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Working for wild Birds of Prey and their Habitats

Press Release

The Hawk and Owl Trust (HOT) has resigned from Environment Council's Hen Harrier Dialogue process: President of HOT, Wildlife presenter Chris Packham calls for a firm stand against the persecution of birds of prey.

The Hawk and Owl Trust, as the last pro-raptor body participating in the discussion group the **Hen Harrier Dialogue process**, set up by the Environment Council back in 2006 to bring together those with an interest in the future of the Hen Harrier in England, have decided to leave the Dialogue process.

The Trust cite the lack of any progress or willingness of the grouse moor owners and their representatives to recognise the existence of raptor persecution in any meaningful way; despite solid scientific evidence to prove lethal persecution exists. This type of persecution is illegal under British law yet is widespread to this day. See the case of young female Hen Harrier 'Bowland Betty' in Note 6 below.

The Hawk and Owl Trust are joining fellow conservation organisations, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) who left the dialogue last summer, and the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF) who left recently for the same reasons.

Nearly seven years of dialogue and numerous meetings have resulted in the appalling fact that, due to persecution, 2012 saw only one breeding pair of Hen Harriers in the whole of England, despite the habitat being available for some 300 breeding pairs.

As President of HOT, wildlife presenter Chris Packham speaks out on behalf of the Trust:

"The Hawk and Owl Trust feels that it is completely unacceptable for any bird of prey to be killed – and should remain absolutely illegal" says Chris. "It is time for all who want to make Britain a better place for birds of prey to take a firm stand."

Cont/

President | Chris Packham
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Patient dialogue has failed, so HOT will be joining other conservation bodies in looking for other more effective ways to end the wholesale slaughter of our birds of prey and the Hen Harrier in particular. The illegal persecution of birds of prey must stop and those with a commercial interest in grouse moor shooting must be made to put their house in order.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. Hawk and Owl Trust Conservation Officer for the South West Chris Sperring 07799 413 918 or Nigel Middleton Conservation Officer for the East **07867 572 794** are available for comment.
2. More images and interviews available on request from Lin Murray **07881 657 944**.
3. **The Hawk and Owl Trust**
Founded in 1969 to help save the peregrine, the Hawk and Owl Trust is a national charity which now works for the conservation and appreciation of all wild birds of prey and their habitats – both in its own nature reserves and in partnership with others. Working with other organisations, farmers, foresters and landowners, the Trust researches, restores and manages nesting, roosting and feeding habitats and encourages greater understanding and appreciation of these very special birds. www.hawkandowl.org
4. **The Hen Harrier Dialogue process**
Started back in 2006 by the Environment Council with the aim of bringing together 'stakeholders'/those with an interest in Hen Harriers, to try to find a way forward in the conflict between the Hen Harriers and those with commercial and recreational grouse moor interests.

Bodies now represented on the Dialogue process include: British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC); Countryside Alliance, Country Land and Business Association; Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust; Moorland Association; National Gamekeepers Organisation.

The conservation bodies that have left the Dialogue process are Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), Hawk and Owl Trust (HOT) and Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF).
5. **Environment Council**
<http://www.the-environment-council.org.uk/projects/nature/natural-areas/hen-harrier-dialogue-documents/>
6. **Evidence to prove raptor persecution exists**
<http://www.britishbirds.co.uk/news-and-comment/cutting-edge-science-used-to-reveal-raptor-persecution>

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