

Hunting with hounds **the facts**

The case for keeping the hunt ban

The **Keep Cruelty History** campaign run by the League Against Cruel Sport aims to present the case against repealing the hunt ban.

The League Against Cruel Sports says that hunting with hounds is not only cruel and barbaric, but also totally unnecessary. Foxes do not need to be 'controlled' or 'managed' by people because, as a natural species, they maintain their numbers through natural means. And, anyway, hunting with hounds in its traditional form is not about controlling foxes for the benefit of others - it is about chasing and killing for sport. When hunting was banned during the foot and mouth outbreak, evidence showed that this had no significant effect on fox numbers. Foxes are territorial animals and, in many cases, where one fox is taken out another will move in to take its place.

A **Keep Cruelty History** report in 2010 stated 'that whilst a hardcore element in the hunting community continues to flout the law, the Hunting Act is working well and there have been almost 140 convictions under the Act.'

Anti-hunt groups say that:

- Hunting is cruel - deliberately so, because the hounds are bred to be slow to prolong the chase.
- Hunting is unnecessary - wild animals do not need to be 'controlled'.
- The majority of the British public want hunting to be banned and the Hunt Act to stay in force.
- The Hunting Act is working. It is not perfect but it is better than having no legislation at all to protect wildlife.

Opinion poll results

Most people believe that all forms of hunting should remain illegal.

75% don't want a return to fox hunting*

84% are against deer and stag hunting*

85% oppose hare hunting and coursing*

An opinion polling** for **Keep Cruelty History** found that within the main political parties, 62% of Conservative supporters back the ban, as do 83% of Labour supporters and 77% of Liberal Democrat supporters.*

* Polling by Ipsos MORI for IFAW and the League Against Cruel Sports, September 2009.

** Polling by YouGov for the League Against Cruel Sports, July 2009.

Quotes

'I can't stand the idea of people hunting foxes and stuff like that and I think it would be good to let any future Prime Minister know how the public feel about it.'

Simon Cowell, interviewed on BBC Newsnight before the election.

'Being a vet teaches you above all that what we share most with other animals is the ability to experience fear, pain and suffering. Hunting ensured that foxes, deer, mink and hares endured all three – and purely in the name of human entertainment. Long may such inexcusable cruelty be outlawed.'

Emma Milne, veterinary surgeon, BVSc MRCVS.

'There is no evidence that foxes need to be controlled.'

Professor Stephen Harris, Environmental Sciences, University of Bristol.

Summary

It took animal-lovers 80 years and 700 hours of parliamentary debate to bring the Hunting Act into force in 2004, by democratic process, in accordance with the will of at least 75% of the population. Don't let it be repealed in the interests of a minority, and in the face of public opposition. It would be a political and social injustice as well as a tragedy for animal welfare.