

Charity offers cautious welcome to Scottish Government's announcement on fox hunting legislation



A leading animal welfare charity has given a cautious welcome to today's (Wednesday) announcement from the Scottish Government on its intentions to bring forward a Bill to strengthen current fox hunting legislation. The League Against Cruel Sports Scotland says it is pleased that following a lengthy consultation process steps are now being taken to close loopholes in the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002.

Today's announcement, by the Minister for Rural Affairs and Natural Environment Mairi Gougeon MSP, is the conclusion to the Government's Bonomy Review. The Minister outlined plans to implement the vast majority of Lord Bonomy's six recommendations, and also pledged to go further by reducing the number of hounds from a full pack to just two.

The Minister also announced a new licensing scheme, allowing applications for an exemption to the two-dogs rule, but emphasised that this would only be available under exceptional circumstances.

Robbie Marsland, Director of the League Against Cruel Sports, Scotland said:

"We're pleased the Minister and the Government have listened to the public who oppose the cruelty of fox hunting. Today's announcement, to introduce the vast majority of Bonomy's recommendations in addition to a critically important two-dog limit, shows a commitment to wild animal welfare, and we are confident that it will address a major weakness in the law.

"Naturally, we are cautious about suggestions of licensed hunting to enable an opt out of the two-dog limit which could potentially create a new loophole. We will monitor the wording of this proposal as it moves towards legislation, but we are very encouraged by the clear guidance the Minister gave that this will not be used as a new loophole to allow traditional hunting. We need the legislation to be tight, restrictive and clear so it doesn't undermine what is a well-intentioned proposal."

Hunting foxes with dogs was banned in Scotland in 2002, two years before the rest of the UK. In over sixteen years there has only been one successful prosecution of mounted huntsmen for illegal hunting. The League has been campaigning for the law to be strengthened to close loopholes which it believes allow hunts to hunt in a manner which is very similar to pre-ban, traditional hunting.



Your help is vital in ensuring that Governmental promises of strengthen the law are upheld and that the new legislation meets the desires of the Scottish people who wish to see fox hunting illegal once and for all.

Your signature will communicate to the Government that the time to 'really' ban hunting is now.

Sign the petition