

PROTECT

AUTUMN ISSUE

2023



LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS



Wins for wildlife

Ending hunting, shooting and animal fighting. Find out how your support and our campaigning has led to significant success in animal welfare wins.

Welcome to your autumn issue of Protect



We bring you this issue of Protect in celebration, as we prepare for our Centenary in 2024. To see what's ahead, it's wise to first look back.

I hope you enjoy reading about all the aspects of our work that help us deliver change for animals, be they a single fighting dog or an entire species, or what we provide for animals on our own wildlife reserves. Each animal will feel the difference we make.

I end with my sincere thanks to everyone who has worked so hard to deliver the outcomes that make up this report, and all those before it. Our generous supporters, amazing volunteers, and expert staff make this, the League Against Cruel Sports, the best hope for animals persecuted for so called sport.

The many protections we have brought for animals throughout our history, and particularly over the last few years, bode so very well for the ending of cruel sports in all four corners of the United Kingdom. We have summarised them for you in these pages (page 12).

2023 has been particularly successful, with a proper ban on hunting in Scotland, a ban on snares in Wales, and an expected imminent ban on snaring in Scotland as the highlights. These measures all put the onus on England to follow suite. It must.

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'AR Knott', set against a dark background.

AR Knott MBE
CEO

Our Goals

End hunting, shooting, animal fighting and other cruel sports and the associated practices that enable them.

Win the hearts and minds of a broader audience.



This issue at a glance



Snares success in Wales

Follow the campaign journey that led to Wales becoming the first UK nation to outlaw the use of snares.

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National Parks campaign

Use your voice; help us to end hunting in 13 national parks across the UK.

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The Hunting Act 2014

Legitimate exemptions or unforgivable excuses?

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Recap on our achievements for animals over the past five years.

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Wildlife Reserves

Read our view of the impact of humans on animals in autumn.

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Team League

Discover the many ways you can show your support of persecuted animals, including stocking up on our new Christmas card range.

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Will Morton - Head of Public Affairs

No more snares!

After years of campaigning, Wales has become the first nation in the UK to outlaw the use of snares.

Snares are thin wire traps widely used by shooting industry gamekeepers to target any animal they think threatens their 'game' birds.

On 27 June, Members of the Senedd voted unanimously in favour of historic legislation which included a complete ban on their use, cementing Wales as a leader in animal welfare.

The new ban – which comes into force this month – will save countless animals from a cruel fate, now free from the suffering that snares have inflicted for far too long.

Diolch yn fawr (A big thank you)

This tremendous feat could not have been achieved without your tireless support and shared vision of a world free from cruelty to animals in the name of 'sport'.

Our campaign, and the end of the road for snares in Wales, really got going with a petition which secured an influential inquiry into their use in 2017. After many milestones along the way, the campaign led to an election promise from Welsh Labour in 2021 to ban snares. A phenomenal response from League supporters to a public



consultation then sealed government support for an outright ban.

Following the Senedd elections, we took your voice to the Senedd to ensure the government followed through on its promise. When the legislation was introduced last year, we successfully battled attempts to water down the ban on snares and were invited to provide detailed evidence to the Welsh Parliament.

The Rural Affairs Minister responsible for the legislation, Lesley Griffiths MS, stood firm and with strong cross-party support a complete ban on the use of snares was passed into law this summer.

What's next in Wales?

With your support, we achieved a total ban on the use of snares. Now our focus shifts towards banning cruel breeding cages for 'game' birds.

Unfortunately, Wales is the home of the largest game bird breeding site in Europe. Bringing an end to caged breeding of 'game' birds in Wales will immediately improve the animal welfare for at least 90,000 breeding birds kept in cages for most of their adult lives.

Together, we can make Wales a cage-free nation.

Reaping the benefits of devolution

Wales has set an example for the rest of the UK to follow. Snares could soon be outlawed in Scotland following a Scottish Government consultation on adding a ban to its Wildlife Management and Muirburn (Scotland) Bill. This will intensify pressure on the UK government to ban snares in England too, if it is left as the only nation in Great Britain to allow them, and a future change in UK government could very well see a Great Britain completely free of snares.



John Petrie - Regional Campaigns Manager

Our National Parks campaign has launched!

Our national parks are some of our country's greatest assets. Enjoyed by millions every year, they conserve and enhance natural beauty and wildlife. They should not be the playground of hunts to chase and kill. That's why we've launched a new campaign to bring an end to hunting on our national parks.



Our new campaign calls on the park authorities across England and Wales to do all in their power to end fox hunting on our national parks. Their world-class landscapes, stunning natural beauty, and wondrous wildlife may not be ours, but they are ours to look after and preserve for future generations. That's why the park authorities must act to end this barbaric cruel 'sport'.

With almost 10 per cent of England, and nearly 20 per cent of Wales, being national park land, there's a real opportunity for our campaign to deny the hunts access to significant tracts of land. With the current government refusing to act and properly ban hunting with dogs, it remains our job to deny the hunts access to as much land as possible while we persuade policymakers that it's time for change.

Our first task is to persuade each of the 13 national park authorities to ban so-called 'trail' hunting on land they own and manage, but there is much more they can do after making that commitment. With much of our national parks owned by private landowners, we will seek to work with the park authorities, local policymakers, and other partners to ban hunting one acre at a time.



QUEEN VICTORIA

LEAGUE AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS
TIME FOR CHANGE
National Parks
#EndHunting

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‘...it’s about people and about making their voices heard.’

We’ve made a flying start to the campaign, with awareness-raising events already held in Brighton in July, Cardiff in August, and Leeds in September. As well as the local and regional media interest our events generate, our launch on 15 July secured us an exclusive story in The Times and our Wales event saw our campaign being covered by media across the country.

But our campaign is about more than spreading our message through the media, it’s about people and about making their voices heard. Our open letter to national park authorities – calling on them to do all in their power to end fox hunting on our national parks – has already been signed by over 16,000 people.

The first couple of months of the campaign have been a great success and it’s because animal advocates like you are raising their voice for animals and making sure this is an issue that isn’t going away. Thank you for everything you do to support our work.

You can join our campaign

Thousands of animal lovers like you have already signed our open letter to national park authorities. If you would like to add your voice, visit: **league.org.uk/nationalparks**





Campaigning with the Coalition

This is the first campaign our partners in the Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting have joined us on. With the focus of the coalition being to change the law after the next general election, we're delighted to have so many of them on board with our national parks campaign too. Fox hunting is clearly an issue that people want to see addressed.

We've been able to announce a steady stream of animal welfare organisations joining our campaign since the end of August and the momentum continues to build as our partners add their voices to ours. With so many backing our campaign, and bringing their millions of supporters with them, it's becoming clear that not just national parks, but also policymakers must act to end fox hunting.

As well as adding their names to our campaign, and encouraging their supporters to join it too, members of the coalition will be getting involved as well. Look out for more in the next issue of Protect, or online if you follow us on social media, to see all the ways in which they are supporting us. Ranging from blogs, to events, to podcasts, our partners are giving more than just their names to this campaign.

It bodes well for our general election campaign next year, and for getting the next government to finally strengthen the Hunting Act 2004 and bring an end to fox hunting once and for all.

How intelligence supports our campaigns

Our in-house intelligence team always helps us to build credible and effective campaigns, and this one is no different. Using their insights and expertise, we can build a picture of what hunting looks like on our national parks. We know where it happens, who is doing it, and on whose land.

Not only does the work of the intelligence team help us identify the focus of our campaigns, but it also helps us to apply pressure to those who own and manage land as well as policymakers. Being able to demonstrate this abhorrent, and often illegal activity, is taking place across our national parks means it's an issue that can't be ignored. It isn't enough to just say we think, we must be able to say we know.

We're also supported by the team for identifying potential areas of interest for the media to work with us on. I won't give anything away now but keep an eye out in the next edition of Protect for a more detailed update.

**TIME FOR
CHANGE**
 **National Parks**



You can show your support of the National Parks campaign by buying an exclusive t-shirt from our Clothes Against Cruel Sport range.

league.org.uk/clothes



Mike Nicholas - Senior Media Relations Officer

A large buck with impressive antlers is the central focus of the image. The buck is shown in profile, facing left, with its head and antlers in sharp focus. The antlers are dark and have several points. The buck's fur is a mix of brown and grey. The background is a soft-focus landscape featuring a mountain range under a sunset sky. The mountains are bathed in a warm, orange glow from the setting sun. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, dry grasses. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

The Hunting Act 2014

Running for its life, an exhausted stag gallops into view. Hot on its tail are the baying hounds of the Devon and Somerset Staghounds and the members of the hunt on horseback.

Hollering from the neighbouring roads are the hunt supporters scaring the red deer away from safety and driving it into the hands of the hunt.

It's a battle the stag will sadly lose. It will tire and then the hunt will move in for the kill, a shot ringing out to signify the brutal end to this chase.

It's a scene that plays out every summer and autumn in Devon and Somerset. As you're reading this the three deer hunts active in the west country will be switching their attention to hinds, some of them pregnant, and their young.

You'd think such scenes would be illegal in 2023 – after all hunting with dogs was banned nearly 20 years ago. But the hunts are cynically exploiting the hunting exemptions found within the Hunting Act 2004. The 'research and observation' loophole was the excuse of choice for many years – despite very little research ever emerging – but the 'rescue of a wild mammal' looks increasingly to be the trendsetter of excuses. Quite why the hunt would need to chase a stag to exhaustion for seven miles if it needed 'rescuing' defies logic and flies in the face of animal welfare.

We're working hard to persuade politicians to end this cruelty and strengthen hunting laws by removing these ridiculous exemptions.

'...hunts are cynically exploiting the hunting exemptions found within the Hunting Act 2004.'



Wins for animals

2018 - 2023

Our successes are not easily won. They take persistence, perfect timing, strategic insights, collaboration, commitment and long-term relationship building.

Our passionate staff bring a multitude of skills to the cause – public affairs experience, intelligence insights, media relations, fundraising skills to name a few - that lead us closer and closer to our goal of ending hunting, shooting and animal fighting.

We are proud to have achieved significant wins for wildlife in our 99 year history. We are proud to have supporters like you who continue to stand by our side. We are proud to be the League Against Cruel Sports.





2018

University of Wales ends its lease with the 'game' bird breeder at Gregynog Hall estate

Natural Resources Wales pioneers a decision to no longer permit 'game' bird shooting

in the Welsh national forest



Dog fighting exposé launched by BBC News showing national and international network of dog breeders and dog fighting



2019

Nottinghamshire County Council bans trail hunting on its land



League forms a coalition of 11 leading Non-Governmental Organisations to increase custodial sentences for animal cruelty from six months to five years.



The Labour manifesto adopts our key measures to strengthen the Hunting Act 2004

Yorkshire Water tightens up its licensing arrangements in Yorkshire Moors



The University of Reading ends the shooting of pheasants on its land



Conservative Party pledges to increase animal cruelty sentences to five years, and not to repeal the Hunting Act 2004, on its General Election Manifesto.



2020

League independently rated as **twelfth best charity to work for in the UK.**



Amendment to the Animals and Wildlife (Penalties, Protections and Powers) (Scotland) Act to **protect the mass culling of mountain hares**



National Trust, Forestry England and United Utilities **suspend 'trail' hunting**



Lake District National Park and National Resources Wales **suspend trail hunting**



Councillors in Peterborough **ban trail hunting on public land**



2021

League wins Chartered Institute of Public Relations **Gold and Silver medals** for its **United Against Hunting** general election campaign



National Trust **bans trail hunting on its land**

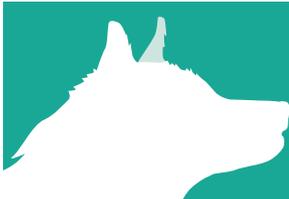
Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act passes, increasing sentences from **six months to five years**



UK's largest landowners, including the National Trust, United Utilities, Forestry England, Lake District National Parks and Natural Resources Wales **ban or permanently suspend hunting licences which results in more than 2.3 million acres of land denied to hunts**



Cheshire West and Cheshire Council **bans hunting on its land**





2022



As the Cross-Party Groups are independent and formed by members of the Senedd, the **League was appointed as the Secretariate on Animal Welfare at the Welsh Parliament**

The Lake District National Park Authority **suspends trail hunt licences indefinitely**




League wins Chartered Institute of Public Relations **Gold and Silver medals** for its National Trust and Webinars campaigns

2023



Scotland **really bans fox hunting** with the introduction of The Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Act

Wales bans the use of **snare**s in the Agriculture (Wales) Bill




Five National Park Authorities (South Downs, New Forest, Lake District, North York Moors, and Yorkshire Dales) **undertake not to allow trail hunting on the land they own**

Labour Party includes a pledge to **close the loopholes in the Hunting Act** in its pre-general election policy document

TIME FOR CHANGE

– COALITION AGAINST HUNTING –

Launch of the League-led **Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting**, a coalition of 32 Non-Governmental Organisations. It is perhaps the **biggest single-issue coalition ever brought in UK to campaign on any subject**

Greater protection for animals

In a win for animals, we've ensured that judges across England and Wales now have greater powers to jail animal abusers for longer. This follows a consultation on new guidelines for sentencing offenders, which have been strengthened in response to the concerns we and our charity partners raised.

The Sentencing Council, an independent body which sets rules that judges and magistrates must follow, last year proposed a new set of guidelines for handing down animal cruelty sentences. This was necessary to bring outdated guidelines into line with new legislation allowing tougher maximum prison terms. However, the typical sentence for the most serious animal cruelty offences was proposed to be around 18 months in prison. We responded firmly to

this, urging the Sentencing Council to increase proposed sentences to be closer to the legal limit of five years.

As a result, the new sentencing guidelines now go much further. Those convicted of the most serious animal cruelty offences can now expect to be jailed for between six months and three and a half years, with a starting point of two years. Particularly shocking offences may still result in a five-year sentence. While not perfect, this



marks a significant improvement on previous proposals and offers animals greater protections than ever before.

Importantly, the Sentencing Council also said it agreed with the League that cruelty involving a profit motive should be an aggravating factor in sentencing. This opens up criminals involved in dog fighting – so often involving financial gain through breeding and betting – to receive harsher sentences than they otherwise would under the new guidelines.



**ANIMAL
CRIMEWATCH**

If you witness - or suspect - acts of animal cruelty, you can report it to our supporter-funded Animal Crimewatch service.

league.org.uk/crimewatch

The seasons of change

Paul Tillsley - Head of Conservation and Education

Autumn is a time of mixed emotions for those of us who live and work on the League's wildlife reserves.

There's a certain sense of sadness as the vivid green hues that have provided the calming backdrop to the summer's activities mellow and fade. The colours of summer try their hardest to hang on, but shorter days and colder temperatures inevitably mean they must give way and allow autumn in.

We've already said goodbye to the summer specialists; the flowers, the insects, and the migrant birds that have enriched our lives throughout the warmer months. These are uncertain times, and we hope they will return next year. The flycatchers and warblers have retreated to North Africa and beyond, chasing insects and the sunshine, whereas most insects here will see out the colder times as eggs, pupae, or in a state of suspended animation. Flowers have cast their seeds or have retreated below ground for a well-earned rest.

Trees stand stoically against the changing seasons as their leaves transform through reds, purples, yellows, and browns. Acorns, chestnuts, and beech nuts form crunchy carpets on the ground below their parents, while the winged seeds of sycamore and lime trees take to the air. The berries of rowan, elder, hawthorn, and blackthorn lure in winter thrushes, redwings and fieldfares, to gorge on the fruits and to take the seed far away.

Then, there is the excitement and spectacle of the red deer rut, where stags make their way to their traditional rutting grounds to compete for the attention of females. For a couple of months each year, when testosterone levels are high, friendships are forgotten as the focus turns to siring the next generation.

Unfortunately, there are also the human activities that infringe on our daily lives and on the lives of other animals during autumn.

Volley of gunshots from pheasant and partridge shoots ring out near the League's reserves almost every day of the week, as people try to kill birds they have no interest in eating. Gamekeepers with their traps, guns, and poisons, have already killed any predator that might have been attracted by the thousands of factory-farmed birds.

Deer hunting, fox hunting and hare hunting all continue despite the restrictions imposed by the Hunting Act 2004, even around where the League's reserves are located in Exmoor and Dartmoor National Parks.

We are working hard to ensure the Hunting Act is strengthened, and that local authorities crack down on these cruel and often illegal activities.



Animal Crimewatch

Our supporter-funded service is designed to empower members of the public to report animal crime. Our Intelligence Team takes this information and, through a rigorous process, attempts to turn it into viable intelligence to support our campaigns to end cruel sports. If you suspect animals are being persecuted in the name of 'sport' near you, please get in touch.



What happens when I report cruelty in the name of sport to Animal Crimewatch?

1. Report

Suspected cruel sport incident **reported** via **Animal Crimewatch**



Contact provides details of the incident; date/time/ location/incident details /photographs/videos where possible



2. Log

A member of the **Animal Crimewatch team** adds the incident details to our database



3. Research & validate

The information will be **researched** to **validate** the details by...



Using the **'Map of Cruel Sports'**



Looking at intelligence opportunities/utilising all **information**



Harvesting intelligence to enable further investigations

4. Outcome

Our **research** and **data** is used to...



Produce statistics to assist with lobbying parliament



Support our campaigns to protect animals from cruel sport



Create national and local media awareness campaigns

...**amplifying our voice** to a **national audience**

5. Feedback

We **provide feedback**, as well as useful information, to our sources to create **greater public awareness**

Phone: 0300 444 1234

Email: crimewatch@league.org.uk

Web: league.org.uk/animal-crimewatch/report

Info: league.org.uk/what-you-can-do/useful-information/

Team League



Animals are at the heart of our organisation, but none of our vital work would be possible without our steadfast supporters.

In recent years we have faced a global pandemic and a cost-of-living crisis, events that have forced much of the population into difficult decisions about how, and where, to spend their money. We thank you for continuing to stand by the side of animals and for entrusting us with your donations, your time and your ongoing support.

On these pages we highlight a few of the ways you can continue to support persecuted animals, and spread our message to your friends and family.



Delivered to your door

Cards
AGAINST
CRUEL SPORTS

Did you know the last recommended postage date for Christmas cards is Monday 11 December? It's time to order our latest designs so you can get them to your loved ones in time for the festive season.

Our staff are so passionate about ending cruel sports that two of them have channeled their inspiration into the creation of four handcrafted Christmas cards, exclusively for our supporters.

These unique cards can only be purchased from our Cards Against Cruel Sports range, along with 15 other beautiful designs featuring winter foxes, majestic stags, beautiful badgers and wild hare.

Our Christmas cards can take up to five days to be delivered in busy periods, so please place your order online as soon as possible to avoid disappointment.



Phone orders: 01227 811 620
league.org.uk/cards



Wear your support with pride

Whether you want to show your own support of the charity, or buy a gift for your friends and family, we have a wide variety of designs for you.

All t-shirts and tote bags are printed to order, made from organic cotton using renewable energy and come in plastic-free packaging, so you can shop with a clear conscience as you do twice as much to care for animals in their natural environment.

All profits from your purchase support our campaigns to end hunting, shooting and animal fighting across the UK.



league.org.uk/clothes

Write your will for free

It's our dream to create a safer world for animals to live in, forever free from persecution and fear. No creature should be chased, maimed or killed in the pursuit of so-called 'sport'.

If you make a small gift in your will to the League, you can make a real impact on animal welfare. You could change forever, today.

As a thank you for your support and compassion for animals, you can claim a free will - from our partners at Guardian Angel - who can help you make your mark online, over the phone or in person. All wills are checked by a solicitor and give you the freedom to plan in the way that suits you best. It's simple and easy to use.

Make your mark and give animals a life free from the horrors of hunting.

“I have never had a will before and didn't know where to start. The service that has been set up is so quick, easy to follow, and informative. I could not be happier or recommend it more.”

- Raechel

Visit us at: league.org.uk/makeyourmark
Phone us on: **01482 524250.**

Get in touch

01483 524 250

supportercare@league.org.uk

league.org.uk

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