

Dear Editor,

I have been appalled, but sadly not surprised, by the coverage that the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) has received this week.

The continued lauding of 'The Glorious 12th' is disgusting to many people who object the unnecessary pain of animals for the purposes of recreation.

But it should also be increasingly concerning for those working to combat climate change and in protecting the environment more generally.

Let us be very clear, despite the claims that have been published this week, the management of grouse moors for shooting is very damaging to the environment.

We need to face facts. We are living in a climate emergency and we are increasingly seeing extreme weather here in Yorkshire.

Research published earlier this year by the University of Leeds found that burning grouse moors degrades peatland habitat, releases climate-altering gases, reduces biodiversity and increases flood risk. Thank goodness an increasing number of landowners are banning the burning of peat.

Far from protecting biodiversity on our moors, the shooting industry is leading to the loss of biodiversity in favour of one species – the red grouse.

The grouse hunting industry is linked to the mass killing of potential grouse predators such as foxes, weasels, stoats, crows and ravens, often in traps and snares that also trap many other non-target species, wild and domestic.

Then, there's the illegal shooting of rare and protected birds of prey. The Times have recently published about the illegal shooting of a rare owl near the 19,500 acres Leadhills Estate in Scotland – one of many such stories up and down the country – coincidentally many happening near land used for grouse hunting.

There is nothing glorious about privileged people shooting birds for enjoyment, then trying to justify it as 'job creation' and 'social cohesion' or even worse, environmental protection.

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