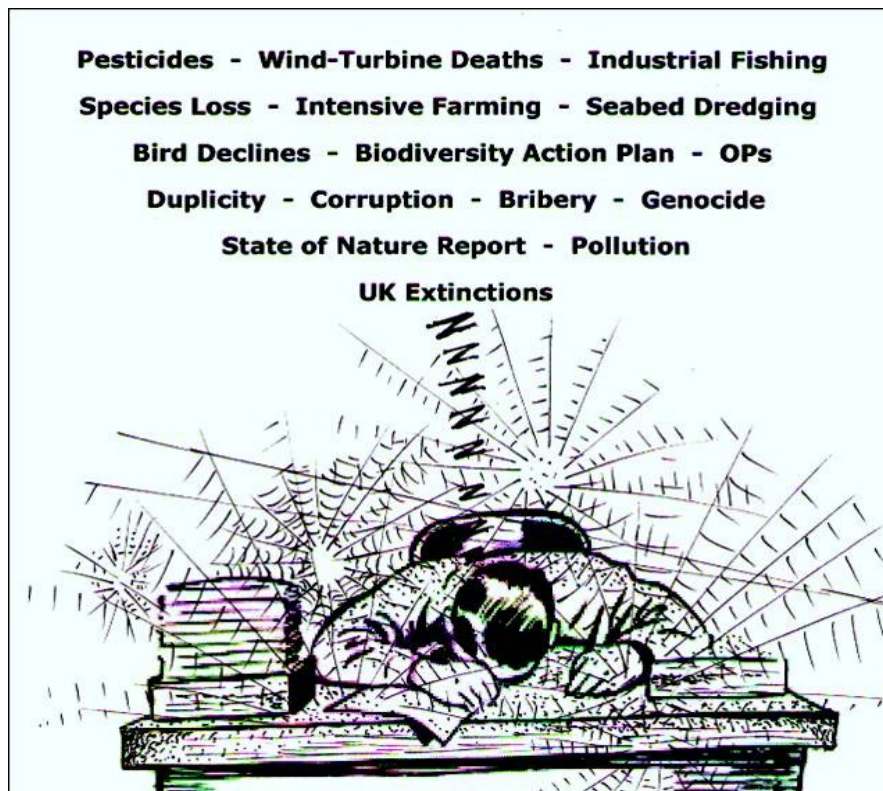


DEFRA:

ECO-TERRORISTS
EXTRAORDINAIRE

2014



RSPB 1970-2014

In the early days the RSPB. was in the forefront of defending our birdlife. Since around 1970 however, with new people taking over and collusion with the government, things changed and their roll from there on became a sad one of compliance and passiveness.

Bird and Mammal Declines, a brief history in time:

The history in all of this goes back a long way. The first two casualties, following the introduction of the Grey Squirrel back in 1876, were the Red Squirrel and Hawfinch; over the decades, as the Greys became more and more establish, their numbers then gradually petered out to levels we find today. The next thing major impact came with the advent of the organochloride pesticides, such as DDT and Dieldrin etc., at around the second half of World War II; everything suffered, particular birds of prey. Fortunately the RSPB. in those days were a force to be reckoned with and campaigned tirelessly in eventually achieving an almost complete worldwide ban.

By the 1970s, another group of compounds, known as organophosphates became the new threat. These rendered many species infertile but the problem by this time was the government had seen to it that the RSPB. had been bought and was well and truly out of the picture as a campaigning force and as a result of that they are still in widespread use today. This together with slug-pellets wiping out Song Thrushes and Hedgehogs, new farming regimes brought in, such as silage and early hay-cutting which destroyed the nests millions of ground-nesting birds, complete with Mink being released everywhere, the countryside by then was in utter turmoil.

Then by the 1990s, as if things were not already bad enough, we now had the ever growing threat of wind-farms appearing all over the place. And that to-date concludes this brief history lesson; will get back as and when the next catastrophe happens.

BRITAIN'S RESPONSE TO THE BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

Right, you've just read the intro., below is the long and exhaustive list of exactly what's happening in the countryside today:

1) **Pesticides**: Ever since their advent at around the time of the second world-war, in the days of DDT. when almost everything was almost wiped out, pesticides have had a long and very corrupt history. These days however, things are said to have improved somewhat and that there's now very little to worry about. If you believe that of course then good luck to you, but I know things are far from alright. From the mid-70s we've seen the widespread use of organophosphate (OP.) chemicals, back in the Eighties, contrary to anything any government would admit to, we saw appalling situations unfolding in front of us. Pairs of Grey Partridge that had in previous years had eight to ten chicks, were now flying around with no chicks at all and within two or three years the Brown Hare had all but disappeared. Added to this the Red-backed Shrike was declared UK. extinct over that same period, egg collectors were blamed who clearly wouldn't have helped, but there was all so much more going on as for it to be coincidental. Populations were being decimated, Lapwings, Turtle Doves, Bullfinches, Linnets, Tree Sparrows and even the House Sparrows on our very rooftops were disappearing (see full species list on page 13).

Health & Safety Executive: Despite purporting to be there to protect public health, and indeed was set up to enforce what few safety regulations there were, will use every loophole in the book to ensure a pesticide related prosecution never takes place. HSE. is in fact one of most evil government departments ever to have existed. In 2010, along with their counterparts in Spain, following an interim period of withdrawal, they worked determinedly to have OPs. reinstated for widespread use throughout the EU. once again; possibly using RSPB. data for all I know, they're all that bent and twisted nothing would surprise. And at the end of their meeting they were seen to be congratulating themselves; I'll bet they were. What they actually did of course was to throw away any chance there was of getting bird populations back to the way things should be once again, and I fully believe it really was that serious.

PESTICIDES: If you can smell it, taste it, feel its effects; you're getting it. Don't listen to those HSE. simpletons.

RSPB: There was a time back in the 50s and 60s when the RSPB. was in the forefront of the fight against the widespread and overuse of pesticides; by the 70s and 80s however, everything dramatically changed. I don't think it was any accident either. By that time this new group of pesticides had come onto the market, those OPs. I was talking about. The RSPB., now infiltrated by some turd at the top and with a different band of elected board members to wave any new policies through. Then, all of a sudden, pesticides were fine to use and they were even said to be somehow beneficial to birdlife in some of their own written articles. It was an appalling situation where, a few decision makers, those with a bit of power and persuasion can override the very principles of an entire organisation (see attachment A Case Against the RSPB).

When an interim ban came into effect incidentally, this was while OPs. were under an EU. consideration for relicencing, 'being phased out' was what Defra. actually told me, all of my suspicions were confirmed. I could see marginal improvements, Marsh Tits were picking up, as in I was actually seeing some for the first time in twenty years, so too were Mistle Thrushes and Linnets. Now, with OPs. in use again, everything's gone back to zilch. Admittedly we've had a couple of bad winters, but that wouldn't 've effected Cuckoos or Turtle Doves, and in any case, if a species is in low health anyway, as a result of something we've put into the environment, a bad winter could just be enough to finally finish them off, whereas they may well otherwise 've survived were it not for that.

Slug Pellets or Molluscicides: Active ingredient metaldehyde, the Song Thrush, once a common garden bird, now rare or absent thanks to this. Thrushes eat snails that have consumed non-lethal doses, non-lethal for the snail that is, but for the unsuspecting thrush, these levels build up and up. Safer alternatives do exist of course, the most obvious being copper sulphate, not that I personally go around killing things you understand. These thrushes used to be a common garden bird, these days they're restricted to the remotest hills or as a winter migrant.

Bees: In recent years entire bee populations have died out with both industries and governments kicking and screaming their innocents as to there's no connection whatsoever; all down to scotch-mist I suppose. One thing I have noticed, is that blossom crops like orchards, beans and rape etc., are routinely sprayed on hot sunny days when the blossom is wide open and right at the time when bees are most active. The pesticides' industry talks about best practice this and best practice that; a more dangerous practice for bee conservation is difficult to imagine. These are details we need to be aware of when wondering just what's killing off our insects.

GMO. researchers seem to blame everything rather than facing facts and saying the countryside's a mess. Their opinion seems to be that in order to sort problems out, the world needs more and more of their kind of science of chemicals and GMOs. etc. It's precisely their brand of 'help' in the past that have pushed the countryside into the backwater we know today. Wall to wall carpeting of generously sprayed wheat fields was never going to be great for insects.

Convenience Spraying: It's mainly believed that farmers will only spray where there's a problem with weeds, insects or fungus etc. Not commonly known, but widespread practice nevertheless, is that harvesting is so much more convenient when you don't have bulky foliage and stalks to deal with. So what they do is to spray potatoes, rape, feed beans, peas and there are one or two others crops, with weed-killer around two weeks or so before harvesting commences. That way life for them is that much easier, never mind the poor saps who have to eat the muck, that's doesn't even come into it.

As I see it, the big problem with pesticides, quite apart from the obvious one of pollution, is that the more that's used the better it is, and it's the same with almost every commodity you can think of. We are encouraged, made to feel guilty even, if we're not consuming or spending enough; the economy in fact demands it. Whether we need or even want the stuff, heaven forbid, that's not even a consideration. The manufacturers want everyone to consume more and more, so that they the corporates, backed by the governments, can make more and more profits for themselves and their shareholders. And that is the bottom line as to why we have so much unnecessary pollution in the world today. With pesticides, having hoodwinked everyone into believing there was an actual need for the contaminating filth in the first place, they now want to force a it down everyone's throats.

This kind of attitude was always going to become all the more obscene wherever there are polluting or destroying industries with their strangleholds. Look on every shop-shelf and you will find aerosol cans of all descriptions; furniture polish, hair spray, body deodorant, air freshener, fly spray, highly toxic lubrication products whereas once an oil-can would've done, the list just goes on. And if you don't buy the latest product, you're made to feel somehow unclean, inadequate or otherwise worthless; that's if you're suckered in by the bull's-shit. Continuing on, mercury dental-fillings, my dentist now assures me there's now a

silicon based alternative but you do need to request it, non-organic potatoes dipped in anti-sprouting agent, enjoy your jacket potato next time you eat one, additive laden diet cokes and diet everything else, the nation's favourite health drinks, meat on the counter that's not fit for pigs, micro-wave emitting wireless routers and mobile phone masts, you name it. It's a sick old world out there, with no birds, allergies and diabetes at all time highs and everyone dying of cancers all over the place. All of this and I've not even mentioned vehicle fumes or smoking.

2) Grassy Strips: These were the strips of grass that surrounded the edges of arable fields back in the Eighties in order to enhance the prospects of farmland birds and other wildlife, as well as to somehow 'absorb' the effects pesticides were having on our natural environment (how that was ever going to work). But as our research showed, they came in many guises. Some, it must be said, were grown with real conservation in mind; plenty of nesting cover together with seeds for winter feeding etc. Often however, they were nothing more than a box to tick for EU. payments; with examples of mowing right in the middle of the nesting season, spray-drift affects visible and routine, while others doubled up as footpaths, heavily trampled upon and strewn with dogs' shit. It is highly doubtful whether things would've changed over the years either, along with any other government policy, it's best not to get your hopes up.

3) Meadow Management: A good meadow should be left strictly alone throughout the spring and summer, while in the autumn and winter it should be nibbled to within an inch of its life; (see attachment Keep Meadows Special Campaign).

4) Rolling: It's difficult to imagine a more pointless or destructive practice than rolling fields throughout the spring and summer; crushing insects and smashing up birds' eggs as they go. And yet, and for whatever reason, wherever there are grassy fields, it goes on.

5) Ponds: At the moment frogs are having to spawn in puddles on farm tracks or in flooded tyre marks and it's a national disgrace. It would be so easy for each farmer to go out there with a JCB. and dig two or three well positioned ponds and they don't even need to be that big. Anywhere that's spring-fed would be ideal. It's a problem that could so easily be put right and with such little effort.

6) Wind-Farms: RSPB. policy – THE FINAL DEATH-NAIL (see attachment Zero Carbons, the options).

7) GMO. Crops: June of 2013 the government expressed an interest for expanding UKs. production of GMOs. So far the industry has shown very little concern about what properties they were intending to breed into their crops. The green part of the potato, which incidentally is highly toxic, is just one which currently being researched. The reason given that it would require less pesticides to produce the crop. On the surface this seems to be fair enough that is until you consider the crop you'll be eating would be toxic in itself. They didn't mention too there's now a GMO. oilseed rape you can spray unlimited amounts of herbicides on without killing it; rather flies in the face of the former claim doesn't it.

8) Ash Die-back: This disease is now here with a vengeance with thousands of trees dying everywhere. Hopefully, there will be some trees that survive that might well go on to naturally produce disease resistant strains; that's evolution and it worked well enough before we came along. Everyone will doubtlessly be out there with chainsaws in their droves, the tragedy is however that dead trees are good for wildlife.

9) Lay Off the Hedges Campaign: Yet another unnecessary and damaging practice happening in the countryside these days is hedge-failing. Every section of hedge, once layered, should be left to take on its own form and character, offer as much shelter and habitat potential as is possible as well as providing the maximum numbers of berries and insects, and all this can hardly happen if a hedge is sliced to pieces on a regular basis. Hedge-failing might well be the commonly accepted, good-hedge policy in the modern countryside of today, but I believe it to be very misguided and yet another major reason as to why it is we have so few birds left in the UK. All the effort that goes into this every year and for no gain whatsoever; the destruction of insects and berries for birds to feed on, as well as the decimation of Brown Hairstreak Butterfly numbers.



British Farming at its Best: Above we see a very poor attempt at hedge laying in the first place which has since been allowed to be completely nibbled off by sheep. This photograph was taken in September and by that time the new regrowth would have been higher than the fence behind, but instead of a vigorous newly laid hedge, we now have a row of dead sticks. This example, although bad is not uncommon, with others littering the countryside, and no doubt grants would be paid for this kind of work.

The idea of hedging is to create aesthetically pleasing, livestock-proof barriers, but more often than not, hedges are laid with some very glaring faults:

- a) The above example, with no protective fencing to prevent sheep-nibbling; it is also essential that the stems, known as a pleachers, are not laid completely horizontal as we see here, this leads to the kinking of the connective strip, which prevents the sap from rising.
- b) Nylon string is all too often used for tying down and securing hedges these days.
- c) We often see inappropriate species like Hazel being kept to form standard trees instead of say Oak, Ash or Holly etc.
- d) Non-native species like Sycamores are generally worked into the hedge whereas they could be ring-barked out to make more room for the natives.
- e) Some examples are so flimsy and look like they might be blown over in a high wind while others are worked where the trees have a six to eight inch diameter trunks at the base. Struggling with hefty material like this is completely unnecessary. Far better to fell the entire hedge, non-natives like Sycamores should be left standing and then ring-barked, the appropriate number of standards should be left remaining (groups of trees left and other sections cut out altogether allows for less uniformity) and then to have a good twelve years of regrowth to develop before finally going ahead with the hedging.
- f) Always work within the appropriate season (Oct-March). I have seen hedges worked as late as May.

Principles dictates they should be well worked, properly structured and organic; you certainly shouldn't have great strands of nylon string littering a site. Hedges should be well built, they should never just be thrown together haphazardly.

10) Dead Wood: There's an overwhelming need for more dead wood in the countryside, both as standing trees as well as log piles. Hole nesting birds, hibernating amphibians, Hornets, Stag Beetles and fungi all require massive amounts of dead wood for their very survival. And again, and far from helping, Defra. in its undying wisdom, have come up with their 'wood burning initiative' as an incentive to encourage land-owners to cut down their trees for household burning. Coppicing is undoubtedly beneficial for all kinds of plants and insects too, but this scheme was very poorly thought through and allowed for no provisions for dead wood other than a handful of twigs occasionally scattered around as an afterthought; so typical with what they would come up with of course. Moss-covered logs, those that would have laid on the forest floor for many years and would have picked up all kinds of insects larvae in that time, are often used too. Anything the governments comes up with is always going to be a disaster, it really is what that do best. It never was about conservation, it was always about profit and 'what landowners aim to do' as they always like to describe it.



11) The Farm Dump: This is one such dump you'll commonly find in the countryside; leaves, branches and other organic debris left in a heap. These cause no problems at all in fact, so long as they're not dumped on top of a valuable botanic site, and can actually do a lot of good by providing habitat and shelter. It's what so often comes with it that causes the problems and as you can see this one is no exception. Plastic crates, plastic chemical containers, plastic boxes and plastic bags; basically all things plastic. It's not as if there aren't fortnightly recycling collections, but no, it all ends up on the dump.

There are certain basic rules and principles when it comes to dumping; anything organic and natural, or any of those trace elements we naturally have in our bodies such as iron, copper, zinc, magnesium and chromium etc., glass even, although sharp fragments can create problems of their own of course. Things like asbestos, heavy metals and plastics, also any aggressive rhizomes such as knotweed roots should be separated and left out. The dumping of all of these things is nothing less than fly-tipping.

One of the worst things you can do incidentally, is to have a dump, leave it for a few years and then to set fire to it. This creates the perfect deathtrap for all kinds of creatures which is why you should always have 'recognised' log piles.

12) Liming: Lime has to be quarried and the liming of fields is a chronic waste of resources.

13) Moles: Below is a service for those who have a total intolerance for species living on their land, basically it's for people who need to get a life. Fortunately many landowners are far more accommodating when it comes to sharing space with their fellow species but there are still plenty of those who are not. Moles, if you like, are the forgotten mammal. There are Badger groups and groups for everything else, but the poor old Mole has to manage all by himself. They get treated worse than rats by some but really do such little harm.

Mole Catcher Carmarthen, Aberystwyth, Llandysul, Ceredigion

The mole catcher covering your area is

Jason James

You can contact Jason James on

Tel: 01570470660
Mobile: 07538537133

Alternatively you can email Jason James using the button below

Organisation/Business:
ceredigion mole control

We are traditional mole catchers living in Ceredigion. We offer a fast and effective mole control service and have a traditional 'no mole no fee' policy, which means if we don't get rid of your mole you don't pay a penny.

14) The problems of alien invasive species: Defra's answer is to produce nice little booklets without ever doing very much to either deal with those already here nor indeed to prevent new arrivals from entering the country. Before going on, let's read the relevant clips sent to us by the Animal Health Corporate Center, an Executive Agency of Defra.

Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)

Animals subject to CITES may need a licence. To obtain a licence or to find out if an animal is subjected to CITES contact Defra's Global Wildlife Division on 0117 372 8170 or fax 0117 327 8206 or visit www.ukcites.gov.uk

The animals listed below have no specific requirements for EU trade:

Invertebrates (includes insects, spiders and molluscs);
Amphibians (includes salamanders, frogs and toads);
Reptiles (lizards, snakes and crocodiles).

These animals can be imported with a self-certificate from the owner. The certificate must state that the animals, at the time of dispatch, show no obvious signs of disease and that the holding of origin was not subject to any animal health restrictions

Currently, there is no limit on the number of pet invertebrates that an owner can bring into the UK.

Currently, there is no limit on the number of pet amphibians that an owner can bring into the UK.

Head Office: Animal Health Corporate Centre, Block C, Government Buildings, Whittington Road, Worcester WR5 2IQ corporate.centre@animalhealth.gsi.gov.uk Animal Health is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
www.defra.gov.uk/animalhealth

And so, these are the current laws that are in place. To be fair they are EU. regulations, so I guess we can't take all the credit.

- a) Animals subject to CITES. only may need a licence.
- b) In order to validate reptiles, amphibians or invertebrates entering the country, you can do this with a self-certificate, needing no more than a declaration of what they are written by yourself on a sheet of paper.
- c) There are no limits on the numbers of the latter two categories you can bring in either.

And so with import laws like these, there's no wonder we have alien imports of all kinds all over the place; basically anyone can bring in what they like. In the past, admittedly a long time ago, someone decided Grey Squirrels would look rather nice on one of their estates, and so we now have Grey Squirrels in the UK.; someone else wanted to breed Mink to adorn fashionable ladies with furs, and now we have Mink; we had Signal Crayfish bred to supply the restaurant businesses, and now we have infestations of the things right through our river systems; children wanted Terrapins as 'must have accessories' for their Ninger Turtle games back in the Eighties, and now we have Red-eared Terrapins and finally a green-house owner using Six-spot Ladybirds as pest control decided, for what ever reason, that this wasn't good enough and brought in some monster from the Far East, and now we have Harlequin Ladybirds. All of this doesn't even include the catalogue of species brought over as accidentally, and the list really does go on and on and on. Anyway, you get the picture, and all of it down to lack of care or to serve the whims of some misguided no-brainers.

You would think a government, with such 'commitment for conserving our native species,' would see fit to outlaw such practices, but as we've seen on the above list of regulations, it is in fact openly encouraged. And now, on top of all this, we have Skunks in the UK. A Skunk breeder on the BBC. One Show, 2012, I didn't even know we had such a person over here, telling listeners if there's a Skunk you don't want, to take it along to an animal shelter and let them deal with it and not to release it into the wild. Good advice on the face of it, but the fact is, he was the root-cause for bringing them over here and breeding them in the first place and it was like he was the authority sorting the problem out. And like animal shelters don't have enough to deal with in any case.

Here is a cross-section of some of the worst cases:

Grey Squirrel: It is commonly assumed that with Greys you simply don't get Reds and that's the end of the problem, but it's a good deal more complex than that and there are probably scores of examples which are neither known about nor documented. The Common Dormouse is known to be badly effected, as too is the Hawfinch, a magnificent finch with a massive bill. All of the old bird books describe the Hawfinch as common, and yet within my lifetime I can't recall ever seeing one in this country. But go over to Germany, where there are no Grey Squirrels, and walk around their parks and cemeteries, and there you will see Hawfinches. I should stress however that this was over forty years ago and in those days we had Turtle Doves, Cuckoos, Bullfinches and Linnets in abundance here in the UK.

Grey Squirrels are now in Europe

In sixty years grey squirrels are predicted to colonise the western Alps, the internal hilly system in Piedmont, and the area along the Ticino river from Switzerland to the confluence in the Po river. In this phase of the project does not consider the expansion in Switzerland. Between 2060 and 2080 the two populations will join and then the expansion will continue in all Piedmont, part of Liguria and western part of Lombardy. The model predicts a maximum of 7,513 sub-populations totalling over 2 million individuals in the year 99. The fluctuations in population size between years are small until year 30 and then increase progressively. This is related to the annual changes in tree seed crops that were modelled. Population size remains under 1 million in the first 70 years, and then increases to 2 million in year 95, with a large fluctuation in number, and a drop to 750,000 animals in some years as a result of simulated poor seed years.

Source European Squirrel Initiative

Mink: Ravenous predators of native wildlife (please see article of how this species might be dealt with on page 14).

Skunk: Sightings have been made around Gloucestershire. Consequences unknown.

Rats, Black and Brown: Not great anywhere outside of their native S.E. Asia. Islands with populations of Rats however are particularly vulnerable because they are totally out of commission for all subterranean seabirds such as Puffins, small Petrels and Shearwaters etc., until such time as the problem can be sorted out. The RSPB, fortunately, has a long-standing a policy of dealing with infestations. Scottish Natural Heritage, 'guardians of Scotland's tremendous natural heritage,' on the other hand, has a policy of protecting them on most of their island reserves.

Sika Deer: Known to interbreed and genetically interfere with our native Reds, causing all kinds of problems, and yet we have those who very misguidedly encourage them. As much as I respect the work undertaken by the National Trust, they do have a policy of protecting them on their land.

Little Owl: An introduction from mainland Europe and does no damage at all throughout most of the UK. On offshore islands however they do eat large numbers of Storm Petrels and far from doing anything to resolve the problem, most reserve wardens seem to protect them. As far as I'm concerned, if it's a toss up between an endangered native species and an import, I know where allegiances should lie.

Canada Goose: The trouble with some species is they simply take up a lot of room that could support natives. It's an inoffensive enough bird but they are very territorial and they do drive out native birds, they also crèche their young and as a result they are better placed to ward off Mink attacks. With both Canada Geese and Mink becoming more and more numerous the problem is very serious.

North American Ruddy Duck: Migrates from here down to Southern Europe where it interbreeds and genetically interferes with the White-headed Stiff-tail. A reasonably effective government led control was implemented over here.

Red-eared Terrapin: Causing all kinds of problems; not least sitting on and submerging grebe nests.

Red-clawed Signal Crayfish: Ravenous feeders of aquatic life, known to eradicate all kinds of natives (please see article of how this might be dealt with on page 14).

Harlequin Ladybird: Feeds on various native insects to the point of wiping them out.

New Zealand Flatworm: Kills our own native Earthworms. Brought over here as a soil-borne pathogen courtesy of New Zealand's tree fern trade.

Cotoneasters, various species: Bird-sown garden escapees, covering many of our limestone areas while our own native one in N. Wales is endangered as a result of this and overgrazing. Even the RSPB's wildlife gardening advice recommends them as a source of berries for birds. Unfortunately they fail to say how you can then stop these birds from crapping all over the countryside.

Japanese Knotweed Control: Operations currently undertaken by local councils are in reality little more than a public-relations exercise. They spray the leaves around mid-June; the plant then dies back only to reappear again as large as life the following year. They've been doing this for the past 40 years and if there were any seriousness about what it was they were doing, they would need to cut them down in the autumn and then inject herbicide into the stems. At that time of the year the sap travels back down to the roots and with only a few applications whole plants could be eradicated in a few years. They would need to gain access to any neighbouring land in order to do a proper job however.

Rose-bay Willowherb: Taking over vast swathes of habitat. The reintroduction of the Wildboar might well help to control it.

Himalayan Balsam: Taking over vast swathes of waterside habitat (please see article of how this might be dealt with on page 15).

Spanish Bluebell: Given the absolute mayhem this plant causes for our own English Bluebells, we need a law in place that prohibits the growing of this plant, and enforcing what's more. There are already laws that prohibits the cultivation of cannabis and this could easily be extended to include Spanish Bluebells.



If you have these interlopers in your garden or on your land please get rid. These are Spanish Bluebells from which bees carry pollen and genetically contaminate our own English Bluebells.

15) Scavenging: This is something that's been brought into question in recent years, seen by many politicians and animal welfare authorities as being somehow unsavoury. Cleaning up corpses however has been going on since the beginning of life itself and indeed has always played a monumental role in keeping the planet healthy, and yet they assume, in their arrogance, that scavenging is somehow less than desirable. Dead animals were once dumped into ravines or simply went unnoticed on the high mountain slopes, now, under EU. laws, all dead livestock must be incinerated in order to comply with regulations. Vultures can consume anthrax and remain in good health and they are well adapted to their way of living. Our only contributions have been to cast unfounded doubt as well as to add the drug diclofenac into the mix. Here in the UK. we don't have Vultures but we do have Kites, Buzzards and Ravens and many others besides; they all need to scavenge and will do an excellent job what's more.

When writing to Defra. on this matter, their reply was that Southern Europe was not within their remit. However, the UK., as an EU. member, does have a voice and a vote, which, along with Spain, was used very forcibly to have certain pesticides reinstated as legal products throughout Europe once again. But on the issue of starving Vultures, it seems is not within their remit, damn well not interested more like.

16) National Trust Farms: I've been looking around some of these farms, not far from where I live, and I have to say that the management in these places is no different from most of the other farms in the area. The hedges there are flailed just the same, the hay-cutting is carried out at the same time of the year, and so what is the difference? They could take a good read of our attachment on 'Keep Meadows Special Campaign' and get involved with some real management. To me it shows a lack of imagination to do anything else. I did write to them on this but they never got back.

17) Wild Boar Cull: I wrote to the Forestry Commission concerning its involvement with culling Wild Boar and their reply was, 'Defra. announced their national policy for managing Wild Boar, which makes it clear that local communities and landowners will decide the future of populations.' And don't they just love it. Defra. gives them some indication of a green light, and they're out there with the guns. The system stinks and they're around 200 years behind the times. Such nasty, sick in the head arrogance in charge of looking after the countryside. Our predecessors exterminated this species out of ignorance, and this self same ignorance is rife in their thinking today.

18) Lead-Shot: A ban is currently being considered by Defra. The Wildfowl & Wetland Trust spokesperson said on a TV. interview however that they wouldn't necessarily welcome an outright ban. We ourselves on the other hand would request nothing less and would want it banned on principle; it's difficult to imagine a more irresponsible action than broadcasting lead-shot all over the countryside. We wrote to WWT. on this issue and they sent us couple of links below. All of it makes very good reading, but gives no indication of their position:

<http://www.wwt.org.uk/issues/conservation-policy-briefing-on-lead-gunshot/>

<http://www.wwt.org.uk/news/news/2013/07/wwt-news/wwt-news-conservation/lead-shot-poisoning-latest/>

The Lead Ammunition Group, the group overseeing proceedings, was convened by Defra. and is made up of the following organisations: British Association for Shooting and Conservation, Country Land & Business Association, The Gun Trade Association, National Game Dealers Association, Universities Federation for Animal Welfare, Countryside Alliance, Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust, Institute of Environment and Health, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust.

I've been onto the sites of some of these groups and they really are awful people. They talk about conservation this and conservation that, they want to broadcast lead-shot all over the place, they want species they don't actually kill any more to remain on the quarry-list and their views on wind-energy are truly terrifying. These people enjoy killing, they care about conservation but have absolutely no idea of what they're talking about and they're living on the wrong planet if they think they have any conception about saving the natural world.

19) BASC welcomes Welsh Government's decision on Greenland White-fronted Geese: The UK's. largest shooting organisation, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), has welcomed the Welsh Natural Resources' Minister, Alun Davies' decision to continue a voluntary moratorium on the shooting of Greenland White-fronted Geese rather than removing them from the quarry list; I only found this out by going onto their site. 'Making use of wildfowlers' considerable knowledge,' rather than re-listing was seen as the preferred option. I understand a petition was organised shortly after we made this globally known.

20) The Machair Project Update: It has come to our notice that a cull is taking place of the Grey-lag Goose on the Machair, Uist. This population is the pink-billed race and is a much wilder bird than the semi-domesticated, orange-billed race you'll find on the Norfolk Broads and elsewhere (both races are incidentally perfectly native). This race is Britain's only truly wild resident goose and it is far too important to even be considered for a cull. I heard an RSPB. spokesman talking about the Machair a few months earlier, mentioning then about 'controlling' the geese. On hearing that I wrote to them and asked what species of goose they were talking about and what methods were being used to control them. They never answered my first letter but eventually sent me a load of old flannel about using bird-scarers. I can however confirm that a cull of native Grey-lag Geese, conducted by Scottish Natural Heritage, 'guardians of Scotland's tremendous natural heritage' no less, is taking place and that the RSPB. was compliantly lend-

ing support and involved in a cover-up. For years now they've concealed population declines, and more worrying still the reasons for those declines, and now we have yet another grubby example of their deceit. They really are very undignified and are untrustworthy to the last.

21) In a report by State of Nature, 22nd May 2013, there was an acknowledgement that things are not so great as we all thought they were (please type in state of nature rspb for details).

'UK nature is in trouble – that is the conclusion of a ground-breaking report published today by a coalition of leading conservation and research organisations.'

'Scientists working side-by-side from 25 wildlife organisations have compiled a stock take of our native species – the first of its kind in the UK. The report revealed that 60% of the species studied have declined over recent decades. More than one in ten of the species assessed are under threat of disappearing from our shores altogether.'

More than a year on and what's happened? Not much!!! With no real acknowledgement as to what the problems are, things are unlikely to improve any time soon.

22) The Disappearance of Sandeels around Shetland and Orkney and the effects this is having on the local seabird populations. This subject has been dealt with on our other paper (please see A Case Against the RSPB.).

Both the RSPB. and Greenpeace once campaigned against the Danish Sandeel fisheries but then both suddenly pulled out; as I remember it was all about very sordid deals with the Sandeels losing out. While these excuses for campaign organisations stand around and ponder, things are really suffering out there.

23) Blue-fin Tuna: The UK. and Germany have indicated their interest in the demise of this species. Both governments have in the past issued arrest warrants against those who were working to save this species from extinction.

24) Wolves and Bears, the ultimate reintroductions: Alladale Est. in Ross & Crom., Scotland seems the most promising place. They've not been brought over here yet but hopefully, over the next decade or so, this might happen. They do have European Bison and European Elk and I suppose, with any will and determination, we could eventually have these others too.

The loss of species courtesy of Defra., industry and the RSPB. Full List

Red-throated Diver, Black-throated Diver, Little Grebe, Black-necked Grebe, Slavonian Grebe, Great Crested Grebe, Grey lag Goose, Shelduck, Teal, Gadwall, Wigeon, Pintail, Garganey, Shoveler, Pochard, Tufted Duck, Scaup, Common Scoter, Smew, Red-breasted Merganser, Goosander, Osprey, Honey Buzzard, Goshawk, Sparrow Hawk, Golden Eagle, Sea Eagle, Hen Harrier, Montagu's Harrier, Marsh Harrier, Peregrine, Hobby, Merlin, Kestrel, Black Grouse, Grey Partridge, Quail, Common Crane, Water Rail, Spotted Crake, Corncrake, Moorhen, Coot, Great Bustard, Oystercatcher, Ringed Plover, Little Ringed Plover, *Kentish Plover, Dotterel, Golden Plover, Lapwing, Dunlin, Common Sandpiper, Ruff, Curlew, Whimbrel, Black-tailed Godwit, Redshank, Greenshank, Woodcock, Snipe, Avocet, Red-necked Phalarope, Stone Curlew, Great Skua, Artic Skua, Stock Dove, Turtle Dove, Cuckoo, Barn Owl, Long-eared Owl, Short-eared Owl, Nightjar, *Wryneck, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Swift, Swallow, House Martin, Sand Martin, Sky Lark, Wood Lark, Yellow Wagtail, Grey Wagtail, *Red-backed Shrike, Savi's Warbler, Marsh Warbler, Grasshopper Warbler, Garden Warbler, Wood Warbler, Pied Flycatcher (within range), Spotted Flycatcher, Whinchat, Nightingale, Ring Ouzel, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush, Fieldfare, Redwing, Marsh Tit, Willow Tit, Starling, Corn Bunting, Yellowhammer, Cirl Bunting, Reed Bunting, Twite, Linnet, Lesser Redpole, Bullfinch, Hawfinch, Tree Sparrow and House Sparrow.

Hedgehog, Lesser Horse-shoe Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat, Whiskered Bat, Brandt's Bat, Daubenton's Bat, Natterer's Bat, Bechstein's Bat, Pipistrelle, Leisler's Bat, Noctule, Serotine Bat, Barbastelle Bat, Long-eared Bat, Otter, Red Squirrel, Water Vole, Harvest Mouse and Brown Hare.

*UK. Extinct.

Underlined. Those that were once common but today are hardly found anywhere.

We always tell everyone not to believe us but to make their own mind up. Any one of the above are the real indicators of any success that might be happening in the countryside and the lack of all of these species paints a much bleaker picture than any of the authorities will tell you. We have a countryside that's not fit for purpose, three UK. extinctions and an abysmal void of nothingness everywhere we care to look.

The things you need to know when counting birds:

It is important to recognise and understand your birds and to always make positive ID. There are some, it has to be said, who mistake female Blackbirds for Song Thrushes or even some, Blackbirds for Starlings etc. These are extreme cases but it can and does happen, but that aside the ones on the list here are what you should be looking out for if you want to register what's happening. Some always were rare, while others were once common and used to see every day, and it's the latter that for me are the best indicators of what's happening.

Just look around out there for Lapwings, Turtle Doves, Song Thrushes, Bullfinches and Linnets, they should be around but simply are not. You may think there are still plenty of birds in your gardens, and that may be true, but this is because those species we have left, ie. those still as yet unaffected by the various policies have actually increased to fill the ecological void left by the loss of so many others. Who'd ever had thought Starlings would've had to 've been added; summer birds are now non-existent in most parts of the UK. while the winter birds are becoming thinner on the ground too. And the same is true of House Sparrows found in some parts but absent from many others. Defra. will tell you everything's fine while the RSPB. will try and have you believe things are not so bad but the birds and the insects are saying otherwise. The absence of so many species speaks for me that things are far from fine and for so many species to be disappearing things have to be very wrong indeed.

Mink and certain other alien species, and how we might best deal with them:

One of the biggest threats facing many species in the countryside right now is Mink, which is largely why waterbirds have featured so prominently on the list for many years. Populations have varied considerably depending on Mink densities in any given location and a way I think things could be improved enormously is to have a well thought out waterways' action plan. It all sounds a bit grand and fanciful but it would be only a slightly involved and not an altogether overly complex thing to achieve. It is known that

Otters predate heavily on Mink, so much so in fact that Water Voles often follow in the wake of Otter recolonisations; and so by cleaning up our rivers and generally improving the habitat for Otters on a monumental scale, I believe we could easily turn things around for the benefit of everything living on our waterways. I'm sure they would eat large numbers of Red-clawed Crayfish too; certainly if anything could sort them out it would be them.

By banning certain pesticides and taking care of nutriment run-offs from sewage, slurry and other out-flows, by vastly improving habitats by planting many more riverside Willow, Poplar and Ash pollards, building large log-piles all along the rivers and by allowing proper meadows to flourish throughout the floodplains (see Keep Meadows Special Campaign), we really could make one enormous difference which in turn would sort out many of the problems we have. Everything would win, cleaner water, varied habitats of log-piles and gnarled roots and properly managed meadows. Disturbance too is bad; Otters hate it whereas Mink seem immune. Footpaths hugging the riversides for too long and anglers especially create massive Mink safe havens, albeit unwittingly.

Himalayan Balsam: This is another problematic species that's taking over vast stretches of waterways. Some albeit pretty basic research has shown that Beavers will eat this plant and that reintroductions may well help to control it. It is an annual plant and so it's seed prevention, ie. finding something that eats it before it seeds, will certainly help. Although the tests have shown Beavers did indeed eat this stuff, whether they would necessarily gravitate towards it with the competition of all the other food available remains to be seen.

Concluding:

We live in a countryside that's relentlessly nibbled, trimmed, manicured and sanitised to within an inch of its life, with alien invaders all over the place, and now added to this we have some of the most bizarre looking structures imaginable that species are having to negotiate. With all of this and we wonder why we're losing species at the rate we are.

Listed here are the words of the various governments. 'We regard safety as paramount,' 'the government's doing more than ever to protect our wildlife,' 'committed to conserving our native species,' 'the success of conservation measures' and let us not forget those 'robust safeguards' regarding the use of pesticides. With statement after statement after meaningless statement, the endless drivel continues to spiel. So exactly what is the government doing to protect our wildlife and what does it all mean? Despite all of these fine words and assurances, we have population crashes that have occurred and still are occurring right across the country, we have a countryside that's not fit for purpose and a decided lack of imagination of what really needs to happen. The plain fact is they simply do not care enough and are doing nothing to put anything right.

In a summary we have discussed matters like pesticides, the inadequacies of those grassy strips which surround crop fields, the nibbling and general bad management of meadows, lack of ponds, wind-farms, GMOs., the terrible mismanagement of our hedgerows, lack of recognised mini-habitats such as log-piles, a disregard for life in so many cases, alien invasive species, the unnecessary clearance of dead livestock, unnecessary culls, lead-shot, an absolute lack of imagination for putting things right, terrible commercial fishing policies and on top of all of these they have zero policies for the reintroduction of extinct species. All in all they haven't got a bloody clue.

None of this is any big deal either. We have written a detailed inventory of exactly what the problems are, as well as producing the species list. Simply by banning certain pesticides, digging a few ponds, not flattening birds' nests, allowing threatened plants to seed once in a while, by not slaughtering the hedges each and every year, and by not placing the most inconceivable looking obstacles in the way of our birds, bat and fish, this would make all the difference between the survival of these lifeforms or not. A few

minor adjustments just for starters and things would at least be given a chance. Those of you who have been with us for the long-haul, will be well aware of the battle we've had with Defra. concerning its commitment to the Biodiversity Action Plan the UK. signed up to well over twenty years ago. This should have meant, giving them say a decade of feet-dragging and generally sorting things out, things being finalised over ten years ago, instead things have only gotten worse.

As if not affronted enough by the lack of any progress, some time ago now Defra. announced a new '50 year visionary plan' they were planning to unleash. It was like it was some new master-plan all of their own to actually get the countryside in a state of good health and repair once again, whereas it was in fact yet another delaying tactic of five long decades further into the future. I saw through that one straight away and was very successful at getting it shoved in the dirt where it belonged. Wildlife simply doesn't have the time to fuck around while governments and conservation groups get their acts together.