

## **SOAC Part 8 - Dogs**

Having a dog as companion can enhance your enjoyment, but taking access with dogs is a big issue for land managers, other access users and wildlife. The latter is especially an issue at this time of year being bird nesting season. Many birds nest on the ground in the mountains, of which a number have declining populations or are rare and endangered. A campaign was launched by Scottish Natural Heritage to raise the understanding of the issues among dog owners and promote responsible access with dogs. The title is '*Your dog doesn't know any better. Make sure you do.*' It is based around three dog characters and aims to persuade dog owners across Scotland to use the code to protect their natural environment. Land managers are keen to support this campaign too as poorly controlled dogs can be harmful to farm animals, as well as disturbing wildlife, alarming other people and even be a danger to the dog owner themselves. Remember not all people are doggy-people and a barking dog running towards you, unless you "speak dog language" can be very intimidating, even if the owner is shouting "he's only being friendly, he won't bite." Due to the number of potential issues with dogs, the Code is fairly detailed in its explanation.