



PR UPDATE October 2015



Welcome to our latest newsletter - we hope you all had a successful season.

This month our attention has focussed on local and regional media liaison, specifically around the Surrey area. Our thanks to Peter Harwood who agreed to be interviewed for a press release. More about this press coverage later...

Much of our activity this month was focussed on the issues surrounding the television programme, The Yorkshire Vet, and working with Raptor Alliance to establish the facts and liaise with various parties which were involved. This investigation is still ongoing and we continue to offer support and advice to Raptor Alliance.

In addition, the Law Commission's report on the review of wildlife law and draft Bill was published on 10th November.

Click the link to read more:

<http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/project/wildlife-law/>



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Regional activity:

< We have been liaising with Surrey media regarding Pete Harwood's case study. The Surrey Advertiser will be featuring this story in November.

< Woking News and Mail featured this story on the 22nd October.

We are still on the look out for people to interview for the media. If you have a story you'd like to share with us, please do get in touch:

jessica@voicecommunications.co.uk

01206 332110

We still require pigeon fanciers from across the UK, so we'd be delighted to speak to you if you are willing to be interviewed.

Tradition in danger of dying



A SEND resident believes a traditional pastime is on the brink of extinction.

Seasoned 'fancier' Peter Harwood says the future of pigeon racing is threatened, with numbers participating in the hobby dropping dramatically.

He says that 'raptor attacks' on racing pigeons by sparrowhawks and peregrine falcons are increasing and, as a result, the pastime could disappear by 2030.

Despite these struggles, many dedicated fanciers still remain in the South East, Peter among that number.

Circling

A fancier since the age of 10, his pigeons have been plagued by hawks over recent months, resulting in many of them being too scared to fly.

Peter endures almost daily attacks on his loft and this year alone he has lost seven pigeons.

Some days there can be as many as five predatory birds circling in his garden, waiting for the pigeons to be released so they can feed on them.

Even if Peter's pigeons are not killed, non-fatal attacks are still



BIRDS OF A FEATHER FLY TOGETHER - will you back the petition?

extremely distressing for them. Frightened by the birds of prey, the pigeons panic and often fly into objects, and the attacks regularly leave them with tails and feathers missing.

Peter said: "The situation has become a nightmare. Pigeon racing is my passion and it has been since I was a young boy. However, I cannot cope with these almost constant attacks. Seeing

my pigeons being eaten alive is truly heartbreaking - I spend a lot of time caring for these birds so seeing them attacked and killed is horrendous."

He has since called for intervention, adding: "If this historic pastime is to continue in the UK, something needs to be done. Pigeon racing has a rich heritage, including the use of pigeons in both World Wars, yet today it is

on the brink of extinction." Racing pigeons form close bonds with their owners and the birds offer company, affection, comfort and, above all, fun. Pigeon fanciers treat their birds as pets, looking after them with great care.

The birds are the only domestic animal to enjoy complete freedom on a daily basis and naturally compete and race every time they are released from their lofts.

Consequently, attacks by predatory birds can greatly affect pigeon fanciers.

Safeguard

Lee Fribbins, representative of Pigeon Racing UK and Ireland, added: "It is important that the tradition of pigeon racing is kept alive in the UK. This is why it is so important to have the cooperation of other people, helping us to track any pigeons that may have gone missing or are deceased."

"We want to encourage more people to take up the hobby, whilst lobbying for the protection of our birds to safeguard the tradition for future generations."

●SIGN the petition by simply going online to change.org and searching 'Pigeon Fanciers'.



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DON'T FORGET!

Don't forget to follow us on Twitter for regular updates and coverage.
@RaptorAlliance

Our petition currently has 1,653 signatures but we need another 849 to reach our target of 2,500! Make a difference and sign and share our petition which is live on Change.org

https://www.change.org/p/pigeon-fanciers-we-need-you-to-help-change-the-law-to-protect-our-pigeons?recruiter=268976331&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=share_email_responsive

WE NEED YOU!

As part of our lobbying campaign, we need as many of you as possible to speak to your MP. You could make a real difference to the campaign and by speaking up, you are helping us get one step closer to our aim.

For more information, please visit:

<http://www.rpra.org/raptor-alliance/>

