the function room of The Lamb Inn, Sandford, near Crediton. Places are strictly limited to 22, so please book early by sending a cheque for £45, made payable to the Hare Preservation Trust, to Heidi Stephenson, 4 Swallowfields, Totnes, Devon, TQ9 5LA. For further information please call 01803 867635. Heidimstephenson@yahoo.com

Interesting fox/hare interaction

A member of the public wrote in to say: "I had been sitting in a hedge since dawn, waiting to take pictures of the hares that I had pictured in this field during March last year. After about two hours of nothing, I sat up and was looking around with binocs when a fox (I think unaware of my presence), broke through the hedge about 4 metres from me being mobbed by a magpie. It ran diagonally across the field in a purposeful direction, possibly following a regular run, and when about 60 metres away from me it appeared to run over a hare, who just stood up and held its ground. The fox diverted slightly off its course, but made no attempt to pounce on or chase the hare. When the first hare sat up, a second hare also sat up about 5 metres from it. They had obviously been there all the time I had been sitting waiting. I assume this area is well stocked with hares since I have observed several groups here over the years."

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