



## Helping the Brown Hare in North Wales



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### As a farmer or landowner, you can help the future of Brown Hares in North Wales.

The sight of Mad March Hares boxing on a misty morning is one of the magical sights of Spring.

But when did you last see this?

#### Did you know?

- In the UK the Brown Hare has been declining since 1945. In North Wales, hares are widespread and mainly found on pastoral land. However, they would benefit from mixed farming.
- Hares are distinguished from rabbits by their long black-tipped ears, loping gait, long limbs and larger size.
- Hares can move at speeds of 45 mph!
- Breeding season is between February and September with up to 4 litters per year for a female hare. Each litter may contain 2-4 leverets.
- A high proportion of leverets are lost to predation.
- Hares are mainly nocturnal and feed on grass shoots, cereals and leaves.

#### What is affecting the Brown Hare in North Wales?

- Changes in farming practices eg. silage cutting and spring to autumn sown cereals.
- Intensification of grazing, cropping, harvesting and chemical spraying.
- Increase in foxes, who are a major predator of leverets.
- Hare coursing may be a problem.

### What you can do to help

**DO** rest pasture to allow a variety of herbaceous plants to develop. Hares are fussy feeders and prefer a 'patchwork quilt' landscape to stay in peak condition.

**DO** run mown grass strips across open arable fields, instead of alongside hedgerows where predators may lie in wait. These will provide summer grazing.

**DO** leave some areas, such as banks and ditch sides ungrazed on livestock farms to allow tall grass to develop for hares to have quiet, undisturbed cover to raise leverets.

**DO** cut the field from the centre outwards during silage making. This enables hares and other wildlife to escape the machinery.

**DO** contact your local authority to discuss help and possible funding for projects such as fencing, boundary work etc.

**DON'T** use herbicides such as paraquat – they are known to kill hares.

**DON'T** shoot hares in late winter – a February shoot can remove 60% of the breeding stock.

**DON'T** top pastures during the hare breeding season if possible. Young leverets use the tufts for protection.

**Send your sightings to and for further information, please contact:**

