

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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Dear Constituent

Thank you for your email about driven grouse shooting and the upcoming debate in Parliament.

I understand that many people have strongly held views about this subject. I too want to see a vibrant, working countryside enhanced by a diverse environment. While there are no current plans to carry out a review of the management of grouse moors, I recognise that it is vital that wildlife and habitats are respected and protected, and that the country's conservation laws are observed, which are among the toughest in the world.

It is important to recognise, however, the conservation and economic benefits that shooting sports bring to rural communities. It is estimated that shooting as a whole is worth about £2 billion a year to the economy, much of it in some of our remotest communities, and supports thousands of jobs.

Finally, it is worth noting that all wild birds are protected from illegal killing by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Raptor persecution, including of hen harriers, is a national wildlife crime priority and there are strong penalties in place for offences committed against birds of prey, as well as other wildlife. I know that most wildlife crimes carry up to an unlimited fine and/or a six-month custodial sentence.

I am pleased that Ministers will continue to work to ensure a sustainable, mutually beneficial relationship between shooting and conservation.

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

*Yours sincerely
Peter Gibson*

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

Constituency Office: 34 Duke Street, Darlington, Co. Durham, DL3 7AQ Telephone: 01325 711711

Email: peter.gibson.mp@parliament.uk Website: www.petergibson.org



