



PR UPDATE



October & November 2015

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

Over the past two months 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...

On Tuesday 20 October Channel 5 aired The Yorkshire Vet programme which featured a falconer, Mr Potter, wearing a bracelet made from pigeon racing rings. Understandably, this angered a number of pigeon fanciers. On behalf of the Confederation Voice we were asked to liaise with Mr Potter regarding the programme's content, specifically the bracelet and the origin of the rings.

The rings originated from members of a local pigeon club. Mr Potter immediately issued a written apology which has been printed in the fancy press previously and has assured us that he is deeply sorry for any upset or stress which he has caused to pigeon fanciers.

Mr Potter returned the bracelet to the pigeon club that had originally provided him with the deceased pigeons. We have confirmed this has taken place and that the bracelet has indeed been returned to the club therefore the matter is now closed.



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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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Congratulations to the National Gamekeepers Organisation, who has won a landmark legal battle on behalf of one of its members, after a Judicial Review at the High Court in London quashed the decision of Natural England.

Natural England refused to issue a National Gamekeepers Organisation member with a licence to control a small number of buzzards that were causing serious damage to young pheasants in his care.

This is of course great news for pigeon fanciers as the court's judgment has established that in order to be lawful, wildlife decisions must in future be made fairly and based on the facts.

The media has recently mentioned Prince George's love of pigeons! The RPR has sent him a stuffed toy pigeon to play with.

Hopefully his grandmother will take him on a tour of the Sandringham lofts soon!





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Regional activity:

< We have been liaising with Surrey media regarding Pete Harwood's case study. The Surrey Advertiser featured this story on 6 November.

< Woking News and Mail featured this story on 22 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 1,662 signatures but we need another 838 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/>

MPs

We've had 55 replies from MPs who are interested in speaking with pigeon fanciers. Don't forget to lobby your local MPs and explain the issues you are facing!