

PROTECT

SUMMER ISSUE

2026



LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS



The Time for Change is here



Welcome to your Summer edition of Protect. After decades of campaigning, the Government has finally launched

its consultation on trail hunting.

We have all campaigned for so long to see a proper end to the hunting of wild animals with dogs, and now our opportunity has arrived. We must now make the most of this historic moment — which is why we have included a quick and easy guide on how to respond with this edition of Protect. Everyone is invited to participate and you can respond by post or online.

With your help, the consultation will pave the way for a proper and lasting ban on hunting. This is the best chance in more than 20 years to end fox, stag, and hare hunting in England and Wales. We must seize this chance, because we don't know if we'll ever get another one.

Together, we have made this possible with our relentless campaigning. And we will continue to create a better world for animals who so desperately need our protection.

Thank you for your continued support.

Emma Slawinski
Chief Executive

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.



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ENDING THE BRUTAL BLOOD SPORT OF FOX HUNTING



You have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to finally end the brutal blood sport of fox hunting. The government has launched a consultation which you can take part in, and which asks for your views on banning trail hunting, the discredited excuse used by fox hunts.



More than 20 years after the original but ineffective fox hunting ban came into force in 2005, we are now on the brink of obtaining new stronger fox hunting laws which will properly tackle hunting with dogs. Our supporter-funded campaigns team are putting their energy into making the most of this golden opportunity, calling on a wide cross-section of the public to take part in the government's consultation on hunting.

This follows years of work by the League's public affairs team which you fund, and who talk to the government ministers responsible for developing more successful and kinder animal welfare legislation.

If we succeed, together we will be giving the justice system the legal clout to tackle the hunters who have carried on chasing and killing foxes despite the ban.

The hunts have been lying to you, the police and the courts, claiming they are following trails when in reality their hounds are cruelly chasing and tearing apart foxes as they did before the ban. The leading police officer with responsibility for fox hunting crime in England and Wales, chief superintendent Matt Longman, has described trail hunting as a smokescreen for illegal hunting and confirmed that illegal hunting is prolific.

Please make sure you take part in the consultation which ends on June 18, as it is a pivotal moment in ending the fox hunting which continues to blight our countryside.

Fox hunting is barbaric and should be consigned to the history books. Let's seize this moment to end it once and for all.





How to take part in the hunting consultation.



We have prepared a handy step-by-step guide for you which you can use to help shape your reply to the government consultation on hunting. You can find this guide with your copy of Protect.

We fully support the moves to ban trail hunting, but we need the government to go further to protect animals from would-be hunters, when it looks to strengthen hunting laws after the consultation has finished. In your reply to the consultation, you need to do the following:



You'll call for a ban on trail hunting



You'll call for an effective deterrent in the form of prison sentences to be made available to judges in fox hunting court cases – at present convicted hunters often get just a paltry fine and are out hunting again the next day



You'll call for measures to prevent hunts from acting recklessly and then claiming that any kills were 'accidental'



You'll call for the exemptions in the Hunting Act to be removed, which hunts exploit to carry on killing wildlife.



Shocking new figures show the scale of barbaric fox hunting

The League has compiled a shocking set of figures showing that illegal fox hunting is still rife despite the ban. The figures show that hunts in England and Wales were seen chasing 488 foxes during the most recent fox hunting season which finished at the end of March and the cub hunting season which preceded it. They also show a pattern of anti-social behaviour by hunts, with 1,220 incidents in which they wreaked havoc on rural communities.

This 'hunt havoc' includes trespass in people's gardens, attacks on family pets, reports of other wildlife such as deer being chased, hounds running amok on busy roads and hunts causing road traffic accidents or even accidents on railway lines – all activities inconsistent with the idea of following a trail, which is what hunts claim to be doing.

The figures were compiled by the League's supporter-funded intelligence team staffed by former police officers and civilian analysts – and consist of incidents reported into its confidential Animal Crimewatch service, evidence obtained by our field operatives, and from reports by hunt saboteurs and hunt monitors.

Of course, the figures are just the tip of the iceberg, showing only those hunts being monitored, with hunt behaviour in many remote rural areas and incidents of animals being chased and torn apart going unreported. But they are important.

We know and you know that trail hunting is a lie – and these figures show that just 23 or less than 4% of the 624 hunt meets monitored across England and Wales showed any evidence of a trail being laid. And within those 23 reports of a trail being laid, there was in fact evidence of 22 foxes being chased.

These figures show the desperate need for us all to take part in the government's hunting consultation.

The time for change is now. You can help shape new and tougher fox hunting laws and end the cruel bloodshed and carnage in the countryside.

'The figures show that hunts in England and Wales were seen chasing 488 foxes during the most recent fox hunting season.'



Bloodied foxes piled up high in events across the country

League campaigners have been busy arranging a series of events funded by donors up and down the country, highlighting the scale of illegal fox hunting still taking place and urging the public to take part in the government consultation.

In an eye-catching stunt, a huge pile of 648 fake bloodied fake foxes was repeatedly dumped by the League 'hunter' in town and city centres – one for each report the charity has received of a fox being chased by hunts since the general election.

The public in London, Birmingham, Manchester, Reading, and Cirencester were shocked by the sight and expressed their support for our campaign to end fox hunting – taking part in the consultation there and then.





Savage deer hunting in the spotlight

In the West Country, the savage blood sport of deer hunting with hounds is still taking place. Every year it sees hundreds of stags and hinds being cruelly chased for miles to the point of exhaustion before being shot.

Three deer hunts operating on Exmoor, the Quantock Hills and surrounding areas still pursue their barbaric bloodsport, falsely using absurd exemptions in the Hunting Act to get away with their cruelty. The hunts often claim to be undertaking 'research and observation' or to 'be rescuing a wild mammal', but the reality is that no serious research has been undertaken and they often choose the fittest animal in the herd to chase.

The League's donor-funded field operatives have teamed up with the North Dorset Hunt Saboteurs

in recent months to monitor the behaviour of these hunts and have captured evidence of some terrible suffering. The tormented deer visibly begins to deteriorate during the chase enduring prolonged physical and mental distress simply to satisfy the blood lust of the callous hunters.

These exemptions need to be removed from the Hunting Act and jail sentences introduced when the government implements new tougher hunting laws – and with your help we will end this pitiless blood sport.

END HUNTING TODAY

You can help end the hunting of animals with dogs:

Participate in the government's consultation on trail hunting in England and Wales before its closing date of 18 June: Have your say and tell the government it's time to the hunting and persecution of animals.

Donate to our appeal and fund work to ensure the consultation leads to a proper hunting ban and finally ends the hunting of animals with dogs.

Visit:

www.league.org.uk
to take action!



TACKLING CATAPULT CRIME AND THE KILLING OF WILDLIFE

Thanks to your support, the League is leading the way in tackling a disturbing new crime involving teenagers killing or injuring waterfowl with powerful catapults in our parks and on our waterways. Ducks, swans and geese are falling victim to this horrific crime, which a League investigation found was being fuelled by boasts on social media, with teenage boys filming and sharing reports of it on the TikTok platform.

The League's head of intelligence Russ Middleton – who runs the donor-funded intelligence team – has been instrumental in bringing together the police and animal welfare charities to form the new Operation Lakeshot working group. This group aims to raise awareness of this new horrific wildlife crime and to establish how it can be addressed.

Key to this will be calls on the government to review and amend the legislation on the possession and use of these dangerous catapults, which shoot steel ball bearings, killing and causing devastating injuries to our wildlife. We will

also be highlighting the need for all catapult sellers to check the age of people buying these weapons, as they can be bought all too easily. As Russ says: "Catapults are weapons not toys, and should be treated in a similar way to guns and knives."

We are also urging anyone witnessing catapult crime to phone the police and the League's Animal Crimewatch Service that is gathering intelligence on the issue. Russ adds: "It's vitally important that the public report these horrific wildlife crimes so we can get the whole picture on what is happening and take steps to stamp it out."



Racing to the finishing line: calls rise for the end of greyhound racing

Your support has enabled the League to tackle the hazardous sport of greyhound racing, which has been responsible for the deaths and injuries of so many dogs. And thanks to you, we have been able to secure two huge victories in recent weeks, with the Welsh and Scottish parliaments taking the landmark decision to ban greyhound racing in both Wales and Scotland. This was achieved by working in partnership with a range of charities in both countries.





We've now renewed our calls for the UK government to ban greyhound racing in England and launched a new report on the issue in parliament last month.

The report – Reaching the Finish Line: Time to end dog racing in the UK – was a joint initiative with GREY2K USA Worldwide, the largest greyhound protection organisation in the world. It established how racing greyhounds around oval tracks is inherently dangerous, putting huge strain on the dogs' bodies. The report highlighted that a shocking 1,353 greyhounds died at trackside after racing in the UK and 35,168 injuries were sustained by the dogs between 2017 and 2024.

But it isn't just during racing that greyhounds have been let down. A further 3,278 greyhounds were destroyed for other reasons, such as treatment costs or simply because they were judged as poor candidates for adoption.

The report also raised concerns over the kennel conditions, breeding, and rehoming of greyhounds. Racing greyhounds spend as much as 95% of their lives pent up in kennels, and at each point in the breeding process, there are 'surplus' or unwanted greyhounds, and at least 1,000 retired greyhounds go unaccounted for every year.

This is animal abuse — and on a shocking level.

The League's Chief Executive, Emma Slawinski, spoke at the launch of the report in Parliament, and is now looking ahead to what we can achieve next: "The UK government has pledged to deliver the most ambitious animal welfare reforms in a generation and banning the dangerous sport of greyhound racing in England should be part of their plans. We look forward to politicians in the UK catching up and following the lead of the Scottish and Welsh parliaments."



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A close-up, high-contrast photograph of a horse's eye. The eye is dark and reflective, with a bright highlight. The surrounding fur is dark and textured. The background is blurred, showing warm, golden light, suggesting a sunset or sunrise setting.

Calls to end horse racing's deadly toll

The League is calling for government intervention and a boycott of both the Cheltenham and Aintree horse racing festivals, in protest at the appalling death toll. Since the year 2000, 82 horses have died after racing during the annual four-day Cheltenham festival while at the Aintree Festival, 69 horses have been raced to their deaths.

‘Year after year we see horses dying at both festivals and sadly this year was no different.’

We are calling for the government to step in and ensure that horses’ welfare is put before people’s entertainment and the profits of gambling companies. We have been highlighting that the use of the whip should be banned in racing as it causes pain and distress to the horses and pushes them beyond what they are capable of, resulting in more deaths and injuries. We are also calling on the public and businesses to boycott both the Cheltenham and Aintree horse racing festivals.

Year after year we see horses dying at both festivals and sadly this year was no different, with four more horses dying at Cheltenham and two dying at Aintree.

We worked to ensure this suffering didn’t get brushed under the carpet. The League’s donor-funded public relations team was quick to respond – and our messaging about the cruelty being inflicted on horses was picked up by nearly 400 media outlets across the world, from New Zealand via Malaysia to the USA and the UK.



Carnage at the Grand National

The Grand National Race at the Aintree Festival is far too long and too punishing for the horses.

This year, only 16 of the 34 runners finished. It was a shocking spectacle with at least three horses seen collapsed around the course at the end, and receiving emergency medical treatment.

We watched it so you didn’t have to.

Together, we must end this callous exercise in animal cruelty.

By Paul Tillsley - head of conservation and education for the League Against Cruel Sports



Spring awakens on our reserves.

Springtime emphasises the enormous value the League's wildlife reserves have for all wildlife. Not just for those that are hunted and shot but also those indirectly harmed by the practices of the hunting and shooting industries. We are able to maintain them to let wildlife thrive thanks to your generous support.

In February, supporters from across the country came to Baronsdown to plant trees which will improve habitats, store carbon and increase biodiversity at the reserve.

Volunteers' enthusiasm didn't waiver as they slid around a steep hillside, toiling for hours, and getting thoroughly wet and muddy in the process. Everyone survived and went home exhausted, and yet looking forward to the chance to do it all again in the coming winter.

‘Supporters from across the country came to Baronsdown to plant trees.’

Young badgers and foxes have come above ground to explore their surroundings. Migrant birds have returned from their extraordinary journeys to Africa and are singing from every available tree and patch of scrub. Pied Flycatchers and other small birds are breeding in nest boxes in Barlynch Wood and Cove Plantation. Hazel dormouse have stirred from their winter torpor to occupy their donor-funded nest boxes too.

Another pine marten released as part of the reintroduction of the species to Exmoor has found its way onto land protected by the League. This is the second of the nine pine martens released last September to turn up on League land.

We hope that both animals stay around to breed and start to fill the void caused by previous persecution from shooting estates who saw them as a threat to their profit-driven, commercially reared ‘game’ bird stocks.

Thanks to your dedication to protecting animals — life is thriving.



Supporters planting trees on Baronsdown, Feb 2026



We use green and environmentally friendly paper, both biodegradable and recyclable.
We're here for both the animals and the planet.



Get in touch

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