

14.15hrs 5th July 2015: PRESS RELEASE BY E-MAIL FROM: John F. Robins, Campaigns Consultant, Animal Concern, Post Office Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ. Tel. 01389-841-111, Mobile: 07721-605521. E-MAIL: animals@jfrobin.force9.co.uk website:http://www.animalconcern.org/

Shocking admission by Scottish Government Minister.

Campaigners have expressed shock and concern over a statement made by the Scottish Government Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform in which she suggested that the Scottish Gamekeepers Association have heavily influenced Government policy and legislation on conservation and wildlife management in Scotland.

Speaking at the Scottish Game Fair on Friday July 3rd Dr. Aileen McLeod thanked the Scottish Gamekeepers' Association "for all the long term support which you have provided to Scottish Government in various areas of policy, development and implementation and making sure we are implementing best practices of conservation and wildlife (sic) and wildlife management....". You can view her full statement on here: [Presentation of SGA Young Gamekeeper of the Year Award 2015](#) (link to YouTube video)

John Robins of Animal Concern said:

"This explains why much of recent Scottish environment and wildlife policy and legislation has been heavily skewed towards the vested interests of very wealthy landowners who employ gamekeepers to 'manage' the countryside to protect not wildlife but the interests of the small number of people who kill that wildlife for fun. If the Scottish Government wanted to protect wildlife they would have banned snares. If the Scottish Government wanted to protect wildlife they would have banned the shooting of seals by salmon anglers. Instead they take advice and create policy and legislation on advice given to them by the lackeys of a vested minority who regard much of our native wildlife as 'vermin' as confirmed by the Young Gamekeeper of the Year minutes after Aileen McLeod praised him."

Mr. Robins continued; "A few years ago, despite my expertise on the issue, the Scottish Government refused to let me join the body advising Ministers on seal conservation. The advisory body was weighted three to one in favour of organisations supporting seal culling and as a result Government created legislation licensing unmonitored seal shooting in Scotland. The public need to realise that the Scottish Government is far more interested in taking advice from the few wealthy landowners who exploit and manipulate the environment for their own narrow interests instead of acting on behalf of the vast majority of Scots by protecting our environment and wildlife from those who destroy much of it for profit."

EDITORS NOTE: There's more info in the e-mail John Robins sent to Animal Concern supporters (below).

ROBINS THE RANTER

Dear Supporter,

Today I'm mostly having a rant. I'm not exactly asking you to do anything today although what you are about to see and hear may prompt you to politely ask the Minister involved if she would take advice on stamping out smoking from advisors from the tobacco companies or would she make Donald Trump Government Guru on wind farms?

I'd like you to view a short video (link at the foot of this page). In fact I'd like you to view it two or three times just so you believe that you really are hearing with your own ears exactly what Aileen McLeod MSP, the Scottish Minister for Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform, said yesterday about the Scottish Gamekeepers Association. In particular listen for the bit where she thanks "... the Scottish Gamekeepers' Association for all the long term support which you have provided to Scottish Government in various areas of policy, development and implementation and making sure we are implementing best practices of conservation and wildlife and wildlife management....".

Near the end of the video, listen for the few words from the newly crowned Young Gamekeeper of the Year 2015. He clearly illustrates why Dr. McLeod and her colleagues should not be basing Government policy and national legislation on advice from gamekeepers when he states; "Vermin control is a big part of the job." He also says his job involves; "Looking after wildlife in general." That's the problem with gamekeepers - they do not realise that what they call "vermin" are in fact very important species of native wildlife which just happen to kill for food what the gamekeepers' paymasters kill for fun.

Perhaps this explains the General Licensing scheme which allows the uncontrolled and unjustified killing of over 20 species of native birds by people who simply have to read an on-line license to obtain legal permission to use a wide variety of methods to kill an unlimited number of birds because they believe they are justified in doing so?

Perhaps this explains why gamekeepers and water bailiffs can easily obtain licences to shoot seals, including lactating female seals, in the estuaries of salmon rivers?

Perhaps this explains why cruel and indiscriminate snares are still legal in Scotland?

Perhaps this explains why almost anything which might eat the egg or a chick of that non-native species the pheasant can be “managed” to local extinction by game keepers?

Perhaps this explains why it is legal for gamekeepers to kill and leave to rot thousands of mountain hares in the belief that by doing so they will reduce the number of ticks which might attack grouse chicks (instead of increasing the number of ticks which will infest grouse because one of their major hosts has been removed from the area)?

You do not even have to bring into the equation the number of gamekeepers who have been prosecuted for wildlife crimes such as shooting, poisoning and trapping birds of prey to realise that their choice of advisors make Dr. McLeod and her Government a bigger risk than acid rain and Chernobyl fallout to the Scottish wild environment and the native creatures which should inhabit it without fear of persecution.

Excuse me while I find a brick wall to bang my head against.

Cheers 4 now,

John

You can view the video on YouTube here:

Presentation of SGA Young Gamekeeper of the Year Award 2015