

From: [Colin Strang Steel](#)
To: [2002 Act Review](#)
Subject: Review of the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002
Date: 28 March 2016 08:25:47

Dear Sir.

I am writing in connection with the above review currently being carried out by Lord Bonomy.

I am writing not as a hunting person since I do not hunt at all but as a livestock farmer. I farm some 423 hectares (1045 acres) near Lauder in the Scottish Borders. The farm is predominantly stocked with sheep (about 1100 breeding ewes) .At this time of year when lambing is underway the young lambs are particularly vulnerable to raids by foxes and every year we sustain a number of losses. It is difficult to know precisely how many lambs are lost to foxes each year but it will be enough to cause concern.

The Lauderdale Hunt, our local hunt, provides a vital service to farmers not just at this time of year when lambing is taking place but throughout the year. By being able to call upon the hunt at any time when foxes are known to be in the vicinity of the farm the hunt has proved to be successful in either eradicating or at least reducing the problem. Although we try at times to reduce fox numbers through shooting alone , this method is generally unreliable as humans can never cover the same amount of ground as a pack of hounds can and consequently a combination of hounds and guns provides the most effective and indeed most efficient method of fox control.

Foxes are prime predators which means that they have no natural enemies and without human intervention they would remain unchecked and become an even bigger menace than they are already. Apart from the havoc and suffering which they can wreak on young lambs they can devastate pens of ducks and poultry as well as ground nesting bird where the fox is but one of many predators birds have to live with. The hunt plays a vital role in ensuring that numbers are kept to reasonable levels although farmers like myself would welcome even more being culled. However it is reassuring to know that when a problem of marauding by foxes arises the hunt is on call to deal with it.

Hunting has proved over very many years to be the most effective method of controlling the fox population as well as the most humane one and I would strongly urge Lord Bonomy to resist any temptation to alter or revoke the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland Act) 2002. If hunting was to be banned there is no doubt that other methods to control foxes would be used which would be less humane than hunting and would contribute to a greater cull of foxes, many of which would be likely to suffer a slow and painful death.

Yours Faithfully

Colin Steel

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