



## Visit Scotland but don't kill our hares

### Letter-writing campaign

**OneKind is calling on VisitScotland to stop using public money and resources to endorse recreational mountain hare killing. You can help us by writing to Malcolm Roughead, CEO of VisitScotland and Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop.**

Each year, tens of thousands of mountain hares are killed across Scotland. Some are killed as part of localised culls on shooting estates and others are killed for sport. Mountain hare hunting is huge commercial business in Scotland, and hunters come from all over the world to shoot our one of our native animal. Many estates across Scotland offer bespoke hunting packages of mountain hare or mixed bags which include mountain hare.

OneKind calls upon VisitScotland to stop promoting recreational mountain hare killing, and specifically to:

1. Stop hosting advertisements on its website or promoting in any way businesses that offer recreational hare-killing, as identified in the OneKind report
2. Provide no more public money for Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group (SCSTG) until it ends promoting and hosting advertisements for businesses that offer recreational hare-killing
3. Withdraw VisitScotland endorsement of the SCSTG, and specifically their use of the VS logo throughout their communications, until SCSTG stops promoting recreational hare killing.

### What is VisitScotland doing?

On 1<sup>st</sup> August, OneKind released a report titled [Mountain hare persecution in Scotland](#), which exposed the full extent of persecution, and, for the first time, the role that commercial hunting of mountain hares continues to play.

The report names 25 companies advertising mountain hare hunting in Scotland. One of these, Mirani Hunting, advertised directly on the VisitScotland website. Eight of the 25 companies are promoted by [www.countrysportscotland.com](http://www.countrysportscotland.com), a website that is supported by VisitScotland. In response to our report, VisitScotland removed Mirani Hunting from its website. However, VisitScotland continues to support recreational hare killing through its support for the Scottish Country Sports Tourism Group (SCSTG). The SCSTG portal – [www.countrysportscotland.com](http://www.countrysportscotland.com) – lists VisitScotland as partner on its website its logo features throughout. VisitScotland also awarded the SCSTG at least two grants worth over £36,000 in the past 5 years.

### Key points you might like to raise

- Mountain hares are native to Scotland. They are a conservation priority under EU, UK and Scottish law.

- 40% of mountain hares killed in Scotland is for sport. This is estimated to be in the region of 10,000 hares each year.
- It is not appropriate for a Government agency to use public funds and resources to promote the large-scale killing of mountain hare when the Scottish Government has conservation obligations for the species.
- Scotland should be promoted as an ecotourism destination, not one that welcomes and encourages the recreational killing of one of our native wildlife.
- Hunting is a minor part of the tourism economy in Scotland, and it is in direct conflict with nature-based tourism that does not involve killing animals. A study commissioned by Scottish Natural Heritage estimated that peaceful nature-based tourism has a total annual economic impact of £1.2bn in Scotland. This compares to field sports, which were estimated to be worth £136mn, the majority of which is from angling.
- VisitScotland may have a duty to be impartial to who it promotes, but that doesn't mean they should endorse an activity that undermines our reputation as an animal-loving country and our obligations towards a native species.

### How can you help

Please write to Malcolm Roughead, the Chief Executive of VisitScotland, and Fiona Hyslop, Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs in support of our campaign. Their contact details are below.

- Malcolm Roughead, CEO of VisitScotland, Ocean Point One, 94 Ocean Drive, Edinburgh, EH6 6JH [malcolm.roughead@visitscotland.com](mailto:malcolm.roughead@visitscotland.com)
- Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Tourism and External Affairs Fiona Hyslop, The Scottish Government, St. Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh, EH1 3DG  
[CabSecCTEA@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecCTEA@gov.scot)

Please could you also let us know if you've written to Malcolm Roughead and Fiona Hyslop? It will help us keep track of who has been written to. You can also send copies of any letters you receive to [sarah.moyes@onekind.org](mailto:sarah.moyes@onekind.org) or Sarah Moyes, OneKind, 50 Montrose Terrace, Edinburgh, EH7 5DL.