

A better way...

It is simply not necessary to kill wild animals and birds. The mouse in the garden and the squirrel in the attic are merely searching for food and shelter, and invariably present no problems for us. However, where there is a concern, we can seek advice from a humane deterrence expert (call Animal Aid for details) instead of calling in the pest controllers.

Our lives are richer for the wild animals and birds who cross our paths, and those individuals – who are merely trying to feed, survive and rear families – deserve our tolerance and respect. We can help them by meddling less in their lives and protecting their habitats as best we can. By respecting individual animals, rather than attempting to regulate whole species, true biodiversity will flourish.



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**With Extreme Prejudice:
the culling of British wildlife**

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Wildlife in danger



Millions of wild animals and birds are shot, poisoned, bludgeoned or killed in body-crushing traps every year.

Many 'reasons' are given for these massacres but, when examined, they turn out to be little more than excuses. Often, the true motives are intolerance, financial gain, personal prejudice or a misguided attempt to 'manage' wildlife.

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Intolerance, Greed and Excuses...

Animals and birds – including foxes, badgers, hares, squirrels, moles, seagulls, geese and raptors – are routinely persecuted simply because their lives bring them into contact with people. They are killed for living in what is left of their fast-dwindling habitat or for adapting to a landscape that is changing rapidly. They are killed because they are considered noisy, messy or unsightly. But most of all, they are persecuted because they pose a financial threat or are simply an inconvenience to industries and 'sports', such as shooting, sea fishing, angling and animal farming.

Case Study: Grey squirrels

Grey squirrels were introduced to Victorian Britain and released into the wild, where they have thrived ever since. Some of the charges laid against them are that they carry a virus, which is fatal to red squirrels, and aggressively oust them; they have an impact on woodland bird numbers; and they destroy young trees.

It is true that grey squirrels fare better than their red cousins in the landscapes we have created over the past 170 years. But when red squirrels were numerous, they too were persecuted as pests and were killed in their tens of thousands. While grey squirrels do carry a virus, red squirrel numbers were periodically decimated by disease long before the arrival of the greys, and they also suffered as a result of deforestation and severe winter weather. By the eighteenth century, red squirrels were virtually extinct. Grey squirrels did not arrive until the nineteenth century.

In 2010, the British Trust for Ornithology published results of a study that showed that grey squirrels do not have a significant impact on woodland bird numbers.

Some trees may be killed by squirrels – both red and grey – eating the bark. That is nature!

Case Study: Badgers

Although they are a 'protected' species, badgers have been killed in their thousands in an attempt to appease the farming industry. Cases of bovine tuberculosis (bTB) in dairy cows have risen dramatically in recent years, which has led to a reduction in milk yields. While there are many reasons why bTB has increased – many of them linked to the filth, stress and neglect associated with intensive farming practices – farmers scapegoat the badger as a 'wildlife reservoir' for the disease.

There are many more diseases and conditions that kill far larger numbers of dairy cows. While 25,000 cows were culled due to bTB in 2010, 90,000 cows are culled each year due to mastitis, another 31,000 due to lameness and 125,000 due to infertility. No wild animal can be blamed for these conditions. Perhaps that is why they are downplayed.

A decade-long trial badger cull in Britain, which cost taxpayers an estimated £50 million and in which 11,000 badgers were killed, demonstrated that badger culling does nothing to eradicate the disease. Despite this, badgers are still being culled.