

Re: PHEASANTS IN THE NEWS Shooting ban on the agenda

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From: Robert Seago (*rjseago_at_zetnet.co.uk*)

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I came back to this as I didn't have time the other night.

While I agree with most of your points below, I disagree to a large extent about your chief inference.

In article <7NVR7SWrdrtBFwBm@port995.com>,

Oz <oz@farmeroz.port995.com> wrote:

> Robert Seago <rjseago@zetnet.co.uk> writes

>>

> > *I had meant that a farmer pursuing profitable farming in the present
> > climate, if left alone from interference, would bring back systems with
> > attractive rare species. This I think would be impossible*

> *In the present climate unlikely, yes.*

Possibly

> *In the climate of the mid 80's to mid 90's, it was happening.*

I remember the 80's as the time when SSSI's had effectively no protection. A landowner was required to consult for some months, 3 I believe. After that unless English Nature bought them out, which I don't think they ever did, and they were not funded to do so, then a landowner could do anything. I personally witnessed the drainage and ploughing of the Halvergate Marshes in Norfolk. Examples were many. That was the time of incredible loss on a national scale of our best wild areas IMV. Much of that was for the reasons you give later.

> *Businesses tend to have a particular form and a particular pattern.*

> *1) Birth – survival the utmost priority.*

> *2) Adolescence – growth becomes the priority.*

> *3) Middle age – security becomes the priority*

> *4) Old age – surpluses used for non-commercial needs.*

> *Of course each step requires the earlier ones are still meeting
> requirements.*

> *You see this with the victorian industrial barons, the cadbury's and
> rowntrees being the best known. They spent lavishly on their staff.*

- > *You saw it in farming for the well established farms in the 80's, the*
- > *essex hedgeplanting, pondmaking and wildlife area explosion being quite*
- > *well documented. Even we (a very new farm) were planning similar eco-*
- > *areas which I have discussed in uba.*

- > *In the current climate, though, everything is on long-term hold because*
- > *survival is clearly the number one thing to be concentrating on. Further*
- > *government regulations have ossified any attempt to remove land from*
- > *farming and move it to eco-areas.*

I accept that the present is one of unknown directions. I can understand you thinking this way.

- > *The first was the realisation that regulations on trees meant that a*
- > *felling license would only be given (and then only after great effort)*
- > *if replanting was enforced. That is plant a tree and the consequence is*
- > *long-term sterilisation of that land. The solution, do not plant any*
- > *more trees.*

I remember the debate about whether we should compile a register of SINC sites, now known as COWS (County Wildlife Sites) because landowners would remove them for the reason you say.

- > *The second was the realisation that any eco-area was likely to get a*
- > *preservation order slapped on it, which was effectively confiscation by*
- > *the government. This has been extended by regulations controlling*
- > *(essentially preventing) the removal of hedges and (lately) ploughing up*
- > *permanent grassland. Its also clear that this sort of legislation will*
- > *continue and become even more draconian.*

I think that would be a new precedent. I don't believe any new SSSI's are being declared, though possibly some of the new fens being created, like Lakenheath might well qualify in a few years. As it is the criteria for declaring SSSI's is very rigorous. We have a small hay meadow, which is one of the tiny remaining ones in the whole of Essex, but it is not a candidate for protection, because of the demanding conditions of EN. Last year it started to be used for car boot sales when its previous owner died.

As for the draconian bit, that seems to have gone. EN used to nag about the law concerning SSSI's but had no money, no teeth.

Now they give rewards for land being in favourable condition, and don't do penalties, unless you know different.

- > *As a consequence I for one am most unlikely to make any eco-areas or*
 - > *plant any more trees and we will continue to conceal any wildlife of*
 - > *interest I have on the farm. The latter has been in force for some*
 - > *decades anyway to reduce the chance of poaching or egg-hunting.*
- To be honest, there are plenty of trees being planted now, in the countryside. Fens Downs and Heaths are receiving more attention than ever, so I don't think farms need to do that sort of thing particularly.

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- > *One bright spark in the loss of my dairy unit because of planning*
- > *decisions is that I now have no grassland, its all ploughed up.*
- > *Ecologically, I am not happy about this, but its demanded by government*
- > *and is a direct consequence of their actions.*

The loss of livestock and mixed farming is a very significant problem, but economics drives that. There is virtually no livestock farming here. Dairy farmers sold up their quotas to the western part of the country ages ago. So we have few Swallows. The west have loads.

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Regards from Robert Seago : <http://www.users.zetnet.co.uk/riseago>