

'Bring back wolves and golden eagles': Conservationist's bold vision for North Wales

Suggestion by conservationists to reintroduce wolves and golden eagles slammed by farming body as a 'dangerous fantasy'

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Wild wolves have not been found in Wales for more than 400 years

Wolves and golden eagles should be reintroduced into parts of North Wales, a senior conservationist said.

Justin Albert, director of the National Trust in Wales, told a gathering at the Hay Festival he was also keen for wind turbines to be built on National Trust land, but agreed that they should be kept out of Snowdonia, the Cambrian Mountains and the Brecon Beacons.

The suggestion has angered farmers who fear the safety of their livestock, especially lambs, could be at risk if wolves and eagles are reintroduced onto Trust land.

The Daily Post: Our view

A Farmers Union of Wales spokesman said: "We have received a number of calls from National Trust tenants and are outraged by Mr Albert's comments.

"They are extremely worried that silly ideas of this nature can easily gain traction amongst those who do not have to suffer the consequences of those ideas.

"The release of eagles and wolves would be a major problem, not just for sheep and lambs but also dogs, which wolves attack and kill as they are territorial.





National Trust Wales director Justin Albert

“And who would pay the compensation once the Trust’s coffers were empty or they started refusing to pay or admit liability for damage caused by an animal they released?”

“The idea is a dangerous fantasy.”

He added: “The onus should be on protecting what we have, including mundane animals and plants which might not be as sexy as eagles or wolves but still need looking after.”

“Mr Albert’s comments have prompted talk of establishing a Welsh National Trust Tenant’s organisation which we’d be happy to help facilitate.”

Mr Albert is reported to have said: “Farmers may be worried about golden eagles snatching their lambs, but I would give £100 to each farmer that it happened to. I just don’t believe it will be a problem.”

Mr Albert’s comments follow similar “rewilding” suggestions made by journalist George Monbiot, who lives near **Machynlleth**.

Hill farmers reacted angrily to Mr Monbiot’s comments, and he acknowledged he did not have the support of the farming community.

Last month, **a wild golden eagle was sighted over Ruabon moor near Wrexham** by two bird watchers.





Golden Eagle

It is thought to be the first reported sighting in Wales since 1990.

Wild wolves have not been found in Wales for more than 400 years. The last reported sighting was in the Vale of Ffestiniog near Maentwrog.

A police officer driving on the Denbigh Moors about 30 years ago is believed to have killed the last wolf in the region.

PC Cyril Jones hit the animal when it ran into the road. It turned out the wolf had escaped from a zoo.

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