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Animal Concern Advice Line (ACAL) is a recognised Scottish charity: No. SC030982.
Animal Concern Advice Line was established in 2001 to take on the charitable work of Animal
Concern which was founded as the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society in 1876.
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Wildlife Crime Division & Firearms Admin Centre,
Police Scotland

Dear Sirs,

I write concerning the shooting of geese on Islay under the Islay Goose Management Scheme.

I recently received, from an anonymous source, video footage of Management Scheme "marksmen" shooting geese. We understand the marksmen are employed by the Scottish Government through SNH.

I do not have full details of where and when the videos were filmed but believe the three short videos are of one incident and the longer video of another. One incident was in February and the other in March last year. The video footage has not been made public until now.

I do not know the names of the shooters but have been told one of the men employed by SNH is known to the police following an incident in an Islay bar when he mimed a shooting gesture towards a wildlife tour operator which resulted in his shotgun certificate being suspended. If there is any truth in that story I assume your Islay office will have a record of it.

From my viewing of the videos and of still photographs which accompanied them, I believe the Animal Health & Welfare Act (Scotland) 2006 is being broken as the shooters deliberately shoot to injure rather than kill and therefore knowingly cause the geese unnecessary suffering.

In the videos you will see the technique being used. One shot to raise the birds and then, using semi-automatic shotguns, as many shots as possible in as short a time as possible in a bid to bring down as many birds as possible. Shooters are also seen firing at birds which are too far away to be killed.

Shooting to injure is an accepted practise by SNH and the members of the Islay Goose Management Scheme who describe it as “crippling”. SNH claim 10% of shot birds are “crippled” but both videos show a crippling rate of at least 60% and this does not include those birds injured but able to fly off. The shooters also seem inept at dispatching injured birds as several are still moving after the shooters attempt to wring their necks. Other injured geese are not dispatched at all and escape into the long grass to suffer a slow, painful death from their injuries. Four of the still photographs show geese found dead the day after one of the shooting incidents. INTRO FROM ACAL:

As well as possible breaches of animal welfare legislation I ask you to determine if shooters who deliberately shoot to injure, discharge weapons at targets which are too far away to be killed and fail to humanely despatch injured birds are competent enough to hold shotgun certificates or firearms licences. As I am not sure which office deals with Islay I have copied this e-mail to both Glasgow and Highlands & Islands Firearms Admin Centres.

The link below will take you to the relevant page on our website. If you have any problems accessing the videos and pictures please let me know.

Yours faithfully,

John F. Robins,
Secretary to ACAL

<http://www.adviceaboutanimals.info/newsjanuary2019article1.html>