

HUNTING WITH HOUNDS - POLICE THE BAN

In 2002 hunting with hounds was banned in Scotland. In 2005 England & Wales finally followed suit. It is now illegal to deliberately use any type of dog to chase and kill foxes, hare and deer. It is **NOT** illegal to use dogs to flush out foxes or other animals to be shot by waiting guns. Hare coursing (chasing hares with greyhounds or lurchers) is now illegal.

The "Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002" proposed for the Scottish Parliament by Lord Mike Watson MSP, banned organised, mounted fox hunts and hare coursing. It does not stop farmers using dogs to flush out foxes and then shoot them. It should stop people and packs of hounds chasing foxes for many miles before the exhausted animal is ripped apart. If you see anyone using dogs to kill foxes, deer, badgers or any other animal then please dial 999 and call the police. There is every chance you have witnessed a criminal act.

The Scottish Justice Minister has told us that hunts will not be monitored to ensure they stay within the new law. Police forces claim they do not have the resources to monitor hunts. Strange when only a few years ago they could send out van loads of police officers and the police helicopter to monitor hunt saboteurs.

SNARES, TRAPS AND POISON BAITS

Although hunting and killing with dogs has been banned there are still many other ways in which land owners and their gamekeepers persecute our native wild animals and birds. Poisoning most wild animals and birds is illegal as are most types of trap apart from some snares and Larsen bird cage traps. Animal Concern believes all types of leg or neck-hold traps and snares are cruel and should be banned. If you see any please note the position as exactly as possible and contact us with a description or, if possible a photograph. If you are out in country why not carry some wire cutters? If you see an illegal snare you can cut it.

Larsen traps look like large wire boxes. A crow or other decoy bird is put in the cage and other birds come into the trap through a funnel-like entrance. Once inside they cannot escape and are shot by the keepers. We would like to see, at the very least, a ban on the use of these traps during the nesting season as dead parent birds leave broods of chicks to starve to death. If you find a Larsen Trap do not touch it but contact us with as much info as possible.

Contact us also if you find dead birds of prey anywhere or if you find a rabbit or sheep carcass with dead birds or foxes nearby. Poison baits will often have dead insects on or around them. **DO NOT TOUCH** any suspected poison bait and keep pet dogs away from them. *Some of the poisons used illegally are lethal to the touch.*

DEER CULLING

Because of the greed of some landowners the number of deer in Scotland has grown out of control. We do not oppose culling so long as it is done as humanely as possible by expert guns. We are totally opposed to the new practise of killing heavily pregnant hinds during what used to be the close season. We also want to see serious consideration given to the use of alternatives such as contraceptive implants.

ILLEGAL BLOODSPORTS

Sadly even bloodsports which have been illegal for decades are still carried out in the UK. Early in 2005 we received information about a massive dog fighting tournament held just a few miles from Glasgow city centre. Cock fighting also goes on throughout the country. If you have any information on these illegal "sports" please contact us or the police.

CHANGES TO THE LAW

Write to your MP and MSP asking that all snares and leg/neck hold traps are totally banned and that the use of Larsen Traps be made illegal between March and July. Request that close seasons for deer and all other animals be properly adhered to so that young animals are not left to starve to death. Ask also for changes in the law to make landowners legally responsible for the actions of their gamekeepers.