

COMMONLY HEARD CRITICISMS OF DRIVEN GROUSE SHOOTING

Claim

Comment

Conservation organisations want to ban it

The RSPB does not support a ban on grouse shooting. The National Trust has no wish to see grouse shooting banned and rents large parts of its upland holdings for driven grouse shooting.

There is illegal persecution of raptors by grouse moor keepers

Such persecution is illegal and the perpetrators should be prosecuted. The fact that some people break the law is not justification for destroying the livelihoods and way of life of their innocent colleagues.

This rich man's hobby damages the environment and society

Rarely does a hobby contribute so extensively to jobs, wildlife protection and internationally important habitats. There are, of course, trade-offs for which evidence is increasing and thus practical solutions are becoming clearer. Banning such a hobby would be akin to banning forestry because there are downsides for brown hares. Instead we recognise the good that comes from woodland and work to integrate it into our landscape.

Claim

Heather burning contributes to the release of greenhouse gases because it releases carbon dioxide

Comment

There is evidence that managed burning (along with many other things) can affect the carbon cycle, but national reviews have concluded, with respect to overall carbon budgets, that: “So far, research has produced inconsistent evidence, with predictions including both positive and negative effects of burning.”¹⁸

Heather burning on grouse moors increases flooding

Although there are relatively few studies available, the authors of a recent Natural England report could not find any evidence for burning increasing flood risk, and state that: “No evidence was identified specifically relating to the effect of burning on watercourse flow or the risk of downstream flood events. If there are any effects, these are likely to be highly site specific.”¹⁸