

*Support for different types of wildlife management is related to underlying human values*

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Disagreements between people over wildlife management and conservation are widespread and often lead to conflict. Such conflicts are notoriously difficult to resolve, especially when the differences in identities, values and worldviews held by the people involved are ignored. In this study, we focused on the persistent conflict between hunters and conservationists over the management of red grouse and hen harriers in the English uplands. Long-term ecological studies have shown that predation by hen harriers and other birds of prey, can reduce the number of grouse available to shoot and this lessens the economic viability of driven grouse shoots. Consequently, hen harriers, although protected under UK legislation since 1952, are killed illegally on private grouse moors. Drawing on work conducted in psychology, we investigated the underlying values that hunters and conservationists hold. These values can be viewed as qualities of life that we hold dear and which influence our opinions and behaviour. Our study revealed that those affiliated to shooting organisations hold values in line with human mastery of nature, whilst values held by advocates of avian conservation correspond to wildlife being on a more equal footing. These differences in values were reflected in the types of management interventions they supported. People from shooting organisations supported all, including the most invasive management technique proposed. Conservationists supported monitoring and protection measures. Our findings highlight the divergent values that underpin this conflict and make it so hard to resolve. Positions on different sides of the debate are polarised, reducing the chances of finding shared solutions. We argue that changes in these positions are more likely to emerge through investment in strong deliberative processes that are focused on building trust through co-management and supported by government. However, while hen harriers continue to be killed illegally, it seems likely that key organisations will continue to pursue an adversarial focus.

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