



29 July 2025

Dear Mr Lambert,

On the 24th July 2025, we posted a media release entitled "Hen Harrier chicks fledge with RSPB support after suspicious loss of parents". This prompted the following public statement by the Moorland Association sent to the BBC by your Chief Executive, to which the RSPB was subsequently asked to respond – in particular to the allegations of "hate speech":

"This is not journalism, it is slander, the repetition of unproven, unverified smears by an organisation that year in year out refuses to publish the number of birds it has on its reserves. The RSPB has its fundraising agenda, our job is to prevent the assaults on gamekeepers which occur on average every 12 days, fuelled by the RSPB's hate speech. The media also needs to recall the times when the RSPB has reported birds as having been illegally killed which have then turned out to be still alive."

Whilst we accept that the RSPB and the Moorland Association have points of disagreement on some issues, we think that this response to our press statement is completely unwarranted and goes well-beyond the standards of reasonable public discourse. We note that the Moorland Association itself have also signed a statement calling for "zero tolerance" towards raptor persecution, so this response to a positive story about Hen Harrier chicks surviving against the odds, seems particularly aggressive.

We firmly rebut any allegation that the RSPB engages in "hate speech", or that highlighting what we and many others consider to be a serious conservation issue has a fundraising purpose. We were pleased to note that the BBC did not publish these elements of your response.

As you know, the RSPB advocates for grouse shooting to be licensed. We believe that this approach would ensure that long-standing issues around illegal raptor persecution to be addressed, whilst enabling law-abiding sustainable shoots to continue.

We ask that you investigate our complaint about this recent public statement by the Moorland Association. We look forward to hearing your response with a view to fostering more acceptable public commentary, and therefore more constructive relations in the future. In the past we have met formally at the Chair and CEO level of the two organisations and would be happy to do so again, as I have let your CEO know in the past.

Yours sincerely,

Beccy Speight

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The RSPB is part of BirdLife International, a network of passionate organisations, working together to save nature across the world.

Patron: His Majesty The King **President:** Dr Amir Khan **Chief Executive:** Beccy Speight

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