



PIGEON RACING UK & IRELAND  
**RAPTOR ALLIANCE**  
PROTECT OUR PIGEONS AGAINST RAPTOR PERSECUTION

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Date: July 2015

From: Pigeon Racing UK & Ireland (Raptor Alliance)  
Unit G5, The Seedbed Centre  
Wyncolls Road  
Colchester  
Essex  
CO4 9HT

Dear

We are writing to you on behalf of Pigeon Racing UK & Ireland (Raptor Alliance) as we have pigeon fanciers living within your Constituency.

Since 1981 and the introduction of the Wildlife Act, attacks on homing and racing pigeons by raptors (such as Sparrowhawks and Peregrine Falcons) have increased markedly given the subsequent growth in their numbers. Predation of racing pigeons has grown to such an extent that it now threatens many fanciers enjoyment, of what is seen as an iconic traditional British sport, on a countrywide basis.

Previous enquiries regarding the issuing of licences via DEFRA and Natural England, to remove individual problem raptors, have been unsuccessful. Our understanding, following receipt of legal opinion and meetings with Natural England, DEFRA, ministers and others, is that Natural England are unable to consider an application to control a bird of prey specifically to protect homing and racing pigeons. This is due to the restrictions contained within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which was written and passed into law at a period in time when raptor numbers were markedly lower than the present day.

We have a glimmer of hope. The Law Commission has now completed its considerations of various wildlife laws, including the 1981 Act and we are hopeful that its eventual passage through Parliament will finally deliver the protection we seek for our sport and its members. The conservation aims of the original 1981 Act have been achieved and the balance needs to be redressed to ensure our sport survives.

The amended law would allow pigeon fanciers to make individual license applications to remove problem raptors from their specific loft. The amended law does not allow for a wider ranging class license nor do we seek one. Each application would have to be evidence based and will be judged on its merits, by Natural England, as required by the amended act.

In summary, we would ask for your support of the draft bill, as proposed and submitted by the Law Commission, as its contents will finally deliver our historic sport of pigeon racing a degree of protection from attack by raptors.

We have enclosed some information regarding our sport and this campaign. We would request a meeting at your earliest convenience with a representative of our sport who will be a pigeon fancier living within your Constituency. To facilitate this could we ask that you contact us at the above postal address or via email to the following address - [shazi@btconnect.com](mailto:shazi@btconnect.com)

Yours sincerely

Sharon Ayling  
Secretary for Pigeon Racing UK & Ireland (Raptor Alliance)