

Local group “deeply saddened” by badger cull decision

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The local group opposing the badger cull in Pembrokeshire has vowed to fight on following the Welsh Assembly's confirmation this week of an extensive programme of badger extermination in West Wales over the next five years. Pembrokeshire Against the Cull (PAC) says it is “deeply saddened” by what it calls “an absolutely senseless massacre of our wildlife”,

Celia Thomas, a spokesperson for PAC, stated “This is a decision based on political expediency and prejudice. It ignores much of the science, disregards the conservation community, and is dismissive of an impending Judicial Review. We are deeply saddened that local landowners who cherish their wildlife are now forced into opposing their own government to protect it”.

North Pembrokeshire is an area of outstanding wildlife value. It is a shame our perceived natural boundaries have been chosen as the reason for the cull. There are many more landowners here that do not see farming as justification to play god in the countryside. It is fallacious to suggest that the majority support the cull, we haven't had a vote on it. Only 350 farmers have been consulted and I am not aware that all of those have been asked directly whether or not they support the cull, they might have co-operated with Animal Health but this should not be taken as support for the cull! Our records show a lot do not! How many more non-farmer residents are there who will be affected? There has been no public meeting to date for us to air our views.

It is just not known how many cases of bTB are a result of badger to cattle transmission, we do know that the infectious agent can survive many months in the soil and in slurry. Even Christianne Glossop ([WAG chief Veterinary Officer](#)) questioned by PAC, admits the vast majority of bTB infection is cattle to cattle transmission.

Assembly officials are quoted¹ as wanting to reduce the badger population “as far as we can”, we believe this is an attempt to exterminate not cull. Elin Jones says it is “not appropriate” to publish a map of the nearly 300 km² cull area, why not? They quote New Zealand as an example of successful control of Possums also implicated in bTB, there were 7 million non-native possums in New Zealand a wildlife disaster and this research also suggests vaccination should be the way forward rather than culling for the Eurasian badger a native species!

What is clear is that trapping and shooting badgers will result in cubs being left to starve even with a late spring start. Caged badgers will either be shot in situ or removed elsewhere. Other species will be caught accidentally and likely disposed of too. Who will be doing this? Landowners do not know yet what exactly will be entailed but this will all take place in the tourist season. Pembrokeshire will lose it's clean, green image forever!

PAC would like to stress that many landowners have contacted PAC appalled at this proposed invasion of their private land to kill Badgers. PAC is in the process of forming a confidential list and map of these landowners within the cull area. PAC can support landowners who oppose the cull, and will be in the vanguard of protest to this decision. The PAC website is www.pembrokeshireagainstthecull.org.uk, please visit this to register your opposition to the cull or call 07827 586033.