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COVER BY N. RIDLEY

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# Readers' Letters

## Letter of the week

In association with



### .410 - a man's gun?

Halfway through this season I purchased a .410 double trigger side-by-side for my girlfriend to have as her first gun. She has learned the great accuracy required with such a spread pattern to drop clays at a good rate. A fellow shooter commented on the gun and what lovely condition it was in. On explaining to the gentleman that it was my girlfriend's first gun, he said, "Why a first gun? A .410 is a man's gun. If you can hit with this then you are a proper shooter." This got me thinking, and on my next day roughshooting I took the .410 to see how I got on. I took the highest and fastest cock bird of my life with the first barrel! It folded instantly and was picked by my dog (who was probably more surprised than I was). I am happy to report that the gun (with my girlfriend's permission) has escorted me on my beaters' day and helpers' day. Again, it provided staggering results. Now I regret not having it for the whole season, because when you miss, you miss and when you're on, you are most definitely on.

R. Kelly  
 Surrey



▲ Mr. Kelly's English springer spaniel with the .410 "man's gun"

WIN!

The writer of letter of the week wins the **Harkila Pro Hunter X gaiters worth £69.99**. Part of the legendary Harkila ProHunter range these Cordura Gaiters are near indestructible. For more information on the Harkila range call BushWear on **0845 226 0469** or visit **www.bushwear.co.uk**.



HARKILA



Dedicated To The Great Outdoors

## THE SELFISH FEW?

When the media shows shot, poisoned or trapped golden eagles, hen harriers, buzzards or red kites discovered dead on grouse moors, or when they report police raids finding stashes of poison in gamekeepers' premises, the public are outraged, and quite rightly so. These images are displayed in every media outlet imaginable, the length and breadth of the country, with MPs being petitioned to do something about it.

I find it very hard to support the driven grouse moors. As they become more intensively managed, I feel very aggrieved that these beautiful uplands are where the vast majority of these crimes take place, and that some of our most celebrated species are being killed so that a handful of Guns can enjoy a few days' sport at a price very few could afford. The increasing public pressure against this type of upland management will bring further legislation, licensing and perhaps even a ban on driven grouse shooting. The real losers will not be these occasional visitors to the grouse moor. It will be the wildfowler, the roughshooter, the pigeon shot and the syndicate member — those who enjoy their sport and keep within the law.

To those who are worried about their sport being further regulated, my suggestion is not to look to the RSPB, SSPCA and RSPCA or the more extreme animal rights groups. Look to the heather-clad glens of Angus or the

## SHOOTING TIMES

Write to Shooting Times, Blue Fin Building, 110 Southwark Street, London SE1 0SU, or email STLetters@ipcmedia.com

Yorkshire Moors. The people responsible for your sport being banned are there.

R. Graham  
 Dumfries and Galloway

## BEEING HELPFUL

I have kept bees for more than 20 years, and most readers will know they are massively important in the human food chain. However, they can also be of great use to gamekeepers. For many years I've noticed that all my beehive roofs are covered in pheasant poo, particularly in the spring, when the hens are hatching. Hens bring their young to my hives and stand on top of them to keep an eye out for predators while their young feed underneath.

A beehive contains 100,000-plus bees, which live for around six weeks. This means every day around 2,400 bees die, which are



P. QUACCIANA

then removed from the hive, and this makes perfect protein for pheasant chicks.

My apiary sites are always very popular with pheasants. At the right time of year they are running alive with the birds, as each hive can

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