# Private Eye controversy highlights ecological concerns over mass pheasant releases



Last month, the satirical magazine Private Eye published a full-page advertisement placed by Wild Justice, drawing attention to the annual release of 50 million non-native pheasants into the UK countryside. This figure highlighted what Wild Justice described as an "absurd" ecological practice. The advert was one of three that Wild Justice had planned and paid for to appear in the magazine, with a second scheduled for the following edition.

However, without prior notice or explanation, Private Eye withdrew the remaining two adverts shortly after the first had been published and refunded the publication fees to Wild Justice. This unexpected decision sparked significant online discussion and led to what has been referred to as a Streisand Effect, wherein attempts to suppress information resulted in increased public attention.

In the edition following the withdrawal, Private Eye included three letters from readers addressing Wild Justice and its directors, including a contribution from the deputy director of communications and public affairs at the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC). These letters primarily criticised Wild Justice, but notably avoided engaging with the issue of the large-scale release of non-native pheasants itself. Observers suggested that these responses appeared to be reactive, prompted by discomfort at having the practice publicly scrutinised.

Despite this, the latest edition of Private Eye has featured further letters from supporters of Wild Justice, continuing the dialogue around the initial advertisement and its subject matter. Additionally, the magazine’s editor provided a partial explanation for the withdrawal of the second and third advertisements. He stated, "The decision was taken purely because we felt the advertisement blurred the line between advertising and editorial. And we did not want to continue with this…". Critics of this rationale note that if this was the concern, it might have been expected to preclude acceptance of the first advert, rather than prompt removal after its publication, particularly following reactions from pro-gamebird shooting organisations.

Overall, the issue of mass releases of non-native pheasants into the UK countryside has gained notable visibility across multiple editions of Private Eye, drawing public attention to a practice that had not been widely scrutinised in this context.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://wildjustice.org.uk/general/private-eye-is-blind-to-the-facts-about-pheasants/> - Confirms Wild Justice's placement of adverts in Private Eye and the magazine's unexplained withdrawal of the second and third ads.
2. <https://wildjustice.org.uk/gamebird-releases/private-eye-and-unpleasant-pheasant-facts-2/> - Demonstrates Wild Justice's continued efforts to publicize the issue after Private Eye's withdrawal, including placement of one ad in The Big Issue.
3. <https://raptorpersecutionuk.org/2025/04/04/private-eye-pulls-wild-justice-adverts-causing-streisand-effect/> - Details the initial advert's impact and the Streisand Effect resulting from Private Eye's removal of subsequent ads.
4. <https://raptorpersecutionuk.org/2025/04/27/private-eye-explains-sort-of-its-reasons-for-pulling-wild-justice-adverts/> - Documents Private Eye's partial justification for withdrawing ads ('blurring advertising/editorial lines') and subsequent reader letters, including BASC's response.
5. <https://bsky.app/profile/arjundevamar.bsky.social/post/3lkslaigkqk2a> - Shows early public engagement with Wild Justice's awareness campaign via Private Eye, corroborating the advert's initial publication.
6. <https://wildjustice.org.uk/> - Primary source for Wild Justice's campaign details (implied context - base domain hosts all referenced materials though specific URL not provided in results)
7. <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiuAFBVV95cUxOb1EzVEZPTTJCY2dla0dWRnozcTF1ZW5iRXFrR1ZnbnBvOHcyaTZnUXRSWmNTdG9OcDZLaFBhNzh2dk4wQWhtTXZ2U3ZILXNlNzFHT2NKNXlXLUViOUFRV2w5WFIwbmxLN1pmYUZKZlVfT0NSQTlBU3I3RDh6eXV6dnExWVhuRWRjeUoxcTdxM01hM2ROX3BicFY3Zk1aZ1FtWmF1dVlaSWJTa1l1b3dreVNxYl83ODds?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data