

SHOOTING TIMES 19/3/14

# Readers' Letters

**SHOOTING TIMES**  
A COUNTRY MAGAZINE

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ISSN: 0037-4164  
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## Letter of the week

In association with 

### Shoo don't shoot

Every year we are forced to defend the principle of pest control when the Government's nature agency — and Natural England's devolved equivalents — initiate yet another consultation to fiddle with the wording of the General Licences. As a keen pigeon shooter, I understand that both pest control and bird populations can change and that General Licences occasionally require updating to keep abreast of the times, but wouldn't it be simpler if the Government simply accepted for good the principle of lethal control of pest bird species rather than timidly proposing ridiculous gold-plating measures on an annual basis to placate the animal rights movement? If my farmers want me to prevent pigeon from eating their peas, I find shooting them rather than saying "shoo" is considerably more effective. The fact that I get a delicious meal and a great deal of pleasure out of pest control doesn't alter its efficacy. That I also call it "sport" isn't of enormous relevance to the pigeon, the squirrel or the magpie.

**T. Roberts**  
By email



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 **Dedicated To The Great Outdoors**

## NOT IN MY NAME, EITHER

Congratulations to your letter writer, Mr Graham. He hit the nail on the head about the rogues in our sport who do their utmost to destroy the reputation and future of our activity through their selfish and mindless actions (*The selfish few*, 12 March). It is sadly true that every raptor found poisoned or shot brings our sport closer to prohibition.

Sixty years ago this year, the 1954 Protection of Birds Act was enacted. Thirty-three years ago the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act was enacted. Our rare and cherished birds have enjoyed strict legal protection for longer than all but the most aged of gamekeepers' working lives. How hard is it for some in the shooting world to understand that the law on these matters is actually incredibly straightforward?

As a shooter based in the South I have only been privileged to see a hen harrier on a couple of occasions (both in Scotland). I took as much delight from those sightings as I do seeing red kites in the skies above my area, lapwings, yellowhammers and, on occasion, grey partridges. Every time I read of another illegal killing, I feel the shame that those who undertake these acts clearly don't. Similarly, our representative bodies are frequently wheeled out to condemn raptor persecution, but it's high time

that those ordinary shooters who enjoy their sport within the constraints of the law made it quite clear that these arrogant and illegal actions are not taken in our name.

**G. Porter**  
By email

## KEEPING A REP

I have some comment regarding a recent issue of *Shooting Times*. What an excellent article by Lindsay Waddell (*Upland Keeper*, 5 March) on how it takes many good deeds to build a reputation, but only one bad one to lose it. He really does put forward the case for law-abiding gameshooters, and I hope he continues to bring to the forefront legal predator control, grouse moor management and conservation. I was lucky enough to have two days' grouse shooting with him in 2001 and wish him well for many seasons to come. Please keep on writing these first-class articles.

**D. Oddy**  
By email

## PATTERN ON .410

I write regarding Mr Kelly of Surrey's letter on how he shot the highest and fastest cock bird of his life with a .410 (*.410 - a man's gun?*, 12 March).

Please can *Shooting Times* arrange for us to be there when Mr Kelly finally pattern-tests his girlfriend's super .410, say at 30 yards? If it's anything like all the .410 patterns I've seen over the years, I will be amazed if he still feels the same about the

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