

**PRESS RELEASE**

**14 August 2018**

## **SMG STATEMENT ON RSPB SCOTLAND MOUNTAIN HARE STUDY**

The Scottish Moorland Group has issued the following response to an RSPB Scotland study on mountain hares.

A spokesman for the Scottish Moorland Group said: "This research is very much out of kilter with other respected research on mountain hares. [As recently as October 2017 Scottish Natural Heritage reported to the Scottish Parliament that evidence of a national decline in mountain hares since the mid-1990s is not conclusive.](#)

"This latest research also flies in the face of what estate owners and land managers see every day on the ground - that hare populations are very high.

"We are perplexed that the author of this report did not seek to get data from moorland managers. It should be remembered that mountain hares are only culled when the populations are sufficiently high and culls only control a very small percentage of the population. Culling, which covers a range of activity from shooting for food to habitat protection, is legal and is conducted under a code of practice agreed by the moorland sector.

"We support the approach of [Scottish Natural Heritage which has recently published research to progress the methods of counting mountain hares.](#)

"It will, however, come as little surprise that RSPB Scotland has chosen to release this paper, continuing its political campaigning against grouse moor management, on the day that the season gets underway and it is obviously an attempt to influence the ongoing independent review of grouse shooting which includes mountain hare management."

**ENDS**

**SNH research on hare counting:-**

<https://www.nature.scot/snh-research-report-1022-developing-counting-methodology-mountain-hares-lepus-timidus-scotland>

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The Scottish Moorland Group is part of Scottish Land & Estates, a membership organisation for landowners, rural businesses and rural professionals.

Scottish Land & Estates promotes the wide range of benefits land-based businesses provide: tourist attractions, leisure facilities and landscapes enjoyed by the public, as well as, housing, employment, tourism & enterprise and farming opportunities.

For more information, visit [www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk](http://www.scottishlandandestates.co.uk)