

PROTECT

AUTUMN ISSUE

2025



LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS



You're making a difference.

Thank you for all that you do



Campaigning for change is a very long road.

It can be hard to keep the hope and momentum going.

Which is why it is so important to mark the big moments. The government's upcoming consultation on the Hunting Act is one of those moments.

If we get it right, it will pave the way for a reform of the Hunting Act, tightening up the legislation so that hunting wild mammals with dogs is consigned to the history books.

You have made this possible – with relentless campaigning, support and determination.

Alongside supporters like you, we have been hitting the streets, making sure as many people as possible understand that hunting is still happening and what we can do together to stop it.

We are pushing hard for progress on ending the use of snares too. Thanks to you these cruel traps are now banned in Wales and Scotland. It is surely England's turn next.

Together, we are taking strides down the long road towards a world where no animal is persecuted for fun. Thank you for all you have done to make this possible.

Emma Slawinski
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.



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THE TIME FOR
CHANGE
— IS NOW —

A pivotal moment in ending fox hunting

The government is expected to launch a consultation on the future of trail hunting – but the League is lobbying for the consultation to include other ways the law can be changed so that hunting is finally a thing of the past.



Now is the time to pledge to take part in the consultation.

By lending your voice you can help ensure the government removes all the other loopholes in the law which are used to carry on hunting wildlife with dogs.

These loopholes, which stem from exemptions in the Hunting Act, are ludicrous – they even include a falconry exemption which hunts have used in court, claiming they were using hounds to flush out foxes to waiting birds of prey.

It's palpable nonsense. No one would risk releasing a bird of prey such as an eagle when it would be set upon and torn apart by the hunt hounds. It's just an excuse to carry on hunting.

The law also needs to change so that judges have the option to jail people who still cruelly hunt foxes.

At present, hunt staff just get paltry fines and are out hunting again the next day.

The scale of the issue

There were nearly 1,600 incidents – consisting of 474 reports relating to suspected illegal hunting (including 397 reports of foxes being chased) and 1,117 reports of hunt havoc – recorded in the League’s end of season fox hunting report published earlier this year.

This covered the period between August 2024 and March 2025.

This includes incidents such as hounds on busy A-roads and railway lines, hunts trespassing in people’s gardens, family pets being killed, and violence or intimidation by hunts.

If so-called trail hunting – where hunts claim to be following a pre-laid animal scent – were real, none of these incidents would have happened.

The police response

Trail hunting has been described by chief superintendent Matt Longman, the most senior police officer in England with responsibility for fox hunting crime, as a “smokescreen for illegal fox hunting”. He also described illegal hunting as “prolific”.

Ch Supt Longman has called for action “to close some of these loopholes that are continually being exploited and putting police in a very difficult position as we try to rebuild trust and confidence with our communities”.

Polling shows support in the countryside for strengthening hunting laws

Thanks to the generosity of one of our major donors, the League was able to commission polling last year, which was carried out independently by FindOutNow with further analysis by Electoral Calculus.

It showed nearly eight out of ten (76 per cent) voters polled in favour of strengthening the Hunting Act.

‘...people in the countryside who face the brunt of the hunts’ shocking behaviour are sick of the havoc and want change.’

The polling of over 5,300 people shows that the overwhelming majority of the public want to see the law changed to prevent animals being chased and killed.

And it wasn’t just people in towns and cities but rural people too, with 70 per cent calling for stronger laws.

This rubbishes the argument used by the hunting world that there is a rural-urban divide. What it actually shows is that people in the countryside who face the brunt of the hunts’ shocking behaviour are sick of the havoc and want change.



How you are helping protect hunted animals

Your donations have already enabled campaigns and lobbying on the issue at the heart of government.

With your support campaigners have been crisscrossing the country and talking to the public about your concerns.

Your support has powered our media and social media campaigns, ensuring our key messages are reaching the inboxes of those in charge of making change a reality.

By pledging to take part in the consultation you will be among the first to know when it launches, and what actions you can take in the meantime.

Sign up here: www.league.org.uk/hunting-pledge



You make this happen

Thanks to your support our campaigners have recently been visiting cities across England and Wales. Your generosity is enabling our campaign to raise awareness of the government's consultation on hunting and why it's so important to tighten hunting laws to protect animals.



A League ‘hunter’ carrying a fake fox covered in blood paraded up and down busy high streets — accompanied by the chilling sound of baying hunt hounds, evoking shock among shoppers — upset to learn that fox hunting is still rife despite it being illegal.

John Petrie, our senior campaigns manager, had this to say about being a hunter for the day: “When you campaign for the League, you expect to do things that will attract the attention of the public. It’s part of the job. But pretending to like fox hunting by dressing up as a hunter in a busy city centre wasn’t something I had expected to do.

“Never have I felt so unwelcome in a place as I did when walking through the centre of Cardiff dressed as a hunter. The looks I got as, carrying our fake dead fox, I walked past shoppers and restaurant goers told me all I needed to know about how the public really feel about hunting.

“People couldn’t keep the shock and disgust from their faces. Now we know why hunts like to hide behind a smokescreen, keeping themselves away from the disdainful glare of the public.”



None of this would have been possible without the support and donations from you, our wonderful supporters across the UK.

One of the cities visited was Peterborough, home to the Festival of Hounds, the hunting world’s lame PR exercise which attempts to sanitise fox hunting and conceal the animal cruelty taking place in our countryside.

Campaigners highlighted how members of the local Fitzwilliam Hunt, which will host the event from 2026, has been convicted of illegal fox hunting three times in just seven years.

Sign up to take part in the government’s consultation here:
www.league.org.uk/hunting-pledge

The push to ban snares in England

As you read this, the 'game' bird shooting season is in full swing and tens of millions of 'game' birds face being blasted out of the sky, either to be killed outright or wounded and left to die slowly.

Partridges and pheasants are targeted from September 1 and October 1 respectively when their shooting season opens.

A staggering 61 million of these non-native birds are bred and released into the British countryside every year simply to be shot, with appalling consequences for the environment.





Grouse are also victims of the shooting industry. These wild birds that live on moorland are deemed ready to be shot once the so-called 'glorious' twelfth of August signifies the start of their shooting season and suffering.

And any animal that a gamekeeper perceives to be a threat to their stocks of game birds faces an agonising fate at their hands, being cruelly trapped or snared and either killed by the gamekeeper or simply left to die.

These traps litter both the moorland where grouse live and the countryside where pheasant and partridge shooting estates operate.

There is hope. Thanks to your support we have already managed to secure bans on snares in both Wales and Scotland.

During last year's election the government committed to ban them, but now they need to act.

This is something your donations help with, by powering our campaigns to lobby the government for change and making such a difference to animals.

We've had success in Scotland and Wales; thanks to you we will be successful in England too.

Snares are indiscriminate killers. These wire traps can't tell the difference between a fox, your family pet or a protected species.

A UK government study found that only around a quarter of the animals caught in snares were the intended targets with the rest including hares, badgers, cats and dogs, deer and even otters.



A hare, one of the animals that fall victim to snares

Help to build a better and kinder future for our wildlife

Take action: www.league.org.uk/campaigns/take-action



Victims of the barbaric fox cub and stag hunting seasons

While the fox hunting season itself will not begin until November, while you are reading this, a barbaric activity called cub hunting will be taking place in the countryside around you.

Cub hunting involves hunts training their hounds to kill. They surround woodland in autumn and late summer, and set their hounds on any foxes they find, often cubs at this time of year.

It's essentially a training exercise in which hounds become accustomed to tearing their victims apart before the hunting season starts.

It isn't only fox cubs that suffer. Any hound that doesn't make the grade is despatched by the hunt. That might be a new hound to the pack or one that has simply become too old – at perhaps only six years old.

Meanwhile, the season for hunting deer with hounds has begun again. From August until the end of October, three deer hunts in



Devon and Somerset target mature red deer stags. They select their victims and chase them for miles across moorland, before finally shooting the exhausted animal.

A savage ritual then takes place in which the hunts cut up the stag's body and present body parts as trophies to their followers.

Hundreds of deer fall victim to these hunts every year.

The hunts use exemptions found in the Hunting Act, which banned hunting with dogs 20 years ago, to excuse their cruel and savage chase and kill.

They claim to be 'rescuing animals from suffering' and yet they choose the fittest one – and before killing it they chase it until the point of exhaustion and beyond what it can bear any longer.

Or they claim to be undertaking 'scientific research' – though no studies have ever been published on what the hunts have found.

With the support of concerned people like you, these exemptions may yet be removed when the government holds its consultation on hunting this autumn.



Pledge to take part in the consultation to help bring an end to this cruelty.
www.league.org.uk/hunting-pledge

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This Christmas, don't wait
for the cards to roll in.
Make the first move.

Pick out a few cards for the people who
make your season. You'll make their day...
and maybe brighten your own too.

League.org.uk/love

Cards 
AGAINST
CRUEL SPORTS

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Scanning the QR code

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and quoting '**League Against
Cruel Sports'**





Donor funded polling shows support for a ban on the cruel cages used to breed game birds

Your kindness and donations have funded new polling which highlights the public's support for a ban on the cages used to breed game birds such as pheasants and partridges.

The figures show that almost seven out of 10 people across the UK want to end the factory farm conditions used to breed the tens of millions of chicks needed every year by the shooting industry.

The polling was carried out independently by YouGov and showed that 69 per cent of UK adults think the cages used to breed pheasants and partridges should be illegal.





Encouragingly it showed support from across the political spectrum – 77 per cent of those who voted Labour in the 2024 general election supported it, 57 per cent of Conservative voters, 78 per cent of Liberal Democrat voters, and 61 per cent of Reform voters.

Emma Slawinski, chief executive of the League Against Cruel Sports, said: “The public are clear that they don’t want to see tiny, cramped cages being used for breeding by the game bird shooting industry.

“With more than 100,000 birds confined to these cages for breeding purposes every year, it’s cruelty on an industrial scale.”

There are around 300 game bird farms across Britain where the suffering takes place.

Game birds don’t qualify for some of the minimum welfare standards other farmed birds receive such as minimum space requirements and routine official inspections.

The severe lack of space restricting movement and natural behaviours in the cages leads to the birds experiencing distress and injuries.

The government has pledged to introduce the most comprehensive animal welfare package in a generation. **Thanks to generous donors’ support it’s crystal clear that there is overwhelming public support for this to include ending caged bird breeding.**

Emma, added: “We’re proud of being a nation of animal lovers, so let’s outlaw the use of these cramped cages and end the cruelty of incarcerating pheasants and partridges in these tortuous conditions.”





Greyhound racing deaths on the increase

Compassionate people like you are needed to support greyhounds following the publication of shocking figures that show an increase in the number of animals that died because of racing last year.

The figures, released by the greyhound industry's governing body the Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB), showed there were 123 trackside fatalities in 2024.

The figures, which the government requires the GBGB publish every year, show 1,357 greyhounds have now died because of racing since 2017.

And it's not just deaths but a large number of injuries too.

35,168

injuries were sustained by greyhounds while racing between 2017 and 2024





A distressing 3,809 injuries were sustained by greyhounds in 2024, affecting a significant proportion of the approximately 15,000 greyhounds that raced last year.

It brings the total number of injuries of greyhounds since 2017 to a staggering 35,168.

The Welsh Government has listened to you.

There is good news, however, thanks to the thousands of you who backed calls for a ban on greyhound racing in Wales and responded to a Welsh Government's consultation on the issue. The Senedd has pledged to ban the dangerous sport before the next election in Wales, and has already published its draft legislation.

In Scotland, there are also moves to ban greyhound racing, with a member of the Scottish Parliament tabling a bill on the issue.

The next step has got to be the UK government paying attention to the devolved nations.

Bookies' profits and people's entertainment are being put before animal welfare.

The GBGB figures also reveal a further 55 greyhounds were put to sleep once they stopped racing last year, simply because they couldn't be found a home.

Emma Slawinski, the League's chief executive, said: "These figures paint an increasingly bleak picture involving a world of pain and suffering for racing greyhounds.

"The government needs to end the sport of greyhound racing and the dogs found loving, caring homes."

Thank you to all of you supporting a ban on greyhound racing. If you have not done so already, you can voice your commitment to a ban here:

**[www.league.org.uk/
bangreyhoundracing](http://www.league.org.uk/bangreyhoundracing)**





Karl Garside, 1966 – 2025

Passionate animal rights campaigner, hunt saboteur and tireless field operative Karl Garside has passed away at the age of 59.

A proud father and grandfather, Karl joined the League Against Cruel Sports earlier this year, determined to use his investigative expertise to expose and help stop cruel blood sports.

A fearless crusader, Karl was known as one of Britain's most impactful campaigners in the world of animal liberation for over 40 years.

It was during a raid on an ICI laboratory in 1984 where he met Bev, with whom he shared a daughter. Famously, on the night

his daughter was born, Karl used the hospital payphone not to call relatives, but to help coordinate a sab for the following day, testament to his tireless dedication.

It was, according to Bev, his move into covert field operations where he truly found his calling, using his expertise to expose abuse within the hunting and meat industries. In 2014, he founded the Hunt Investigation Team (HIT), which rapidly gained a reputation for its professionalism and impact.

One of the most politically sensitive investigations came in 2022 when HIT revealed wildlife crime on the estate of William van Cutsem, a



close friend of Prince William. The exposé prompted a police raid and widespread media coverage.

Karl was excited to join the League as a full-time field operative, working closely with a team of passionate professionals to expose the continued abuse of and cruelty to animals in the British countryside through sports such as hunting with hounds, commercial game shooting, trapping and snaring, animal fighting and animal racing.

On his last day Karl, true to form, spent his morning collecting ex-battery hens rescued by the Hens Trust for rehoming.

The League extends its sympathies to all who knew Karl and worked side-by-side with him on behalf of animals. We are saddened his time with us was not far, far longer.

For more details on Karl's incredible life protecting animals visit:

www.league.org.uk/Karl

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

Supporters enable nature to recover

After an unusually dry summer, with temperatures regularly soaring above 30°C on the League's wildlife reserves on hundreds of acres of land in the West Country, we look forward to autumn with a certain amount of trepidation.

With so much heat energy in the atmosphere we know there will be storms, but the question is when will they strike and how much damage will they cause? Sadly, the increased uncertainty in the weather that climate change brings is making it difficult for wildlife to adapt and survive.





On the bright side, summer 2025 was certainly a good one for insects, good news for the creatures that feed on them, as well as for the plants that depend on insects for pollination.

While honeybees grab the pollination headlines, it is the other bees, wasps, hoverflies, flies, moths, butterflies and beetles that do a lot of the heavy lifting.

Autumn sees red deer stags on the move, as they leave the areas where they have been feeding and growing new antlers, and head over to the places where hinds gather in preparation for the rut.

Alliances between stags that have built up during summer are

suddenly shattered – as testosterone levels rise and the stags' minds begin to focus on one thing, siring the next generation.

The undisturbed fields and woodlands on the League's wildlife reserves provide the ideal theatre for the rutting action to unfold, but even this primal activity can be adversely affected by the unpredictable weather.

In a world of rising temperatures and vanishing habitats, your support ensures that wildlife has somewhere to turn.

Our reserves aren't just sanctuaries – they're symbols of what's still possible, when cruelty is replaced by compassion.

Get hands-on supporting wildlife.

Volunteer to plant trees on our wildlife reserves in February 2026.

Call **01483 524 250** or email **supportercare@league.org.uk** for more information.





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*Cover photo kindly provided by Pete Jenkins,
field intelligence operative for the League*