



THE FACTS OF RURAL LIFE

Why we need better wildlife management

CHARLIE PYE-SMITH

There is scarcely an acre of Britain which is truly wild. Farming, forestry, hunting, water extraction and urbanisation have all had a profound effect on our flora and fauna. Top predators such as brown bear, lynx and wolf have been lost and as a result many of their prey species no longer have any natural enemies. At the same time, other species have been introduced, frequently with disastrous consequences for livestock, crops and our native wildlife. Think, for example, of grey squirrel, mink, muntjac deer, rabbits and rats.

This prompts a fundamental question: who is responsible for managing wildlife? Some people maintain that everything should be left to nature. But if that were to happen, many species would become increasingly rare, or even extinct. Others – and *The Facts of Rural Life* makes the case – believe human beings, having so profoundly altered the environment, must take full responsibility for managing wildlife.

Charlie Pye-Smith's new book makes the case for the need for better wildlife management. It draws on extensive research in the field and interviews with scientists, farmers, conservationists, vets, gamekeepers, huntsmen and others involved in the study and management of wildlife, and it addresses many of the crucial conservation controversies of our time. It also exposes the consequences of ill-thought through legislation.

The Facts of Rural Life provides a valuable resource for politicians, the media and anyone genuinely concerned about conservation, animal welfare and the future of Britain's countryside.

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