

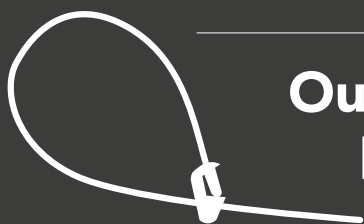


LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS



Impact Report

2022-23



Our campaigning led to a ban on snares in Wales

Nine hunting - related questions tabled to ministers thanks to our Hunt Havoc report.



10,220 supporters signed our official record of support for Britain's foxes

32 charities united in the Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting



Our campaigning led to the new Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill - **we really banned fox hunting.**

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Message from the Chair



I am delighted to be able to bring you this, my first Impact Report as Chair of the League Against Cruel Sports, a charity

that is needed now more than ever. In a world where man-made issues continue to dominate, it is even more vital that we don't forget animals as they have no voice of their own. We must not accept their large-scale persecution for the entertainment of a small section of society.

Over the past 12 months, the challenges confronting us went way beyond hunting, shooting, and other cruel sports groups, to include the cost-of-living crisis and delays in the probate system for legacies which affected so many charities. As a result, we took the necessary corrective action to readjust our budgets and refine our focus. Nevertheless, our resolve to protect animals remains undiminished.

This resolve was most evident in the actions of our loyal supporter base. I want to recognise the sacrifices many have made at a time of rising inflation. By digging deep and prioritising animals we were able to continue to deliver our aims and charitable objectives, and through our wider collaboration in the animal charity sector, help others deliver theirs too.

Coalition building and collaboration, which we do so well, has become the best way of achieving meaningful change at scale. Since 2022 we have worked behind the scenes to assemble what promises to be our most powerful coalition yet. Our new Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting, counting many millions of the public amongst its number, launched officially in June 2023. We are very privileged to have the trust and support of the sector who recognise that hunting is indeed the totem for cruelty to animals in the United Kingdom.

Together we will work hard to see it confined to the history books over the coming months and years, and in doing so, elevate the cause of animal welfare in general.

I am looking forward to playing my part in changing the dynamic for animals in this country, as is your board, staff, and the army of volunteers and supporters that make everything we do possible.

Cruel 'sports' have had their time – it's now time for change! My thanks go to everyone involved in this great endeavour.

A handwritten signature of Dan Norris in black ink, written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Dan Norris
Chairman



Message from the CEO



Each year seems to bring yet more challenges for the League Against Cruel Sports. Be it Covid 19 or high inflation, the

business of sustaining our charity and delivering on our promises continues to test us like never before. Despite these headwinds, we have kept winning for animals.

At times relying on our financial reserves, we transitioned to a smaller but more agile operating model necessary to thrive in the current uncertain economic environment. We are in a strong position to tackle the big-ticket issues, such as changing the law, that will bring the strongest protections for the most animals throughout the United Kingdom.

As the most recent example, our work strengthening the law on hunting in Scotland resulted in the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill passing into law in January 2023. To much acclaim both north and south of the border, we have rendered hunting in Scotland unviable. In Wales, we now provide the Secretariat to the Cross-Party Group on Animal Welfare in the Senedd with a ban on the use of snares now in force as a direct result of our campaigning.

In England and Wales, we picked up another gold medal for our campaigning, with 2.3 million acres of

land now permanently denied to the hunts. The United Kingdom's shooting industry continues to be in our sights, especially caged game bird breeding and the circle of destruction that enables more birds to be shot.

Our most dangerous activity remains the interdiction of animal fighting gangs. Using our intelligence section and specialist investigators, two dozen fighting dogs were saved from a torturous life and a horrible death in 2022. This sort of work shows the League at its most courageous, and I extend our heartfelt thanks to our supporters, without which none of this would be possible.

Whilst the next 12 months are sure to be challenging for the country and charities alike, nevertheless we are well placed to maintain and strengthen our finances and with them, deliver some of our biggest wins yet. Our groundbreaking Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting will be front and centre of that as, together with our friends across the Sector, we seek to end hunting in England and Wales. With your support, we will do just that, and much more besides.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Knott'.

Andy Knott MBE
CEO





Goal One

End hunting with dogs

An end to fox hunting in Scotland

Almost 20 years ago, the Scottish Parliament introduced new legislation which tried to prevent registered mounted hunts using packs of hounds to chase and kill foxes in the Scottish countryside. Sadly, this legislation wasn't effective and did little to stop the cruelty of hunting. Instead, it created a series of loopholes which allowed hunters to ride roughshod over the law.

We worked tirelessly to secure a Bill that will really ban fox hunting in Scotland.

We participated in extensive meetings with government officials, Members of the Scottish Parliament and government ministers to bring this about. We worked very closely with OneKind and others in assisting a number of MSPs in tabling amendments to the Bill as it went through the parliamentary process.

We co-organised the For the Foxes march and rally to show the widespread support of residents to really ban fox hunting in Scotland. More than two hundred people attended the march and League ambassador Megan McCubbin joined our supporters too.

Together with our supporters, we were able to launch the investigations and obtain the footage showing that fox hunting never stopped.

Because of the overwhelming voice of our supporters, we went to the Scottish Government in our tens of thousands – by signing petitions and marching on the streets to parliament.



On Tuesday 24 January 2023, the Scottish Parliament voted to pass the new Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Bill. The Act is expected to come into force this Autumn.

The League was acknowledged as being the main driving force behind the Bill and the impact of our success means trail hunting is no longer legal north of the border. This Bill provides an opportunity to right the wrongs of the last two decades and close the loopholes which allowed hunters to continue with fox hunting as though the law didn't exist.

For the foxes of Scotland, this looks to be a very promising year indeed and we'll focus on ensuring that any breaches of the new legislation are brought to the attention of the police and the Scottish Parliament.

We were instrumental in bringing about a fox hunting ban in Scotland. We'll now build on that momentum and send a wake-up message to Parliament that England and Wales must follow suit.

'For all you've done and all you continue to do, I thank you from the bottom of my heart'. -
League supporter





I WANT A
REAL
FOX
HUNTING
BAN

I WANT A
REAL
FOX
HUNTING
BAN

IT'S TIME TO REPEAL
THE FOX HUNTING BAN
IN SCOTLAND
FOR THE
FOXES

FOR THE FOXES



Hunt Havoc report: making our voice heard

Hunt havoc is the behaviour by a hunting party and/or their hunting hounds and supporters, which causes nuisance, distress, danger or damage to other people, their animals, or their property.

Knowledge of these types of events is well known and we see them occur across the country every week of the hunting season. In isolation some of these events are shocking enough; hounds killed by trains as they have strayed on to the tracks, a cat being mauled to death by out-of-control hounds, aggression by hunts to members of the public. When they are collected and placed together the picture is truly horrifying and speaks to the continuation of old-fashioned illegal hunting.

In October 2022 we said 'enough is enough' and published Hunt Havoc: the human cost of hunting with hounds.

It showcases information gathered from reports made into our supporter-funded Animal Crimewatch service, those gathered by our professional investigators, and other external sources. It's one of the most important publications we've issued in many years, and it was announced exclusively via a piece in The Times. It enforces that the Hunting Act 2004 must be strengthened to better incentivise hunts to comply with the law and ensure they can keep control of their hounds and people.

We sent the report directly to every Westminster MP and hosted a drop-in session in Parliament where we discussed the report findings and provided constituency-level polling.

These actions, supported by 2,300 of our supporters emailing a copy of the report to their constituency MP, resulted in MPs raising the issue of hunting to ministers nine times, a significant achievement.

Then in March 2023, the Cotswold Hunt was caught by monitors from Cirencester Illegal Hunt Watch with a bagged fox. They had buried a live vixen in a sack, with a view to releasing her later so their hounds had a quarry for 'sport'. Luckily, the vixen survived.

This led to us working with Channel 4 news on a seven-minute film that highlighted the disgraceful activities of the Cotswold Hunt as well as our collated figures on the amount of suspected illegal hunting covered this season. This significant high-profile airtime provided the ideal platform to raise awareness of the urgent need for hunting to be banned, for good.

"I would like to thank each and every person for contacting me about this matter... I would like to assure you that your members have been heard. My position in this area is clear - police should investigate reports of illegal hunting, enforce the law and work to prevent incidents of this type occurring in our community."

**Avon & Somerset Police and Crime
Commissioner**



TIME FOR CHANGE

General elections offer us significant opportunities to achieve legislative change. Influencing parties to support our aims pre-election means we are empowered to pressure the party which wins the election into changing promises to action and, in effect, achieving our strategic aim to end hunting with dogs.

In anticipation of the next general election, we've launched our Time for Change programme of activity which has one aim: to unify our anti-hunting campaigns to ensure that commitments are made at the general election by the next party in power to properly ban hunting.

The campaigns that sit underneath the programme build on the foundations our successful land denial and Enough is Enough campaigns have given us, especially in developing new and existing supporter groups in two geographical areas.

Somerset and Gloucestershire are two of the most prominent hunting counties in England (arguably the UK) and our Regional Campaign Managers have been embedded within these communities, with their impact and groundwork starting to bear fruit.



Somerset

Gloucester

Illegal hunting activity



Nearly **300** hunting incident reports in Somerset in the past four years alone.

19 reports of suspected illegal fox hunting (August to October 2022).

21 reports of wreaking havoc in local communities.

Public opinion



Taunton residents signed a petition which calls for an end to trail hunting, exempt hunting, hound exercise and hunt meets on public land in Somerset.

76 per cent of voters in Gloucestershire back moves to strengthen hunting laws*.

Action



Together with Action Against Fox Hunting, we handed in letters to councillors and the four main party leaders at the County Hall in Taunton calling for fox and deer hunting to be banned on Somerset Council land.

Area identified as a major focus for campaign activity. Supporters have set up street stalls and interacted with members of the public to inform them of the hunting activities still taking place.

Support



Supporter groups in the region have held a number of street stalls throughout 2022, spreading awareness of the Time for Change objectives.

Dale Vince, founder CEO of Ecotricity, hosted our campaign event on match day at Forest Green Rovers, the football club he owns.

** Polling commissioned by us and conducted independently by Find Out Now and Electoral Calculus*

Early indications of the Time for Change programme activities suggest both counties will provide the opportunity for multiple wins over the next 12-18 months, but we'll add new campaigns to the programme during the next year and beyond.



**TIME FOR
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#EndHunting www.timeforchangecoalition.co.uk

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TIME FOR CHANGE

– COALITION AGAINST HUNTING –

On 29 June this year, we launched our Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting. As a coalition of leading animal welfare organisations, representing many millions of members across the UK, we believe it is time for change. The ban on hunting with dogs is weak and is failing to protect animals from cruelty. Animals deserve better. The government has the power to act and until they do, animal welfare will not be treated with the seriousness the public expects. Together, we're calling for the law to be strengthened to stop hunting with dogs for good.

We launched the coalition at an event at Camley Street Natural Park in London which was attended by prominent journalists, supportive parliamentarians, charity representatives and media contacts to hear about our collective aim to end hunting for good.

With its nine exemptions and the havoc it causes to communities and other species of animals, the Hunting Act is in desperate need of strengthening and improving. Last year was spent building the Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting, and the future will see us working together to achieve long overdue changes to the law that will finally see a proper end to hunting with dogs in this country, including the smokescreen of trail hunting.

"We, the undersigned, call upon the government to strengthen the Hunting Act 2004 by banning trail hunting, removing exemptions which enable hunting, and introducing custodial sentences for those who break the law. Only this will protect animals and rural communities blighted by hunts".



TIME FOR CHANGE

– COALITION AGAINST HUNTING –

Fox hunting, deer hunting, and hare hunting still take place in the UK. These cruel activities have been banned in England and Wales for nearly 20 years, but the law is weak. Too many animals are suffering, too many people are being abused, and too many hunts are getting away with it. It's time for change.

Those in government must improve the law and make England and Wales a hunting free zone.

We acknowledge the commitment and dedication of all members of the Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting.



Wildlife and Countryside





Andy's MoD march for animals

In late December 2022, Ben Wallace MP, the Secretary of State for Defence, communicated he was unilaterally terminating our long-standing Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Defence (MoD), without the pre-requisite three months' notice.

No evidence was offered to support his view that we present a security risk to the MoD, and no other details were given to support his decision. This sort of summary justice is not acceptable. More than 10,500 of our supporters agreed with us and emailed Ben Wallace to express their anger too.

For our multi award winning registered charity, highly respected by police forces

across the country, to be thrown off public land so hunts can go about their business without the necessary monitoring afforded under the Hunting Act, must be challenged. The truth is that the hunts will now be able to go about their business without the same level of scrutiny. Indeed, the MoD is the only major landowner in the UK that has banned hunt monitors rather than the hunts themselves.

To bring attention to this decision, our CEO Andy Knott MBE marched 10km over Salisbury Plain Military Training Area carrying 25kg on his back. That's the weight of his rescue dog, Buddy, similar to over 5,000 hunting hounds that are languishing in hunt kennels across the UK.

Andy raised over £30k for his efforts, demonstrating to the MoD that we have public support and integrity on our side. We will not let this lie.

Influencing legislation and empowering law enforcement

Our Intelligence team are information specialists and analysts who take information from the public, verify it as intelligence and create compelling intelligence packages. These are used to convince parliament to change animal welfare legislation, to empower law enforcement to arrest those carrying out horrendous animal crimes and to position us as a credible force.

Using our state-of-the-art technology, in-house expertise, and specialist investigators, three intelligence packages that were shared with the

police and RSPCA led to successful search warrants, with arrests and multiple dogs rescued.

During 2022, we shared 376 intelligence packages with more than 50 law enforcement partners. This included 10 different Non-Governmental Organisations and councils, and more than 40 police forces.

We also worked hard to improve the knowledge of both the police and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), training 295 key staff in the Hunting Act 2004 and wildlife crime. We hope this better understanding of the law and their vigour to ensure these crimes are prosecuted, will have a long-lasting effect, and more perpetrators of wildlife crime offences will be brought to justice.





Step by step in Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland is way behind its UK counterparts when it comes to legislating to end the cruelty of hunting wild mammals with dogs. Last year we had an historic opportunity to rectify this but sadly the attempt failed.

The Hunting of Wild Mammals (Northern Ireland) Bill, which was intended to prohibit hunting wild animals with dogs, prohibit trail hunting, and to prohibit terrier-work, work failed at stage two after Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) voted 38 for, and 45 against.

Sinn Fein blocked the Bill after being whipped to vote against it, and this pattern continued when Sinn Fein councillors failed to support Councillor McReynolds' motion.

However, we welcomed support from Belfast City Council for a ban on hunting wild mammals with dogs in Northern Ireland. The motion – End of Hunting for Mammals with Dogs – tabled by Councillor Peter McReynolds and seconded by Councillor Nuala McAllister, was supported with 30 for, and 18 against.

We'd like to applaud Belfast City Council, which has sent a clear message that this is an issue which is not going to go away quietly.

Public support is firmly in favour of ending this cruelty and we'll build on that momentum to campaign to end this cruel blood sport in Northern Ireland once and for all.



Goal Two

End shooting

Success: historic vote to ban snares in wales

Following five years of campaigning, a vote in the Senedd has finally secured a full snaring ban in Wales, the first country in the UK. It's a huge step forward for animal welfare.

Snares are thin wire nooses that tighten around the neck, torso or legs of any animal unlucky enough to step into them. They cause immense pain and suffering and are used by the shooting industry on 'game' bird shoots to trap wildlife that may affect the proliferation of the birds that will later be shot for 'sport'. They trap indiscriminately and government figures from Defra show almost three quarters of their victims aren't even the intended target – catching badgers, hedgehogs and domesticated pets.

In 2021 – after polling carried out by YouGov showed 78 per cent of the Welsh public wanted snares to be made illegal – we secured commitments from the Labour-run government in the Senedd to ban these cruel traps.

We began 2022 with a major push to accelerate the progress of the promised Agriculture (Wales) Bill and with it, the ban on snares. Throughout the first half of the year, we worked closely with policymakers in the Senedd and conducted grass roots activity across the nation and staged a series of roadshow events designed to engage the Welsh public in key areas.

We were invited to provide oral evidence to the Economy, Trade, and Rural Affairs Committee in the Senedd specifically on the use and banning of snares. This is a major milestone on the passage of legislation. We are recognised as being a major driver of this specific element of the legislation and as such we were a key contributor for the committee.

As a result, the new legislation banning snares was passed on 27 June and will protect wild, farmed and domestic animals from falling victim to these brutal devices.

This is a truly historic moment. For animals, for our supporters and everyone who supported the campaign and the League.

It will also add to the pressure in Westminster to finally start addressing this issue and with it the broader subject of the shooting industry. The example set in Wales featured heavily in a recent debate on snares in the House of Commons, alongside mentions of our work on the issue.

“Cruelty doesn’t have to be the first and only option in the way that we manage our landscape and manage species that are special to us”.

Olivia Blake, MP for Sheffield Hallam.

With the Welsh Government banning snaring as part of the Agriculture (Wales) Bill, and the Scottish Government reviewing their own snaring laws with the potential for a ban north of the border too, England’s slow progress is a striking contrast.

We also continued to raise awareness of the cruelty of game bird breeding cages, securing the backing of politicians at a reception at the Senedd and presenting our investigative findings to the Senedd’s Cross Party Group on Animal Welfare.

Our activity resulted in the issue being raised in the debating chamber, with the Rural Affairs Minister acknowledging the importance of the issue and signalling that the Welsh Government will examine it further in the coming year.





Exposed the shooting world's disregard for human life

Our team obtained damning video evidence showing dozens of dead 'game' birds being dumped into a mineshaft on the Dyfi Falls shooting estate in mid-Wales.

We reported this shocking incident to Natural Resources Wales and police amid strong concerns that the dead pheasants and partridges will contaminate water flowing into the nearby River Llyfnant and potentially pose a risk to human life.

The footage was captured at the Welsh beauty spot in Powys, and shows what is believed to be a shoot employee dumping at least 45 dead pheasants and partridges into the cavern, with more loaded up on his quadbike ready for disposal.

Highlighting these incidents increases awareness and, with more eyes and ears looking out for animal cruelty, will help us bring an end to these abhorrent sports for good.

Secured Unilever commitment to end shooting on its land

A report was made to our supporter-funded Animal Crimewatch about a suspected game shooting site on a farmland in Bedfordshire, thought to be owned by the multinational company.

Our team visited the site, found release pens and feeders and confirmed the farm was part of consumer goods giant Unilever's estate.

Our CEO Andy Knott wrote to the company to ask it to clarify its position on commercial game bird shooting and commit to ceasing its operation on its land. To its credit, Unilever speedily agreed and is committed to ending the so-called sport on its land.

Unilever acted swiftly, and as a result many animals will now be able to live free from harm. This message from a corporate giant, that it will not tolerate cruel sports, provides the momentum for us to call other companies to conduct their business without blood sports, which is a crucial part of our campaign work for 2023 and beyond.

Working to reduce grouse shooting in Scotland

Last year the Scottish Government announced a consultation on the licensing of shooting estates. As part of REVIVE – the coalition for grouse moor reform, led by us - our response was to call on the Scottish Government to tackle the circle of destruction surrounding grouse moors.

For example, vast areas of heather are burned, chemicals are spread across the moors and hundreds of thousands of foxes, stoats, weasels and crows are killed - all to ensure an overabundance of grouse that can then be shot for entertainment. Even the financial argument is weak, as the grouse shooting industry contributes a pittance to the Scottish economy.

The environmental damage, such as polluting effects of muir burn, the use of lead shot and the use of medicated grit is a grave concern.

The REVIVE coalition continues to be recognised as the major stakeholder in the national debate about shooting estates and over the year we continued building our relationships and increasing engagement with government ministers and officials about the new legislation.

To maximise interaction with Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) about

our submission to the consultation, we set up an exhibition at Scottish Parliament. It illustrated the circle of destruction surrounding grouse moors via our own version of the 90s game, Play Your Cards Right. At the end, the MSPs were left with a juxtaposition of facts - the large number of animals killed on grouse moors next to the paltry economic contribution of this destructive industry.

We launched a campaign in partnership with REVIVE about the hundreds of thousands of animals that are killed each year so that there can be an over-abundance of grouse to shoot for support. To highlight this 'killing to kill' every MSP was sent a toy fox, hedgehog or badger with a label reminding them of how many animals are killed just so more grouse can be shot. As a result, we had several meetings with Scottish Government ministers and many MSPs and officials on this issue.

'...vast areas of heather are burned, chemicals are spread across the moors and hundreds of thousands of foxes, stoats, weasels and crows are killed - all to ensure an overabundance of grouse.'





Goal Three

End fighting of animals for sport

Using intelligence to combat dog fighting

Dog fighting is secretive and operates deep underground. It's difficult and often dangerous to find information about what's going on and who's involved. It's an extremely challenging and dangerous world to operate in.

Our confidential supporter-funded Animal Crimewatch service – enabling the general public to report cruelty to animals inflicted by 'sport' - is at the forefront of our work.

Our Intelligence Team are professional analysts who take received information, verify it and turn it into packages for law enforcement to act on. Last year, 32 per cent of all intelligence gathered was related to animal fighting and shared with law enforcements and non-government organisations.

This information is also used to support our vital campaigning work calling for changes to animal welfare law, or to provide our media team with stories worthy of press interest, highlighting issues to a wider audience.

It can also be used to help us bring offenders to justice:

Case one

Reports into Animal Crimewatch led to a long-term investigation over several years. The culmination was a raid by the police, accompanied by the RSPCA, on a suspected dog fighter resulting in numerous dogs and dog fighting equipment being seized. Five people have been charged with multiple offences and if convicted at crown court, this could be the first time that the new powers of the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act, which we led the campaign for, are used. The suspects will go on trial in March 2024.

Case two

Animal Crimewatch information also led to an investigation into a suspected dog fighter and supplier of fighting dogs. Our intelligence package was passed to the police who raided the location in December. The suspect was arrested and nine dogs were seized. During the raid, equipment and related material associated with dog fighting were also found. This case is currently still under investigation.



Case three

A badger baiter was caught by our investigators mistreating dozens of animals and convicted of animal welfare offences. Hunt master David William Lloyd Thomas, 56, and his son Carwyn Lloyd Fazakerley, 18, both of Cwm Bowydd Farm, Blaenau Ffestiniog, were charged following our covert investigation. Both men pleaded guilty to offences under the Animal Welfare Act in relation to the dogs, which led to the seizure of a whole pack of hunting hounds – the first time this has ever happened.

Thomas was originally sentenced to 24 weeks in prison, just two weeks more than when he was convicted of dog fighting and badger baiting in

2018. He was also given a second ban from owning dogs for 10 years, having breached his original ban handed to him when he was convicted of badger baiting.

Fazakerley was sentenced to 160 hours community service, to be served over 12 months. He also received a 10-year disqualification order from owning dogs.

Sadly, on appeal, Thomas' sentence was reduced to 13 weeks, suspended for 12 months. Worse, the additional 10-year ban on keeping dogs was lifted despite him breaching his original ban.

Thanks to our work all the animals on his farm are now safe, but this sentence is nowhere near enough to deter those who would do harm to animals.

Case four

Through our work with the Scottish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA), we uncovered one of the worst cases of animal cruelty inspectors had ever seen.

Callum Muir, 25, used his three pet dogs to fight badgers and foxes and was seen in videos encouraging his dogs to attack wild animals as they screamed in pain. He also failed to seek veterinary treatment for any of the injuries his three dogs - terrier Pip, lurcher Bella and bull lurcher Mig - sustained as a result of the fights. He was jailed for just six months and has been banned from owning and keeping animals indefinitely. We would like to commend the SSPCA for such a comprehensive investigation which was critical in bringing this abuser to justice.

Case five

A gamekeeper who worked for one of Scotland's leading grouse shooting estates was jailed after pleading guilty to animal cruelty charges. It followed his exposure for arranging animal fighting with dogs including badger baiting. Rhys Davies, who was employed at Mildens Estates in Angus, was sentenced to eight months imprisonment. He was also banned from keeping or owning animals for 15 years.

He was exposed as being part of a dog fighting ring after sending 58 grotesque trophy photographs of dogs, badgers and foxes that had been the victims of organised animal fighting to be developed. Again, working with the SSPCA and police, we were able to offer our expertise and support in delivering crucial intelligence which saw the imprisonment of the offender.

Even though the League has no regulatory powers to directly enforce the laws relating to cruelty to animals in the name of 'sport', we're collaborative in our approach and have the capability, knowledge and skills to prepare credible investigation and evidential packages to share with those who do have an enforcement capability.



Goal Four

Win hearts and minds

Celebrating Fox Day 2023

We launched Fox Day in 2022 and this year's event saw the nation come together once again to share their love and support of foxes. Our staff and supporters proudly wore orange, our social media followers spread our message on their channels and thousands of people joined us online to celebrate our iconic red fox.

Giving foxes a voice

10,249 animal lovers signed the Official Record of Support for Britain's Foxes; a show of hands for the abolition of fox persecution.



Wearing orange with pride

Our supporters took to social media to show their support of Fox Day 2023 and their commitment to ending fox hunting for good.

Spreading style, and awareness

Fox merchandise sales not only helped fund our campaigning efforts but also raised awareness of the League to the public.



Fact or fiction?

A fox quiz was circulated on social media, to educate the general public about foxes as well as debunk any negative myths.

Business Without Blood Sports Pledge

Animal welfare and environmental issues are now a priority concern with the public, the value of which is increasingly recognised by business and enterprise.

Following on from our successful lobbying of well-known firms such as KAYAK and EasyJet – asking them to stop the use of blood sports imagery in their advertising – we've now begun to recruit businesses to join our very own Business Without Blood Sports pledge.

The pledge is a way to create a community of organisations that not only refuse to use blood sports in their materials, but also adhere to ethics around both animal welfare and the environment.

We have so far been joined by more than 150 businesses, including energy giant Ecotricity, and have high aspirations for a growing pledge community.

"We share the belief of the overwhelming majority of the British public that animals should be defended from persecution in the name of 'sport', and therefore we pledge to ensure we will never allow, promote or otherwise enable blood sports such as hunting, shooting or animal fighting."

Business without Blood Sports pledge

Calling all wildlife photographers

We held our annual photography competition with the theme Animals in Action, which called for supporters to submit their best animal images ranging from beautiful birds, wild mammals and beloved dogs.

We received 678 entries, and our image library is now full of outstanding images to share across our materials, celebrating all the animals we strive to protect through our work. Our celebrity judges this year included professional wildlife photographers Andy Parkinson and Carl Bovis as well as TV's nature presenter, Michaela Strachan.



Call for tighter safety measures at Aintree

Our campaign to see higher standards for racehorse welfare stepped up a gear in 2023 after the Cheltenham Festival took place again. Sadly, one horse died on the first day of the festival and, though the death toll was thankfully less than the four deaths we saw last year, one horse death is one too many.

A month later, the three-day Grand National Festival at Aintree - a race

similarly notorious for horse fatalities - saw the tragic death of three horses including one in the Grand National race itself.

We have renewed our urgent calls for stronger animal welfare standards at Aintree and all racecourses across the UK. We are campaigning for a ban on whip use, which pushes horses beyond what they can safely achieve, and for the British Horseracing Authority to be replaced with a truly independent regulatory body.



Our Wildlife Reserves

A positive impact on animals, the environment and our understanding of nature

Whereas elsewhere in the country we've seen hunts closing, amalgamating, or switching to drag hunting, on Exmoor, Dartmoor and the Quantock Hills deer hunting, fox hunting and hare hunting have continued unabated. These are also the areas where most of the League's wildlife reserves are situated.

The three stag hunts have caused us the most problems during the year, with hounds chasing deer onto the reserves on numerous occasions. However, once the hunted deer are on League land, they are saved from the hunt and can rest. Sometimes it can be difficult to stop hounds or hunt supporters from chasing the hunted deer off again, but the 250 acres of freedom and sanctuary are available for all wildlife.

As well as protecting hunted animals, we also strive to protect the environment.

On our wildlife reserves we have more than 250 acres of semi-natural ancient woodland, with many trees well over a century old, so their capacity to store carbon from the atmosphere is significant. In May our staff each planted an additional tree on our reserves to help offset our annual carbon emissions.

Rewilding is an important part of our environmental programme. The removal of cutting and grazing regimes on our reserve has seen more areas of tussocky grass form on the fields, which favours small mammals and invertebrates that in turn attract larger predators. The huge numbers of butterflies on the fields during the summer was quite extraordinary.

Once again, we were able to work with the Somerset Badger Group to vaccinate badgers on Baronsdown. It is a sad fact that badger populations have been devastated by a combination of illegal persecution by gamekeepers and farmers, and legal persecution through culling. We are pleased that we are able to maintain a healthy badger population on the reserve.

While League members can visit our wildlife reserves, their location in the heart of Somerset can be difficult for many to reach. This year we hosted our inaugural Wildlife Reserve online event, enabling supporters from all around the country to hear about the fantastic work being done in the world of rewilding and conservation, on our reserves and across Britain. It was a successful and informative event helping to raise awareness of our long-term goals.



Forever Free

Gifts in wills make it possible for us to give persecuted animals a voice and enact positive, permanent change in animal welfare. These gifts have enabled us to maintain wildlife reserves that offer safe havens for wildlife at risk. They have supported the campaigning that has achieved protection for wildlife through landmark legislation and social change. They provide a lasting gift of freedom to animals threatened by cruel sports.

Last year 55 people kindly remembered us in their will and made their mark on animal welfare. We're extremely grateful for their support that will help to create a safer world for animals, forever free from fear.

In 2022, animals were protected by:

Robert Allen
Beryl Benjamin
Audrey Bernard
Kenneth Billis
Maureen Bird
Shirley Bishop
Edith Brown
June Chatton
Martin Choat
Gerda Christophi
Laurence Clark
Derek Clowes
Elizabeth Davies
Dephine Deaville
Margaret Ellis
Suzanne Eward
Margaret Ferriman
Rosalind Flowers
Diana Freeman
Barbara Garlick
Meirwen Gordon
Edward Gwynne
Jennifer Hallam
John Hendy

Doreen Holmes
Valerie Hurst
John Hutton
Susan Jennings
Leslie Johnston
Rosemary Jones
Barbara Kitching
Brenda Lawfer
William Laws
Edward Layton
Donald Leader
Melody Leroy
Frances Miller
David Mitchell
James Parrington
Jean Peacock
Brenda Pocha
Shirley Rayner

Kathleen Robinson
Audrey Saunders
Ken Scattergood
Joseph Shaw
Joan Shaw
Susan Stevens
Betty Stewart
Joan Stringfellow
Margaret Tate
Marjorie Thompson
Joan Tripp
Eileen Westbrook
Eileen White



376 intelligence packages shared with **more than 50** law enforcement partners



10,500 supporters emailed Ben Wallace MP to express their anger about retraction of our Memorandum of Understanding

59 companies have signed the **Business Without Blood Sports Pledge**



55 supporters remembered us in their will

295 key Crown Prosecution Service staff trained by the **League** in the Hunting Act 2004 and wildlife crime

88p of every **£1 you donate** is spent on our **charitable objectives to end hunting with dogs, end shooting of animals for 'sport' and end animal fighting.**



Get in touch

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