

REPORT:
**The 2010/2011
Hunting Season**

LAUNCHED AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS, 18TH MAY 2011

About the League Against Cruel Sports

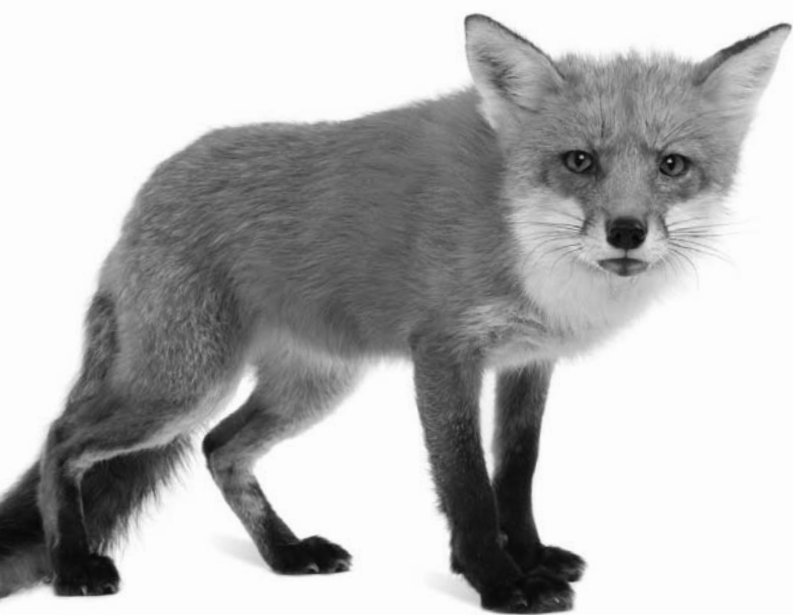
The League Against Cruel Sports is a registered charity that brings together people who care about animals. Like the majority of the public, we believe that cruelty to animals in the name of sport has no place in modern society. We have no political bias. We were established in 1924 and are unique because we focus on cruelty to animals for sport.

Our aim:

We work to expose and bring to an end the cruelty inflicted on animals in the name of sport.

What we do:

- We expose the barbaric nature of cruel sports and the people involved, identifying what action should be taken.
- We raise awareness and campaign for change by lobbying government, politicians and businesses. This includes campaigning for new laws and helping to enforce existing laws by working with the police to bring to justice those who commit illegal acts of cruelty for sport.
- We also offer advice to people whose lives are being detrimentally affected by cruel sports.



Our approach:

- Through investigation and lawful campaigning, we encourage the public and law makers to recognise their responsibility to protect animals from suffering cruel acts in the name of sport.
- We raise awareness of the issues through the media and enlist public support to put pressure on law makers. We work to change people's behaviour, gain new legislation, and enforce existing laws that are in place to protect animals from cruel sports in the UK and across the globe.

Our Values:

- **Informative:** we expose the truth of cruelty to animals in sport.
- **Purposeful:** we are focused on ending cruelty to animals in sport.
- **Accountable:** we campaign based on the facts uncovered through continuous research and investigation.
- **Contemporary:** we believe cruel sports involving animals are barbaric and have no place in modern society.
- **Compassionate:** what we do is inspired by concern for the well-being of both animals and people; through our work we help to create a more caring society.

Our campaigns:

- Bullfighting
- Fighting Dogs
- Hunting
- Racing animals
- Shooting
- Snaring
- Trophy Hunting

We also have campaigns in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The League Against Cruel Sports receives no Government or National Lottery funding and relies on the generosity of our supporters to help fund our campaigning and investigative work.

Our supporters come from all walks of life and we continue to attract new members, donors and campaigners worldwide.

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Executive Summary

The League Against Cruel Sports' *2010/2011 Hunting Season Report* provides a unique insight into the world of post-ban hunting activity and highlights the continued success of the Hunting Act since its introduction in February 2005.

- By analysing the latest Ministry of Justice figures recording the performance of the Hunting Act 2004 this report details a 72% increase in defendants found guilty under the legislation.
- Using data obtained from the League's hunting database this report shows that 77% of the hunts for which the League holds records continue to engage in suspicious activity consistent with traditional hunting practices.
- This report examines the implications of the League's new incident and intelligence reporting arrangements with the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) and welcomes the NWCU's analysis that foxhunting should be a priority for the police in the south west of England.
- Figures for the 2010/2011 hunting season confirm the continuing misery of hunt havoc affecting members of the public who object to hunts treating them, and the law, with contempt.
- The League can report that all six police chief constables approached by the Countryside Alliance (CA) in 2011 have unequivocally rejected CA criticisms of the League's legitimacy to monitor hunting activity.



Introduction

This report provides an overview of the League Against Cruel Sports' hunting campaign and operations during the 2010/2011 hunting season.

Celebrating its sixth anniversary in February 2011 the Hunting Act continues to protect wild mammals in England and Wales from the unnecessary suffering inherent in the sport of hunting with dogs.

Despite misleading information circulated by elements from within the hunting community this report records that the total of convictions secured under the Hunting Act to date stands at well over 150; a delay in Ministry of Justice reporting means that an accurate figure on any given date cannot be found.

By focusing on three key elements of the League's hunting campaign, this report confirms the League's position as the leading animal welfare charity working to inform and educate the public on the progress and success of the Hunting Act 2004.



Ministry of Justice figures

In its *Hunting Season Report 2009/2010*, the League countered criticisms of the performance of the Hunting Act by analysing figures from the Ministry of Justice. The League noted that despite a concerted campaign by elements within the hunting community to discredit the Hunting Act, it could legitimately claim to be one of the most successful pieces of animal welfare legislation in England and Wales of the last twenty years.

This year the League can report similarly encouraging news. According to the latest figures released by the Ministry of Justice, the number of defendants found guilty of offences under the Hunting Act 2004 in 2009 stood at 57 individuals. This compares with 33 defendants found guilty of offences under the Hunting Act in 2008.

This represents a 72% increase in defendants found guilty under the Hunting Act.

To date the total for convictions under the Hunting Act stands at well over 150. This is before figures for 2010 - to be made available in Autumn 2011 - have been included.

To illustrate how successful the Hunting Act has been, it is informative to compare the most recent figures (*Table 1*), made available from the Ministry of Justice for 2009 with the performance of other wildlife legislation in the same period.

STATUTE	OFFENCE DESCRIPTION	PROCEEDED AGAINST	FOUND GUILTY
Protection of Badgers Act 1992 - sections 1-5 & 10.	Offences of cruelty to badgers	44	26
Protection of Badgers Act 1992 - section 13.	Having custody, failing to undertake, destruction of a dog while disqualified	4	4
Deer Act 1991	Killing or injuring, deer by shooting, trap, snares etc	3	2
Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996	Offences under this Act	8	5
Hunting Act 2004	Offences under this Act	90	57

Table 1: The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts and found guilty at all courts of selected offences related to wild mammals, England and Wales, 2009.¹

¹Source: Justice Statistics Analytical Services - Ministry of Justice.

Performance of Wildlife Legislation in 2009



- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- sections 1-5 & 10
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- sections 13
- Deer Act 1991
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996
- Hunting Act 2004

The figures in Table 1 demonstrate the unequivocal success of the Hunting Act and confirm the value of the legislation to police forces in combating criminality against wildlife in predominantly rural areas.

Organised hunting

The figures from the Ministry of Justice are extremely encouraging and once again demonstrate the effectiveness of the Hunting Act. However the League remains concerned that more could be done to tackle the problem of organised hunting with dogs, as typified by the member hunts of the Masters of Foxhounds Association (MFHA).

It is the League's firm belief that this organised hunting activity deserves a similar degree of scrutiny from the police as that given to the hare coursers and individuals, unaffiliated with traditional hunting member organisations, who hunt wild mammals with dogs.

It is to this category of organised hunting with dogs that the majority of the League's information on hunting relates. For the second year in succession the League can report that this information is being shared with the police through the auspices of the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU).



League Information

In the course of the 2010/2011 hunting season the League continued to receive information primarily through its monitoring operations and Hunt Crimewatch² (HCW) service.

The League also has an extensive network of local groups which pass information to the head office. In addition to these information sources staff regularly monitor the press and relevant hunting related websites.

This activity has enabled the League to direct operations and maintain a database of hunting information in England and Wales since the introduction of the Hunting Act in 2005.

The 2010/2011 Hunting Season

In the 2010/2011 hunting season the League amassed a considerable volume of information on hunting activity throughout England and Wales. Given that there are over 20,000³ hunting days in a hunting season these figures represent a snapshot of behaviour in the hunting field.

For the season 2010/2011 the League received a total of 221 reports detailing hunting activity in England and Wales (see Fig. 1 for a further breakdown).

Figure 1:

Distribution of reports according to information sources.

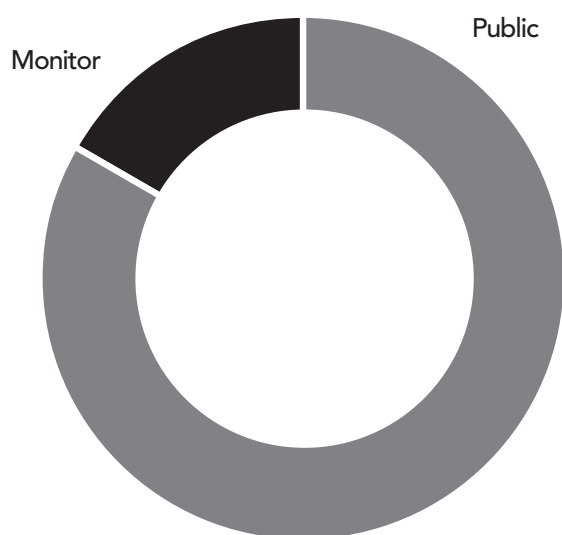
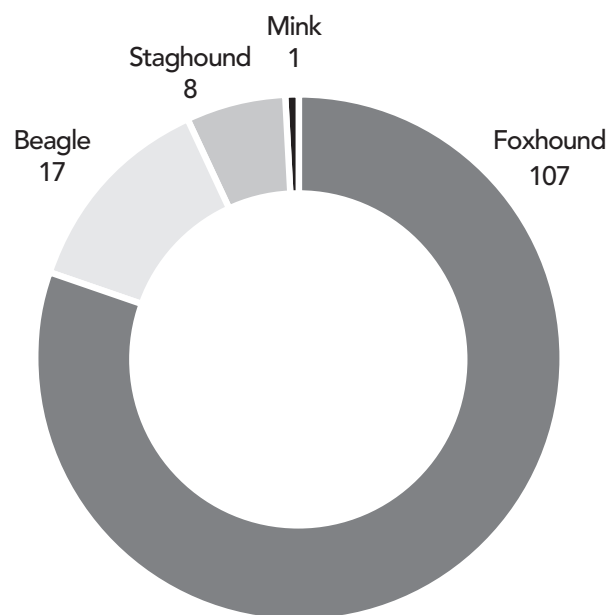


Figure 2:

Distribution of types of hunts responsible for suspicious behaviour.



²For more information visit www.league.org.uk/HCW

³Previous estimates have placed the number of hunting days per season between 18,000 and 23,000

Illegal Hunting Continues

Of the 221 reports received by the League 133 detailed suspicious behaviour⁴ consistent with traditional hunting activity carried out by 76 individual hunts - 77% of the hunts for which the League holds records.

This 133 figure recording suspicious behaviour can be broken down further to reveal the types of hunts responsible (see Fig. 2). In addition to these statistics it is worth noting that 75 of the hunting incidents recorded by the League in the 2010/2011 hunting season were reported to the following police forces in England and Wales (see Fig.3):

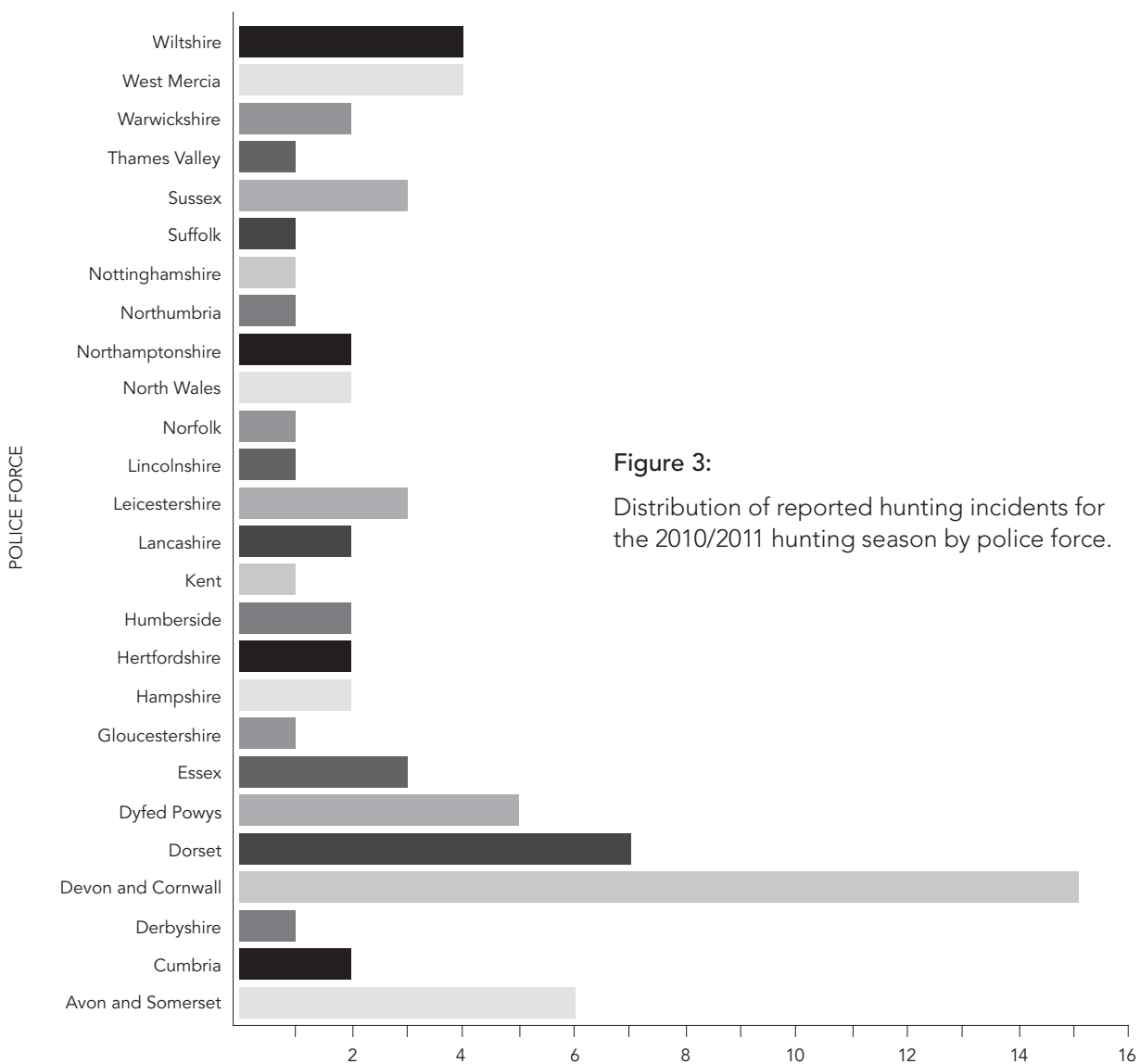


Figure 3:

Distribution of reported hunting incidents for the 2010/2011 hunting season by police force.

⁴Suspicious behaviour in this instance includes behaviour consistent with traditional hunting practices, e.g.: Drawing (where hounds search) coverts where quarry is likely to be and has traditionally been found such as reed beds, gorse, hedgerows, fields of crops and woodlands; Holding up coverts where supporters surround the area; Hollering - this is a way of informing the huntsman that the quarry has been spotted; Hounds running in full cry (when they are on a scent) over roads, near motorways, through private gardens etc where it is unlikely that a trail would have been laid; Full pursuit of quarry where hounds have not been called off by the huntsman; Horns calling to signify a kill; Digging out by terrier men; Conversations between hunt supporters overheard by monitors where they talk about kills they've had that day or where they will find quarry etc; The absence of trail laying; Hunts packing up as soon as they see monitors and the police; Hunts moving away from an area when they see monitors and police.

League Information *(Continued)*

The League and the NWCU

With the establishment of the NWCU in 2006, the police have worked to combat wildlife crime using a progressive and intelligent methodology designed to complement and assist the work of wildlife crime officers on the ground.

In 2009 the League was invited to pass intelligence to the NWCU. Now in its second year this arrangement is a key factor in determining how intelligence led policing can address the problem of hunting with dogs in England and Wales.

Between September 2010 and April 2011 the League sent 80 incident reports to the NWCU. Fig.4 demonstrates the wide geographical reach of this information by police force area.

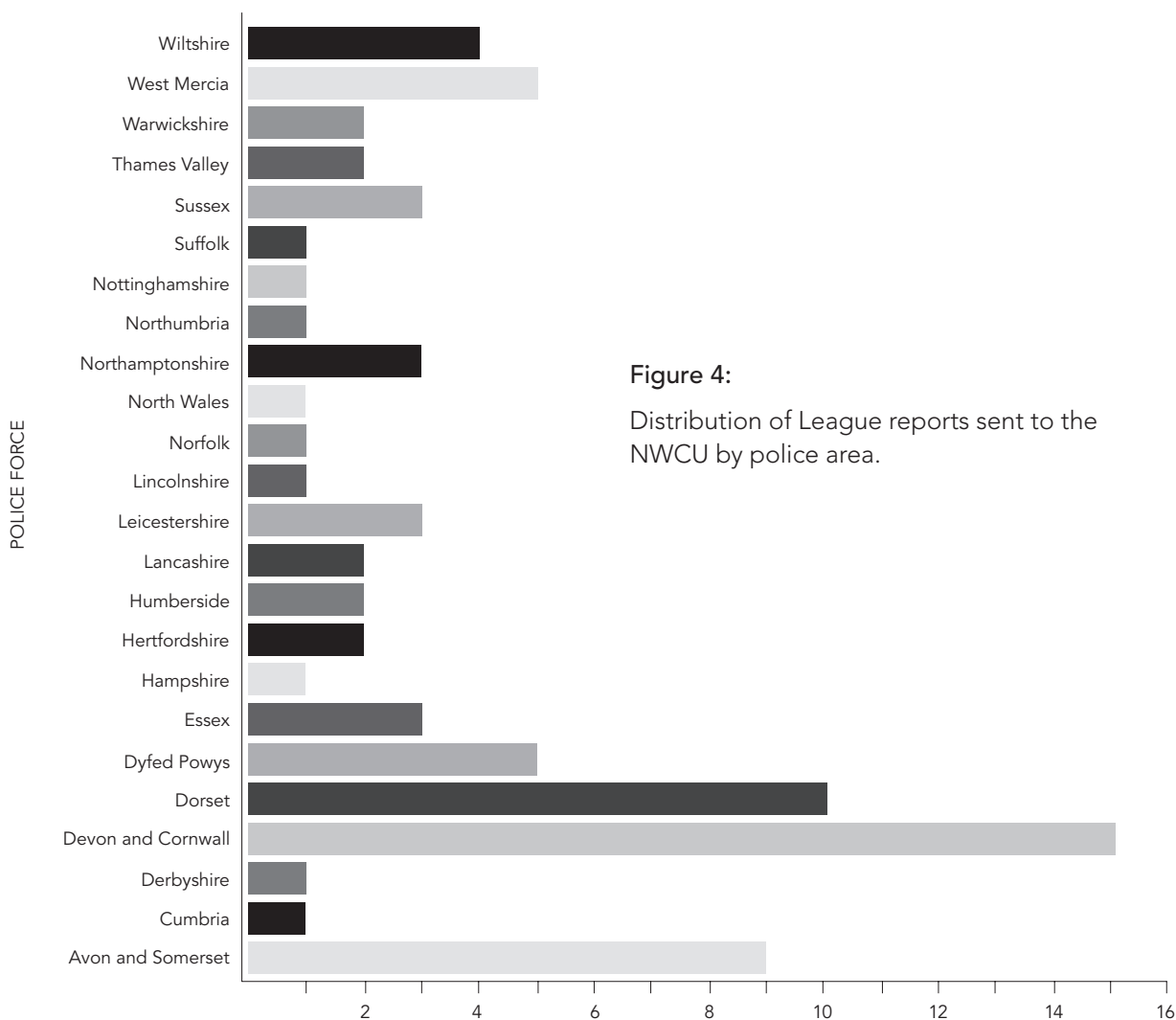


Figure 4:

Distribution of League reports sent to the NWCU by police area.

In addition to League incident reports, police forces continue to report National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR) hunting data to the NWCU. However in its most recent Strategic Assessment the NWCU has suggested that fox hunting could be a significantly underreported incident category:

*Foxhunting has remained consistent throughout the strategic period, currently accounting for 4% of all reported incidents. The inclusion of League Against Cruel Sports data in year two may indicate that this problem is underreported as one in ten reports originates from their organisation.*⁵

In light of problems with the recording of hunting incidents experienced in the past by police forces in England and Wales, the League would encourage all forces to ensure that relevant incident reports are not withheld from the NWCU.

Targeting criminality

The League has consistently argued that hunting with dogs is a major contributor to criminality within the rural community. Although previous years *Hunting Season Reports* from the League have demonstrated that the problem is widespread throughout England and Wales, incident data held by the League has consistently identified geographical regions where the problem is particularly acute.

In its latest *Strategic Assessment* the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) identifies an increase in incident reports from police forces and partner organisations concerning, specifically, fox hunting. By analysing the available data the NWCU has determined that:

Foxhunting is predominantly a problem in the South West region as almost one third of reports originate there and should be a priority of focus in that regional area.

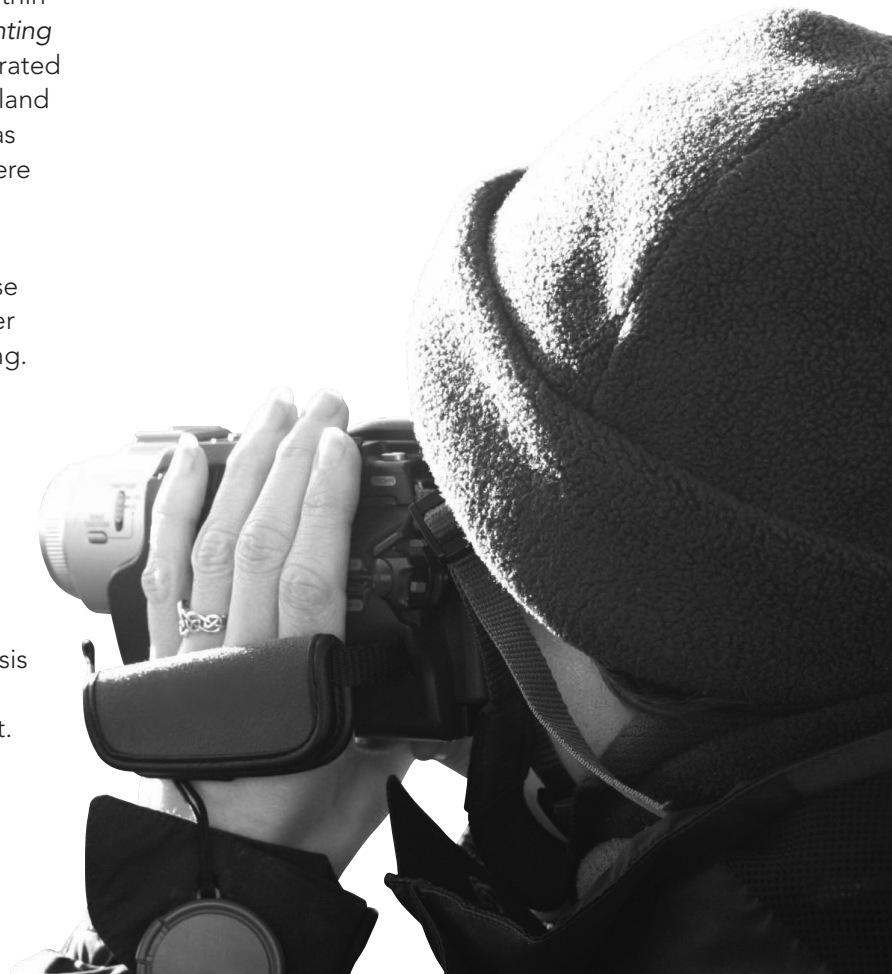
The League hopes that police forces in the South West region will act on the NWCU's analysis and seek to address the problem of fox hunting highlighted in the Unit's most recent assessment.

The Future

Looking forward the League continues to believe that the NWCU's incident analysis would be better served by establishing a category for hunting with dogs to reflect all of the activity prohibited by the Hunting Act 2004 within its National Standard for Incident Recording (NSIR) template.

In recognition of the League's increasingly high profile role in providing information to the NWCU, a former police Detective Inspector with experience in covert and undercover policing has been appointed to be the League's Intelligence Officer. In addition to this appointment the League has engaged a senior IT consultant with knowledge of NWCU intelligence processes, to design a database and provide training for all relevant staff.

This progressive and exciting measure will ensure that the League continues to operate an efficient and compliant intelligence database that reflects the growing importance of the League in aiding Hunting Act enforcement.



⁵ NWCU Strategic Assessment February 2011, Section 9:3, Foxhunting

League Operations

With over 25 years' experience of observing hunting activity in the field, the team at the League has led the way in both overt and covert hunt monitoring. Since the introduction of the Hunting Act in 2005 League observers have been at the forefront of monitoring organised hunting activity throughout England and Wales.

Despite continuing attempts from within the hunting community to discredit the League's legitimacy to observe hunting activity the League would once more take this opportunity to point to the recognition afforded to this role by the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidelines on Hunting Act enforcement:

*Gathering of evidence of offending behaviour has proved a difficult task for the police, and with available resources it is likely to remain so. The police will therefore have to continue to rely upon initial evidence gathered by members of the public who are often organised for this purpose.*⁶

The 2010/2011 Hunting Season

For the second hunting season in succession severe winter weather over the Christmas period forced the cancellation and postponement of many hunting fixtures throughout England and Wales. Despite limiting the scope of operations the League's team was nevertheless able to observe a considerable amount of hunting activity in the 2010/2011 hunting season.

Between August 2010 and April 2011 League Operations staff monitored a total of 91 days hunting activity. In line with past Operations procedure the League has once again succeeded in observing a broad cross section of organised hunting activity:

Secrecy Continues

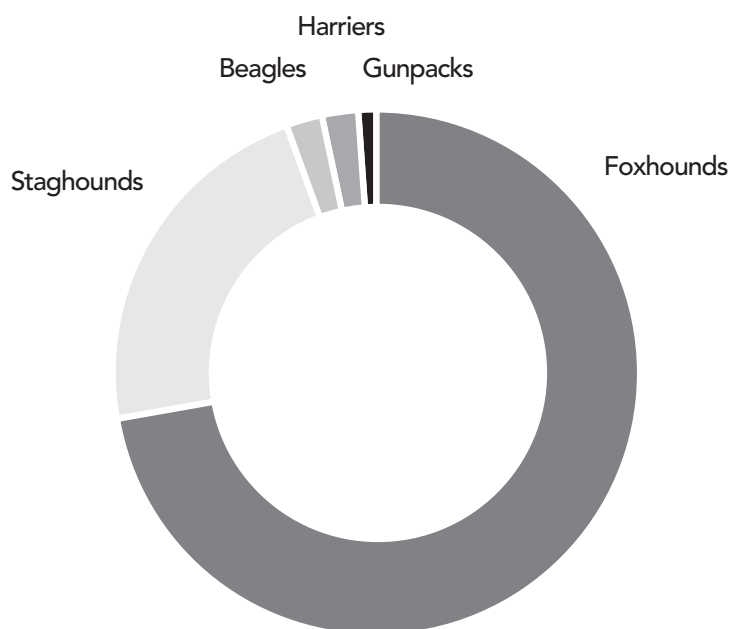
The 2010/2011 hunting season continued a trend that has seen a marked decline in publicity given to organised hunting fixtures. Because of this secrecy the League's Operations team has continued to rely on information received from the general public.

To highlight this shift in behaviour it is informative to compare the number of advertised hunting meets from before the introduction of the Hunting Act with that of the most recent 2010/2011 hunting season.

In the course of the hunting season *Horse and Hound* magazine⁷, a weekly publication widely read by the hunting community and recognised as a premier source of hunting news, devotes a page of every issue to forthcoming hunting fixtures in its 'hunt appointments' section. By looking at two editions of *Horse and Hound* between 2003 and 2011 it is possible to observe a significant reduction in advertised hunting meets (see fig 6).

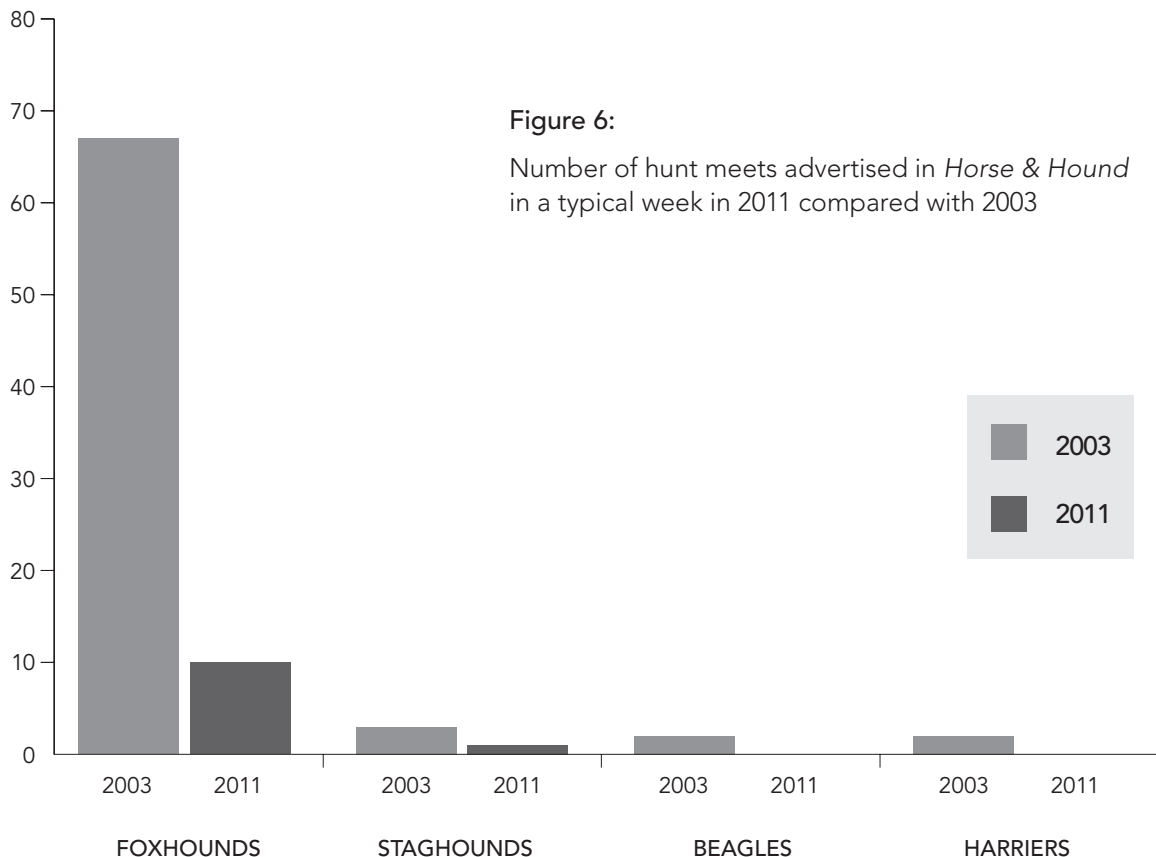
This shift in behaviour is not just evident on the pages of *Horse and Hound* magazine; websites established by individual hunts continue to password protect the hunting fixtures for the select few.

Figure 5: Types of hunts observed.



⁶ACPO Guidance on Enforcement of the Hunting Act 2004, Section 4 Enforcement, 4:2

⁷*Horse and Hound* magazine, published by IPC Media



Observations from the Hunting Field

Last year's *Hunting Season Report* recorded the disturbing level of intimidation and violence directed towards League Operations staff from elements within the hunting community. Unfortunately the 2010/2011 hunting season has seen a continuation of this anti-social behaviour despite the League's decision to rely, primarily, on covert tactics to monitor hunting activity.

To illustrate the level of hostility from within the hunting community the League can report that two individuals from the Coniston Foxhounds received police cautions after an attack on League Observers at a meet in Cumbria. At the time a police spokesman commented:⁸

"Two men were cautioned following an incident at White Moss Car Park at Rydal near Ambleside in March. A local man was cautioned for battery after he drove his quad bike toward a member of an animal welfare group, and then pushed another member off a dry stone wall. A second man was cautioned for using threatening words or behaviour to cause fear or provoke violence after he waved a stick at a member of an animal welfare group."

It is against this background of secrecy and intimidation that League operations staff continues to monitor a cross section of hunting activity in England and Wales. An assault and robbery from a League Observer remained under police investigation at the time of going to print, whilst in May 2011 the huntsman with the Tivyside Hunt in Wales was convicted and fined for battery of a League Observer.

⁸ Retrieved at <http://www.conistonlocal.co.uk/lake-district-hunt-members-cautioned-by-police-after-attack-on-protestors-1.727986?referrerPath=home>

League Operations *(Continued)*

Hunting Behaviour

The majority of hunting activity monitored by League operations staff in the 2010-2011 season was fox hunting.

Whilst many hunts claim to be trail hunting, it is worth noting that League observers - often present at a hunt meet up to five hours before hounds and riders have set off - have not seen any evidence of trails being laid during the course of the 2010/2011 hunting season.

The following activities carried out by organised fox hunts were observed between August 2010 - April 2011:

- Full packs of hounds accompanying hunts
- Hunts claiming to be trail hunting if challenged
- Behaviour of hunts consistent with traditional fox hunting
- Terriermen⁹ following hunts
- Hounds seen chasing foxes on numerous occasions
- Hunt staff positioned at distance from chasing packs
- Incidents of digging and bolting¹⁰ of foxes
- Reports of hunts using bagged¹¹ foxes
- Incidents of blocked¹² badger setts by terriermen accompanying hunts
- Terriermen present during trail hunting
- Hunts seen hunting across main roads, a cemetery, through villages etc all inconsistent with trail hunting
- Hounds seen marking to ground on several occasions.¹³
- Two of the three stag hunts are no longer hunting with a reduced pack.

Observations on beagle packs

August 2010 - April 2011:

- Beagle packs monitored and filmed between November 2010 and April 2011 hunting hares in contravention of the Hunting Act 2004
- No evidence of trails being laid
- Continuation of traditional hare hunting festivals.

Hunt Havoc

Hunt havoc is anti-social behaviour often characterised by trespass, traffic chaos and, on occasion, pet and livestock fatality. In the six year period since the introduction of the Hunting Act the League has reported annually on incidents of hunt havoc and in that time the problem has continued to impair the lives of those unconnected with hunting.

The 2010/2011 Hunting Season

In the 2010/2011 hunting season 59 separate incidents of hunt havoc, by a total of 38 hunts, were recorded by the League. This represents 39% of the hunts for which the League holds records.

Although havoc can occur in association with all types of hunting groups it is the fox hunts that are predominantly responsible for this behaviour. Of the 38 total of hunts responsible for 59 known incidents of hunt havoc in the 2010-2011 season, 33 were fox hunts.

In percentage terms 87% of the hunts responsible for the hunt havoc recorded by the League for the 2010/2011 hunting season were fox hunts.

⁹Before the introduction of the Hunting Act 2004 terriermen were responsible for flushing out foxes to be chased by the hounds and capturing and killing any foxes that went below ground. Other 'duties' involved blocking badger setts and fox earths to prevent the quarry escaping and occasionally repairing fences and hedges damaged by a days hunting

¹⁰When a fox takes refuge under ground terriermen attempt to force the fox to 'bolt' or escape by introducing a dog to the earth. This process often results in protracted excavations of the various earths by terriermen

¹¹A 'bagged' fox is a fox that has been captured or sometimes bred for the purposes of fox hunting

¹²Illegal under the Hunting Act 2004 but still prevalent, blocking is the process by which terriermen seek to prevent avenues of escape for the hunted fox by obstructing badger sett entrances. This usually occurs in advance of a day's fox hunting

¹³This practice involves the hounds marking the spot where a hunted fox has gone to ground

Trail hunting

In response to the introduction of the Hunting Act 2004 many of the fox hunts claimed to have turned to trail hunting as an alternative to proscribed traditional hunting practices. Distinct from traditional drag hunting this activity, according to the Countryside Alliance Handbook on Hunting,¹⁴ seeks to "simulate the search in cover for a scent to follow."

However the League is reluctant to accept the validity of this alternative to traditional hunting with dogs and would point to the evidence from the League Operations team that records a complete absence of trails being laid at all relevant hunting fixtures monitored in the last two seasons.

Responsibility

The League has repeatedly stated in the past that the problem of hunt havoc could be easily resolved by those responsible in the hunting community exercising a duty of care to the hounds they hunt with and the communities they hunt within. However there has been no indication, based on the evidence recorded by the League, that the hunting community is listening.

The Masters of Foxhounds Association (MFHA)

The Masters of Foxhounds Association (MFHA) represents 174 of the foxhounds hunts in England and Wales. It is a poor reflection on the MFHA that on no single occasion in the six years since the introduction of the Hunting Act has it issued a public statement condemning this anti-social behaviour by its members, despite the following statement appearing on the front page of its website:

*The MFHA has strict rules and codes of conduct that have been specially written to promote standards of best practice both in the Kennels and in the Field and to prove the accountability of their member packs.*¹⁵

In light of this abrogation of responsibility from the MFHA the League is once again calling on the police in England and Wales to engage with the problem and help members of the public who object to hunts treating them, and the law, with contempt.

The Police

Where hounds are out of control on a road, other public place or on private property there is legislation, other than the Hunting Act which the police can use;

- If hounds are not under control on a road, and without being on a lead this may be an offence under **s27 Road Traffic Act 1988** - a person who causes or permits a dog to be on a designated road without the dog being held on a lead is guilty of an offence. There is a limited exemption for dogs which at the material time were under proper control for sporting purposes. This is unlikely to apply to a hunt if the dogs are out of control and as a sporting purpose must be a lawful sport they would not be on a road if the hunt were lawfully [i.e. drag/trail] hunting.
- **s3 (1) Dangerous Dogs Act 1991** - if a dog is dangerously out of control in a public place the owner and if different, the person for the time being in charge of the dog, is guilty of an offence. Under s3(3) if the owner or, if different, the person for the time being in charge of a dog allows it to enter a place which is not a public place but where it is not permitted to be and while it is there it injures any person or there are grounds for the reasonable apprehension that it will do so he is guilty of an offence.
- **s1 Criminal Damage Act 1971** - a person who without lawful excuse destroys or damages any property belonging to another intending to destroy or damage any such property or being reckless as to whether any such property would be destroyed or damaged is guilty of an offence.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs)** can also be used for incidents involving hunt havoc. ASBOs can be given when anyone (over the age of nine) has acted in an anti-social manner so as to cause, or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to someone in another household and the order is necessary to protect others. The court can set conditions and has a wide discretion so long as they are reasonable. An ASBO usually lasts two years, although their future remains in doubt following government announcements that they are to be replaced.

¹⁴ HOW TO KEEP HUNTING HANDBOOK 2005 - 2006, Countryside Alliance and Council of Hunting Associations

¹⁵ Retrieved at <http://www.mfha.org.uk/ia>

Legal and Police Work at the League

The legal team at the League, lead by solicitor Rachel Newman, a former Head of Prosecutions at the RSPCA, is firmly established as an authority on Hunting Act enforcement within law enforcement circles in England and Wales.

The 2010/2011 Hunting Season

This level of expertise has contributed to the following successful convictions from cases heard in the 2010/2011 hunting season:

Alastair Robinson

Terrier man with the Ullswater Foxhounds

Convicted of an offence under the Hunting Act 2004 at Penrith Magistrates Court on July 22, 2010:

£250 fine, £900 costs

Offence took place on October 26, 2009.

Cumbria police.

Richard Down⁶

Huntsman of the Quantock Stagounds

Convicted of an offence under the Hunting Act 2004 at Taunton Magistrates Court November 22, 2010:

£375 fine, £15 victim surcharge, £2530 costs

Offence took place on September 21, 2009.

Avon and Somerset police

Andrew Bellamy

former terrier man with the South Devon Hunt

Convicted of two offences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 on February 01, 2011 at Torquay Magistrates Court:

£250 fine for each offence. £500 costs and £15 victim surcharge.

Offence took place on April 07, 2010.

Devon and Cornwall police

It should be noted that the conviction against Mr Down was his second under the Hunting Act, after he became the first person to be convicted twice under the Act.

In addition to these completed cases the League can report that further evidence gathered by its Operations team and assessed by the Legal team in the 2010/2011 hunting season has been presented to police forces in the south west of England.

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the League

In its *Hunting Season Report 2009-2010* the League made reference to public criticism of its use of covert monitoring. This criticism revealed a fundamental misunderstanding, particularly from within the hunting community, of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and the relationship between the police and hunt monitors.

Regrettably valuable police time has once again been expended on this issue due to the insistence of the Countryside Alliance's (CA) Chairman, Kate Hoey MP, that the matter remains unresolved. A recent Freedom of Information Request to the police reveals that Ms Hoey wrote to six Chief Constables repeating erroneous claims about the League and its relationship with the following police forces:

- Devon and Cornwall
- Gloucestershire
- Leicestershire
- Cumbria
- Thames Valley
- Avon and Somerset

In each instance the police rejected the Countryside Alliance's accusations and reminded the CA's Chairman that members of the public, and non-governmental organisations such as the League Against Cruel Sports, are not bound by the provisions of RIPA as long as they are not acting as controlled or contracted agents of the police or any other public authority.

As reported in 2010 this position was confirmed by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) who advised the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) that where the police are provided with surveillance and other evidence by non-governmental organisations, such as the League, they should use that information and investigate further.

It is hoped that the responses from the six Chief Constables have brought further clarity to this straightforward aspect of Hunting Act enforcement which the Countryside Alliance and its representatives have seemingly struggled to understand.

Police Liaison 2010/2011

In recent years the League has made great progress in establishing good working relationships with police forces throughout England and Wales. This is in large part due to the efforts of former police wildlife crime officer, Steve Harris, now working as the League's police liaison officer.

Association of Chief Police Officers

In August 2010 the League attended a meeting with the ACPO lead on Wildlife Crime and Rural Affairs, Chief Constable Richard Crompton, to discuss the League's *Hunting Season Report 2010* and police enforcement of the Hunting Act. This meeting provided an opportunity for the League to emphasise the need for greater police engagement with the issue of hunting with dogs in England and Wales and to reaffirm the importance of League training of police forces in Hunting Act enforcement.



Legal and Police Work at the League *(Continued)*

Police Training in Hunting Act Enforcement 2010/2011

The training that has been provided by the League for the past two hunting seasons is factual, impartial legal advice based almost entirely on a detailed explanation of the Hunting Act provisions, with reference to case law and guidance issued by ACPO and the CPS. It also includes an explanation of relevant hunting issues including those not covered by the Act such as trail hunting as well as providing practical investigative advice with regard to powers of search and seizure and interviewing of suspects.

Great care has been taken to ensure that the training provided is completely apolitical and uncontroversial so that it is acceptable to the police, having regard to their need to demonstrate impartiality. As a result, Chief Constable Richard Crompton, who holds the Wildlife Crime and Rural Affairs portfolio on behalf of ACPO, has said that the training of police officers by the League's Police Liaison Officer is being carried out with the approval of ACPO.

Each student/delegate is provided with a CD which contains the training presentation for revision as well as a large number of resources, such as the ACPO Hunting Act 2004 Investigators Manual and an explanation of hunting horn calls. Feedback from these events suggests that the vast majority of attendees leave with a much greater understanding of how effective the legislation can be.

During the 2010/2011 hunting season the League was able to provide training in Hunting Act enforcement to 136 officers in Cumbria, Northumbria, Dyfed Powys, North Yorkshire, West Mercia, Gloucestershire, Surrey and Sussex forces.

In addition to these individual police forces the League has also provided Hunting Act enforcement training for 44 officers at two National Police Wildlife Crime Officer courses in September 2010 and March 2011 respectively.

A further reflection of the League's growing stature in the field of police liaison is its attendance at the many specialist law enforcement events that take place throughout the year. During the 2010/2011 hunting season the League's police liaison officer was able to represent the charity at the following conferences:

- The Wildlife Crime Enforcers Conference, Gloucestershire.
- The Scottish Wildlife Crime Conference
- Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime (PAW) Open Seminar, London (at which a presentation on Hunting Act enforcement was delivered)

Crown Prosecution Service

In addition to the success of its work with the police the League has also been commended by the CPS for the thoroughness and professionalism evident when cases have been brought before the police. Roger Hall a Senior Crown Prosecutor recently applauded steps that the League has taken to ensure the police and CPS comply with their legal responsibilities in relation to the revelation and disclosure of unused material.

Summary

The League Against Cruel Sports is greatly encouraged by the most recent Ministry of Justice data confirming a dramatic increase in the number of defendants found guilty of offences under the Hunting Act 2004.

For the second year in succession it is clear that the police throughout England and Wales have made great advances in ensuring that the Hunting Act is used to prosecute those determined to hunt wild mammals with dogs in contravention of the law. However, it is also clear that more can and should be done by the police to address the behaviour of the organised hunting community typified by the member hunts of the MFHA.

This report has shown how significant progress is being made to remedy this deficiency by detailing how the League's ongoing contribution to intelligence led policing, through the auspices of the NWCU, has helped to identify foxhunting in the South West of England as a priority area of focus for the police.

Despite a further challenge to the League's legitimacy to gather evidence of illegal hunting, the observation of hunting activity by the charity continues to produce a high level of success. Working to the exacting standards set by the League's legal team it is hoped

that the police and CPS will continue to ensure that evidence gathered by the League is dealt with in a timely and professional manner.

This report has shown that havoc caused by the hunting community continues to blight the lives of the general public unconnected with the sport of hunting with dogs. The conspicuous failure of those who support and administer hunting in England and Wales to speak out against this anti-social behaviour is illustrative of the contempt in which they hold the law and the wider rural community. The League has once again shown in this report that it is up to the police to use the relevant legislation in order to provide protection for those affected by this deeply anti-social behaviour.

With polling consistently showing that over three quarters of the British public is resolute in its support of the Hunting Act 2004 the League is optimistic that the legislation introduced over six years ago can continue to offer protection to wild mammals throughout England and Wales.



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