The Magazine of The Hunt Saboteurs Association Spring 2017 (Issue 113) £2 (free to members)

HOWL

Direct Action Against All Bloodsports www.huntsabs.org.uk

Shut your trap!:
The war against gamekeepers

Beagle 'trail hunting' exposed

The Keyboard Warrior









LETTER FROM THE CHAIR:

As you read this our AGM will be approaching in June, so now is the time to consider standing for committee.

To do that is very simple:

- you need to have been a member for at least one year's standing in March 2017
- find two members to propose and second you. They can do this via email to: info@huntsabs.org.uk or by letter to the usual address stating their names and addresses and who they are proposing
- finally, they need to do this during the month of March 2017

There are 12 voting committee positions and if more than 12 members stand there will be a postal vote held. Please consider standing as a turnover of committee is healthy and good for the organisation. Any questions to the above email address.

The AGM this year will be held once again at Jackson Lane on the 10th June, 269a Archway Road, London N6 5AA from 11am. All members and active sabs welcome.

Hunting and hunt sabotage has been increasingly in the news, mainly due to hunters behaving badly, although the alternative is rarely seen by sabs. They certainly seem to be shooting themselves in the foot (or mouth) and no doubt this is part of the increasing rise in the numbers of people opposed to any removal of the ban. However, bad media coverage does not save lives and in many cases the news reports are only in existence due to the hard work of our local groups out in the mud and rain each and every week saving lives. This is not just confined to the UK; we now have groups in many European countries and the most recent group to pop up is in Ireland. They came over to sab with some of our southern groups before returning to deal with the 'legal' hunting in Eire.

Another quiet success was the Alston festivals demise; never to be seen again since the week-long sabotage of the 'Event of Death' back in 2014. We can only hope that hare hunters have given up on this event, but we will remain vigilant each and every year to prevent a restart.

Finally, as the HSA moves into its 54th year of existence, I would like to highlight that we are still the only organisation which intervenes directly in the field to protect our wildlife from the hunters. The existence of League, IFAW and POWA monitors is, of course, welcome, but they only gather evidence; hunt saboteurs save lives, today and every day. All this and more on a budget which is less than most national organisations pay their Chief Executive. **So, when you are thinking of donating to an organisation or leaving a legacy, please think of us, as our organisation gives more results per pound than any other organisation. We are proud to say that we are the longest existing direct action organisation in the world, in any area of campaigning, and will remain so until the slaughter of our wildlife ceases.**

www.huntsabs.org.uk

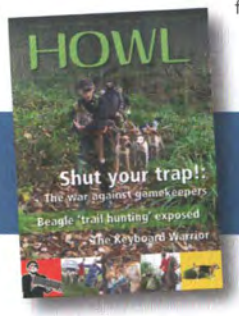
Hunt Saboteurs @HuntSabs

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The Hunt Saboteurs Association has been in existence for over 50 years, and is dedicated to saving the lives of hunted animals directly. Prior to the Hunting Act of 2004, hunt saboteurs used non-violent direct action (nvda) to prevent the horrific deaths of thousands of hunted animals every year. Post hunt ban the primary tool of hunt sabotage has switched from the hunting horn to the video camera, as saboteurs monitor hunts with the aim of capturing their illegal activities on film. This in turn can immediately save lives on the day, and can lead to police action against the hunt concerned. Our range of pre-ban nvda tactics remain in active service, and saboteurs will continue to use them should they be deemed the best way forward on the day for the hunted animal at risk.

The HSA committee is made up of a maximum of 12 voting members, supported by as many non-voting members as is deemed necessary. As a member of the HSA your contribution is vital – thank you.

Editor Dawn
Contributors All groups who sent group news in.
Photos @DenGlanzig, stacywoolhousephotography.weebly.com, HSA Archive, Sab groups all over the country - Ta folks!
Distribution HSA
Big taverymuch to: all HSA members & anyone who we've pilfered stuff off and forgotten to credit.



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The views express in Howl do not necessarily reflect those of the editor(s) or the Hunt Saboteurs Association Committee. Nothing printed should be construed as HSA policy unless so stated. Nothing in Howl should be taken as encouragement to commit illegal acts.

Howl is printed on recycled paper using vegetable inks.



This issue of Howl is dedicated to the memory of Hunt Saboteurs

MIKE HILL & TOM WORBY

Killed

9th February 1991 & 3rd April 1993 respectively

whilst lawfully trying to prevent hunts from killing our wildlife.

YOU WILL NEVER BE FORGOTTEN



EDITORIAL

It seems that we have a lot of good news to pass on: new groups, many coming into being due to the badger cull/ hare coursing events/ animal abuse festivals etc. All very welcome, all celebrated within the hunt sab community and, hopefully, supported as much as possible. Welcome to all of you.

Hunts are merging left, right and centre which is always a good sign: this is happening so quickly that they can't even always agree on a name – or, sometimes, who is in charge... this is always fun! Also, a huge rise in the type of hunts sabotaged; Mink hunts, Beagle packs, etc.

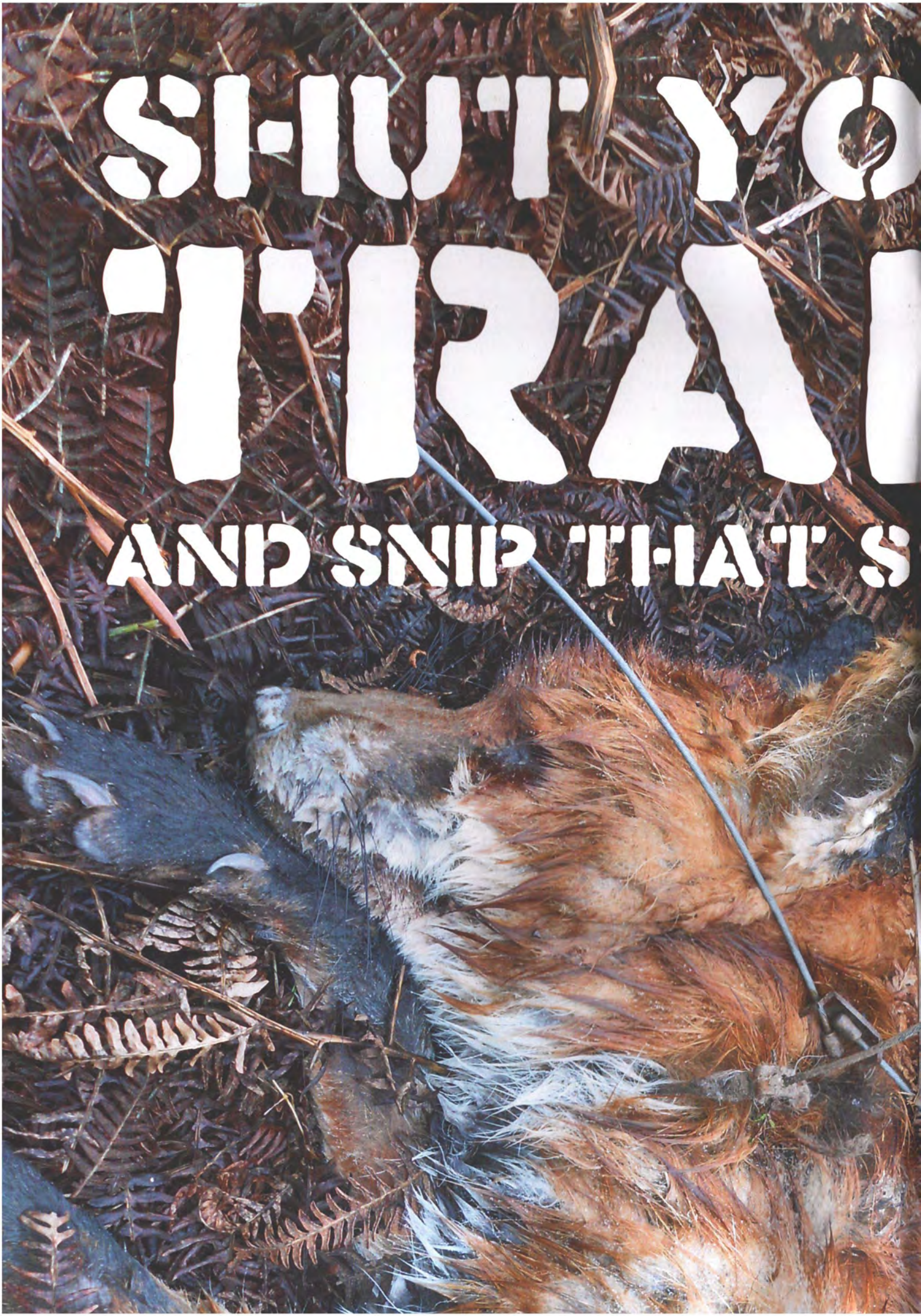
We have several court cases pending (which we can't, obviously, comment upon) but it does sometimes feel as though the hunts scupper themselves with their arrogance and assurance that everything they do is acceptable... see the Keyboard Warrior article (page 24) for ways that hunts are sabotaged without ever understanding why/ who/ when etc!

Don't ever think that you can't make a difference. Every small effort, every refusal to accept, every invitation to others to comment, disagree, protest, is noticed – these are the days in which we live. Hunts are notoriously traditional in their profile to the public; we, hopefully, are up-to-date enough to realise that social media is our friend and that we can reach people, influence outcomes and harness public opinion quickly and effectively.

"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honourable, to be compassionate; to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well."

Ralph Waldo Emerson




SHUT YO
TRAI
AND SNIP THAT S



As the hunting season draws to a close, we may be forgiven for thinking foxes are safe for a few precious months before cub hunting begins. Just as we take off our muddy boots and put away the whips and horns, a new season of intensive persecution is beginning for the fox population.

Foxes are a natural predator of wild birds' eggs - this is part of a balanced ecology which is essential for our native wildlife. However, when foxes predate upon the eggs of grouse intended for shooting, they become a threat to shoot estate profits, and are therefore ruthlessly persecuted. Each shoot estate builds its reputation on its "bag" of grouse - the number a paying customer can expect to shoot in a day. High grouse numbers are therefore imperative for business, and the gamekeeper is responsible for providing them.



Preparing a grouse moor for the season of shooting (responsible for the slaughter of millions of birds in its own right) also involves the systematic eradication of any other species deemed detrimental to the grouse population. Although grouse are a native species, their numbers are manipulated leading to a weakened genetic population and the decimation of many other moorland inhabitants. Foxes, badgers, stoats, weasels, hares, raptors and corvids are all eliminated through a range of crude killing techniques. Gamekeepers have a full time job removing any creature which might compromise the estate's profits.

The late winter/early spring period is critical as this is when wild mammals are pregnant. If a gamekeepers can eliminate a pregnant female before she gives birth, an entire litter is wiped out. Therefore March - May are busy times on the moors. Snares, Fenn traps, Larsen traps, pole traps and poisons are just some of the methods employed by gamekeepers to kill their prey. The legalities of these and how best to respond need consideration in their own right (see links on next page) but the point to be aware of is that thousands of animals are dying in barbaric traps, often just metres from where the public enjoy open access land.



Larsen trap

Gamekeepers are routinely found to break the law, setting traps illegally in the knowledge that few people know what to look for. Moors can seem like large and intimidating places, but in fact they are quite easy to understand from a gamekeeper's perspective. They do not want to traipse over vast areas of heather and bog, so use routine sites and methods generally close to the "moorland fringe" - the lower edges where moor meets roads and farmland. Their access is often visible from quad or 4X4 tracks leading up into the moors.

Keepers use any feature which naturally attracts or funnels animals as a way to trap them. Fenn traps are set along dry stone walls (often concealed in wooden boxes or under large stones), to catch small rodents running route down the walls. They are also placed on poles placed horizontally over water, (pictured below) so the animals will be caught as they try to cross a brook, for example. Snares are often placed around a "stink pit" - a bin or pile of rotting carcasses which attracts foxes in to feed. Ladder and Larsen traps (pictured above) are placed on the high moors, often on the edge of woods, to capture birds. Pole traps (pictured below) are placed on top of tree stumps, poles or walls, again to catch birds. Eggs or carcasses may be laced with poison - evident in the presence of dead flies on rotting flesh.



Pole trap



Fenn trap over water

In addition, gamekeepers are also known to catch foxes live and supply them to hunts. They may also dig with terrier men on the side. Their dirty worlds are closely connected, so it's well worth sabs getting to know their local moors as well as traditional fox hunt territory. Grouse moors are also ecologically devastating, destroying precious peat bogs which store carbon and excess water. Heather is burned to encourage new shoots for young grouse to feed on, but this process releases CO_2 into the atmosphere. The artificial drainage systems installed by estates also cause lowland flooding, as the moors fail to retain water.



We all pay for this mess through the heavy tax subsidies paid to wealthy estate owners. Whether you come from an animal rights, environmentalist or class war background, there's a reason for everyone to get involved. Grouse moors are often public access land and once you know what to look for, the carnage is abundant and can be dealt with in a number of ways. Not only will getting out in the moors save lives and challenge power structures, it will vastly improve navigation and fitness for sabbing.

Please see links below for more information on what to look out for.

www.snarewatch.org/
www.birdersagainst.org/
www.againstcorvidtraps.co.uk
www.antisnaring.org.uk

sabgroupnews



Beds & Bucks Hunt Sabs

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The fight for our wildlife is a non-stop effort and here at Beds & Bucks we've rolled straight from fighting the badger cull in the North Cotswolds zone back to being a major pain to our local hunts. We put in a huge effort in North Cots and made a significant dent in the NFU's plans to kill badgers under some very challenging conditions. The financial and emotional cost was huge and we couldn't have done it without the support of the HSA and the public donations.

We've also been somewhat a victim of our own success regarding the hunts. It seems they all now employ a goon squad to try and stop, intimidate and even be violent towards us in an effort to continue to illegally hunt. The Oakley have a new huntsman and whipper in, the huntsman (Jack Harris) continually shows a complete lack of hound control and it would appear he's also not well liked even within the hunting community as the hunt seem to struggle for areas to hunt in; all good news for us of course.

We've also ruffled the feathers of Bedfordshire police regarding their lack of effective policing to the point of receiving a call from the Chief Inspector! It's an on-going project but we have engaged with them and hopefully we'll see an improvement, we now even have our own dedicated liaison officer. We'll report back in due course and let you know if our efforts are bearing fruit.

We continue to get plenty of people contacting us regarding getting involved and if this trend is maintained over the coming months we'll be looking at running another vehicle to accommodate everyone next season.

Finally our case against the Fitzwilliam Hunt has rumbled on. More delays and court hearings now mean the final date has been set for April. Fingers crossed we'll secure a conviction.

Thanks to all the other groups we've worked with and the public for supporting us with donations.





Brighton Hunt Sabs

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Fresh back from the badger cull, we cracked on with our traditional hunt sabotage, covering several fox hunts and the odd pheasant shoot. We've had an influx of new regular sabs who are fast learning sab tactics, map reading and other skills.

We saved a fox in a very tight spot when the Old Surrey and Burstow hounds were only a few seconds behind as they crossed the road but we held them up, letting the fox escape. Sadly a couple of weeks later the same pack killed just before Guildford sabs could get to them. Because of this, we have been to this hunt a lot, including their Boxing Day meet.

The Southdown and Eridge Hunt have been changing meets to funny times in efforts to avoid us; clear proof that we're being effective. This hasn't meant that they've escaped our presence entirely. We helped promote a demo at the Boxing Day meet, which had a good turnout of locals opposing this hunt while we went to have a go at the Burstow. We've also been out before meets to move wildlife out of harm's way; going through the same woods as the hunt.

We've had to spend quite a bit on Landrover repairs and maintenance this year, but we've had some successful fundraising meals and gigs, as well as online campaigns. Thanks goes to all of our generous supporters; you've kept us on the road.

Do get in touch if you want to join the crew, new volunteers are always welcome. Send us a message on Facebook or drop us an email, address above.



Bristol Hunt Sabs

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Bristol Hunt Sabs continue to go from strength to strength with a strong start to the 2016/2017 hunting season. With more interest than ever, we're always filling our shiny, new Land Rover (cheers for the help, everyone!) and usually taking out a second vehicle.

We started our season at the beginning of September with a visit to the Berkeley Hunt who we caught and stopped cub hunting. On our subsequent visits they refused to leave their kennels. We had a few good days with the Cotswold Vale Farmers' Hunt and the Ross Harriers, with foxes saved at both. We finished cubbing with a trip to Wiltshire to sab the Tedworth Hunt.

We sabbed two opening meets; a return visit to the Tedworth on the Saturday, and the Cotswold Vale on the Tuesday (which took them by surprise). The following Saturday saw numerous lives saved and support turn to violence as both the Ross Harriers and Leadon Vale Basset Hounds hunted hares in Herefordshire.

We have made a couple of trips over the bridge to Wales, helping foxes away at the Curre & Llangibby Hunt, and reacquainting ourselves with the Llangeinor (who put a sab in hospital when we last visited a couple of seasons ago).

A few more visits to the Cotswold Vale saw frustration amongst hunters grow as sabs stopped dig outs, saved foxes and generally added to the dismal days of supporters following this hunt.

We finished 2016 with a midweek visit to the Ledbury Hunt, and despite the (now infamous) attack from their terrier boys, stuck with them all day and had a very good day of sabbing.

We go in to 2017 with more support and more determination than ever to stop illegal hunting!

Shout out to the groups we've worked alongside so far this season; South Wales, Bath, Three Counties, Severn Vale and Southampton.

South Cambridgeshire Hunt Sabs

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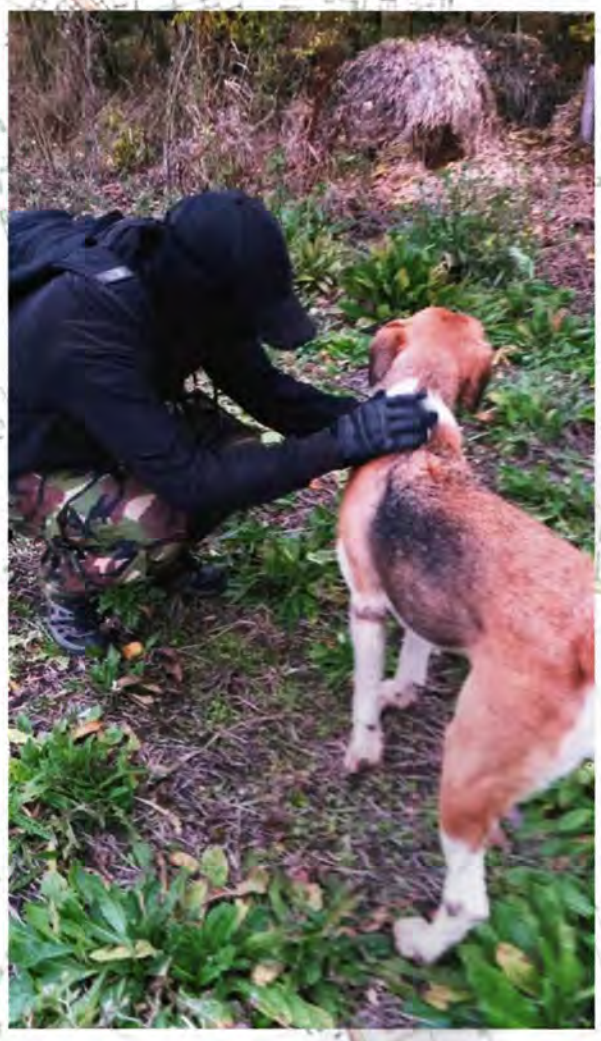
The season started off with most of our group heading down to the Dorset cull zone, working alongside the wonderfully dedicated Dorset Hunt Sabs to prevent many wildlife deaths.

We have now expanded our core group and for the majority of the season have had sabs out in the field twice a week. A heartfelt thanks to all our kind and generous supporters, without whom we would not be able to afford the additional fuel and running costs that this generates!

It's been an excellent start to the season and we have started to see the results of our work. Our local hunt, the Cambridgeshire Hunt with Enfield Chace, broke years of tradition and went on a short hack on Boxing Day instead of hunting, due to sab presence.

Our regular mid-week support sabbing the Waveney Harriers has seen their field numbers start to decline. It has been our privilege to continue to work with and learn from other experienced sab groups in the area.

We hope 2017 sees our group continue to improve and expand so that we can put more pressure on our local hunts. If you would like to join or support us, please get in touch via email or Facebook.



North Cambridgeshire Hunt Sabs

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North Cambs started their second season in a positive frame of mind and, with the impending court case, we've visited the Fitzwilliam a few times – most notably a joint meet with the Oakley. The Oakley brought the hunt thugs with them and their increased violence has been an issue since cubbing. With a few new faces, they have literally upped the ante this time round.

Sabs are routinely followed in their vehicles long after hunts are sent packing and the police have been involved on more than one occasion. Of course, none of this puts us off. Both the Oakley and Fitzwilliam seem to have trouble keeping their hounds under control this season, which shows an arrogant lack of care for any animal's welfare on the part of the hunt.

Our vehicle was rammed by hunt support at the Oakley last autumn and had to be written off. Thanks to the HSA, we now have a new sab wagon and were able to return to action pretty much immediately. We continue to work closely with South Cambs, Beds and Bucks, Cambridge and Northants sabs, but are always looking for new members to help to keep the area's wildlife safe.

Devon County Hunt Sabs

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After a summer spent sett surveying in north-west Devon, we learned in August that the cull was being rolled out to large parts of the county. The huge expansion meant sabs were thinner on the ground this year. We had a constant presence in the north Devon zone where our team worked tirelessly to save the lives of many badgers and the cull company failed to meet their original minimum target. We also had a smaller team down in the South Hams. It was an intense and demanding six weeks, but seeing surviving badgers at the end of the cull made it all worthwhile, and we are grateful to all who helped, including the wonderful people who hosted Camp Badger.

Straight from the cull into fox hunting, we visited 11 of our local packs in the first half of the season. We faced serious violence from the Cheldon Buckhounds back in May, and on 10th December we bumped into them again while sabbing the Eggesford. Sometimes you can't move in Devon without bumping into multiple hunts. True to form, an elderly male rider with the Cheldon assaulted sabs while spouting misogynistic comments, but they packed up before 3pm. There was further violence from the Spooners & West Dartmoor when our driver was attacked on 13th December. Back with the Eggesford the following Saturday another assault on a female sab was picked up by the national press.

On Boxing Day with the South Tetcott it felt at times like we spent more time with the hounds than the huntsman did, and we finished 2016 packing up the East Devon on New Year's Eve. We regularly have more sabs out than there are seats in the Landy, so we have now have a car too. Thanks to the HSA and all our friends and supporters for helping us this year.



Cirencester Illegal Hunt Watch

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PayPal: www.paypal.me/cihwatch



When the badger cull finished once more here in Gloucestershire, we went straight into monitoring cub hunting and now main season hunting in and around Cirencester and the Cotswolds. The hunts we pay visits to are; The Beaufort, The Vale of White Horse and The Cotswold and we also paid a visit to the Heythrop just recently – they weren't too pleased with us!

We've also been monitoring the Ledbury alongside our good friends, Three Counties Hunt Saboteurs. We are familiar with a lot of the badger setts around the cull zones in Gloucestershire and find that it's convenient to survey them whilst out monitoring hunts. As you all know the setts regularly get blocked by the hunts and therefore we have been gathering data and sharing wildlife crimes with the police, The Badger Trust and our good friends: 'The Heart of the Cotswold' https://www.facebook.com/groups/637543133060728/ 'Stop Badger Sett Blocking' https://www.facebook.com/Stop-Badger-Sett-Blocking

We gathered a good few hunt monitors together for Boxing Day to pay the VWH a visit on the day they like to showcase their horses and hounds at the Bathurst Mansion in Cirencester Park. It is here that the present Earl and Countess Bathurst live and we are pleased to hear that they have been struggling to get their gun licenses renewed this year.

We had some success in September when one of the Beaufort Hunt terrier men was prosecuted and found guilty of racist comments against one of team members. Thank you to www.outpaced.org for your support with this.

Dorset Hunt Sabs

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With the Badger cull extended to West Dorset this year, most of our focus was on setting up a camp from scratch, and organising Sabs and Badger groups that had offered help. A very few of us worked hard day and night to protect our badgers. We must have made a difference due to the fact we were extended by a couple of weeks. We had to put up with a lot of intimidation from local hunt supporters, and were subject to some not very nice sights. There were certainly some highs and lows. We couldn't have done it without help from our supporters, who made sure we had food and fuel. Special thanks to South Cams Hunt Sabs, Herts Against the Badger Cull, Guildford Hunt Sabs, DBBW and Dorset Badger Patrol, Stop the Cull.

During this time local hunts started cub hunting but we were there ready to meet them. For some reason they weren't happy to see us! Within 30 minutes of arrival hounds went into cry and we had to intervene. Hunt support then decided it would be a good idea to smash the Landy window with a metal bar on a rope... we were saved by an unsuspecting member of public. Police called but were, as usual, not interested; when they eventually came out they were more interested in whether the Landrover was insured or not! This set a pattern for cub hunting ... we called for help ... none was sent.

Hunting started with support being fairly well behaved, mostly. Even usually out-of-control Ben Doggrell seeming somewhat subdued; had they been told to behave? We shall see as the season goes on...

Working closely with local Hunt Monitors, we are covering most of the 5 local hunts each week, leaving them wondering where we are going to pop up next!

Thanks to our supporters for everything they do.

East Kent Hunt Sabs

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So...early starts for us as cub hunting began again. The East Kent with West Street Foxhounds had a few visits, and the usual nonsense from masked-up thugs trying to keep us away showed how effective we were; an early, "YOU LOT ARE REALLY PISSING US OFF!!" rant from Huntsman Stephen Burton did warm the cockles, though.

The Ashford Valley with Tickham Hunt also got a couple of early visits, and are getting very sore after a few mostly sab free seasons. The pack are also highly responsive to the gizmo, so much fun was had taking the hounds out of the woods for a run around the fields! The hunt have responded by making wild allegations to the police, who are starting to see through them, which is nice.

We continued with regular visits to the EK w WS, and saw plenty of foxes running about, so sabbing was pretty old school tactics ... the glut of terrier men who follow almost outnumber riders on a bad day, so lots of nonsense continued, but as most of them like to bring their (masked up) kids along, things didn't get too out of hand. Things got interesting when the AV started offering us meets to other hunts to keep us away (!), and one of the EK redcoats took an amazing tumble ... the video of which caused an almighty rumble on social media! We also found a new unregistered pack; The North Downs Harriers, led by ex (sacked) EK huntsman Alfie Vassar. It seems that they are pissing off other packs by the amount of info on them we get sent in. They are guarded by a group of bumpkins who go in for the "Landy-ramming" tactic; we really think this pack won't last long - when we can substantiate all the rumours going about, we will.

And then there was the glorious day we found the Blean Beagles: only when we stop looking for them do they appear! One look at us, and they ran, literally RAN back to the meet to pack up, with not one of them uttering a word. Marvellous.

Sadly, on a tip off, one of our members filmed the EK w WS hunting mid-week, only to find on searching the area where they were seen acting suspiciously, they had killed, and left the fox carcass behind ... all evidence is with Kent police.

Boxing Day saw our usual demo at Elham against the EK w WS, and with over 100 protestors, the hunt were well pissed off. 50% down on riders too! We also planned a later demo against the Beagles in Faversham, but this year, they never even left the kennels!! Result.

Landy problems are sadly back, but we still managed another lively demo at Wingham, where the EK w WS support acted more true to form, and many assaults have been reported to the police from the day. We were sabbing from cars last weekend, but are hoping to back to full strength to finish off what has been a great season for us so far!

Kernow Hunt Sabs

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The Kernow team was very busy from July to October with the badger cull being rolled out to North Cornwall. Having a 650sq km zone to be surveyed and then protected it was a massive and seemingly impossible task. With a small core team of members constantly in the zone and others sparing as much time as they could during the 7 week cull we were delighted to join forces with a small number of determined local people who did an outstanding job in helping to stop the slaughter. A big thank you to Devon County Hunt Sabs who had quite a few outings in the North Cornwall zone and the sab groups who helped with surveying.

On the fox hunt side our group vehicle has annoyingly had repeated unexpected mechanical problems which delayed the group getting out. Also annoyingly our Facebook page got removed after posting a list of hunt meet pubs so we have started a new page and renamed it Kernow Sabs, Monitors and Animal Rights Team.

We are in the process of getting new members out with us to sab hunts and the cull zone surveying will resume shortly ready for next year.

Grampian Hunt Sabs

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Our season kicked off with a few Scottish sabs going down to the badger cull zone to help out and save some lives. We met some amazing people and teamed up with some old friends from Sheffield and Beds &Bucks.



Soon after our return we began to pay visits to the Fife Foxhounds' cub hunting meets and at the beginning of the season we also joined Glasgow Hunt Sabs to pay a couple of visits to the Lanarkshire & Renfrewshire hunt. It was on our first visit at this hunt that a fox was killed in front of sabs with hounds ripping him apart. Sabs got to the body just too late but managed to take it for a post mortem. This revealed that the fox had been shot as is required by Scottish hunting law but that the hounds had been able to make the drawn out kill and the fox was running around injured for several minutes. The release of this post-mortem coincided with the release of the Lord Bonomy Review which is the review of fox hunting in Scotland, both of which ended up in several national newspapers and on BBC News Scotland TV. We hope that the results of the Bonomy review will help to strengthen the law as very little protection is given to foxes currently.

Back at our most frequented pack, the Fife Foxhounds, a number of 999 calls have been made to the police this season as we have been told by them to do, but the police have admitted to us that they can do nothing to uphold the law on the day of the hunt, even if the hunt are breaking the law, due to lack of knowledge of the law and 999 calls have been met with no response.

Despite this, we have had a successful season which has been helped greatly by us unmasking which has led to numerous members of the public approaching us with their support and more intel coming our way.

Lancaster Hunt Sabs

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We are currently spreading ourselves a bit thin trying to cover the Lake District area of Cumbria, working with hunt monitors to monitor and sab the Melbreak and Blencathra hunts. We have made an impact in the previous two seasons on hunts in the Lake District and worked very closely with Cumbria sabs and monitors, and Cumbria Hunt Watch. This has led to the hunts having to change their traditional behaviour, with secretive meet cards and hunts meeting early to avoid sabs.

We have been lucky enough to have contact with people who live within Lakeland hunting communities who are passing all sorts of useful information including meets and political snippets. There has been a lot of interest from potential new sabs in Cumbria, but we are finding it hard to get a new Cumbrian group up and running whilst trying to also convene the Lancaster group. We also only have one vehicle and lots of interest from potential sabs in Lancashire...!

This season we have mostly sabbed with North Wales sabs, Cheshire sabs, Cumbria sabs and the new Fylde sabs. We have also worked with the highly dedicated monitors from Cumbria and Cheshire. We have visited the Melbreak, Blencathra, Flint and Denbigh and Cheshire Forest hunts.

The Melbreak seems to be in severe decline with only 25 people turning up at the Boxing Day meet. The Melbreak is almost always monitored and reported on a weekly basis, and members of the public have been extremely supportive in alerting the National Trust to the Melbreak's criminal activities. These have included several recorded incidents of illegal hunting and the death of a hound which was then discarded on a fell side. The Blencathra continues to illegally hunt and to breach their licensing agreement with the National Parks Authority, which we hope to report further on.

The North West appears to have a rapidly growing sab culture which we hope can go from strength to strength. Our report would not be complete without thanking everyone who has contributed in some way to keep us going.



Liverpool Hunt Sabs

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This season we've been mainly focusing on a hunt very close to home, the Holcombe Harriers. At the end of last season sabs attended a meet and throughout the day witnessed a number of hare being chased by hounds. The relentless attack on the local wildlife only stopped when sabs gained control of the pack and kept with them until the huntsman came and collected the hounds over an hour later.

This season we have seen them gradually move towards predominately trail hunting. Our constant presence at their meets has meant there has been no escape for them, but sabs have still had to intervene on a number of occasions to stop hounds from rioting off the trails. We have managed to create a good relationship between us and the hunt, meaning we have not had to put up with trouble from their supporters. There was an exception on their New Year's Day meet when at the start of the day supporters blocked our van in. It was only when the police arrived that they moved.

As well as focusing on the Holcombe we've also joined up with other groups to visit the Meynell & South Staffordshire Hunt and High Peak Harriers. Three visits to the Meynell & South Staffs hunt have seen us team up with Manchester and Nottingham sabs. Good teamwork meant we ensured the escape of a number of foxes each time.

We were pleasantly surprised to see the diminished numbers of the High Peak when we successfully cut short their day with Sheffield sabs.

We'd finally like to thank everyone who has donated to or supported us in 2016. If you're interested in getting out in the fields with us, please contact us through the links above.

Norfolk/Suffolk Hunt Sabs

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Norfolk & Suffolk Sabs have been out in the fields every weekend since the beginning of September and this season we have also covered more weekday meets than we have in recent years. Instead of focusing on the Waveney Harriers, we have been giving more attention to the Easton Harriers and they haven't liked it. It has become obvious that the Eastons have a very high kill rate indeed. Sabs have had to bear witness to some horrific hare kills this season. Sadly, sometimes no matter how many sabs you have out, it is not possible to get there in time and to save them all.

The first kill of the season was during a cub hunting meet and resulted in the Master of the Hunt trying to conceal the hare's body up her jacket (see photo). The Police have been very slow to act but following social media attention, the matter is now receiving proper attention.

For the first time we also covered the Easton Harriers Boxing Day meet, which ended up pretty much a hare coursing event on horseback. The supporters surrounded two fields (where three separate hare chases took place) and were jeering and whooping as the hares ran for their lives. Luckily for the hares, sabs were present to intervene.

The Waveneys have still been receiving our attention. We have sabbed some of their ordinary meets, a cub hunting meet and their prestigious opening meet. The Waveneys are going to desperate lengths to avoid us turning up and have resorted to meeting at one location and then hunting a totally different meet altogether.

We have been very lucky this season to be joined some weeks by the South Cambs Sabs and recently we had a Saturday where we were joined by the Suffolk & Essex Sabs, South Cambs Sabs and the Cambs Sabs. Much thanks and respect to those groups.





Northants Hunt Sabs

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Cubbing season started for us at The Pytchley Hunt, we also paid visits to the Oakley and Fernie whilst also continuing our presence in the cull zone. With work needing to be done on our van we spent the next few weeks hitching rides with other local groups, thanks to all concerned for helping us out!

An incident at the Fernie where our van was blocked in for nearly an hour by hunt support has resulted in their drivers being done under Section 59 of the Police Reform Act; using a vehicle in an anti-social manner. If they do it again they could have their vehicles seized! Dropped by the Westerby Bassetts one morning, they got to the end of the driveway, took one look at us, reversed back down again, unloaded the hounds and that was that – easy!

A visit to the Belvoir Hunt at the start of December turned into a horrific day for foxes and for sabs. Despite our best efforts, a fox was cornered in a farmyard and attacked by the hounds; the fox died in the arms of one of our sabs. Police were called, on arrival they already had two dead foxes in their car that had also been killed by the hunt in the grounds of a local care home. The Police and Crimes Commissioner had been out with the Police and was visibly upset by what had occurred.

A 49-year-old man was later arrested for illegal hunting, criminal damage and assault. This is now an ongoing case. This also resulted in them not hunting for a couple of weeks afterwards, so some lives will have been spared and we've been there most weeks since to make sure they don't do it again on our watch.

We dropped by the Cottesmore for their 350th Anniversary meet and made return visits to the Cambridge and Enfield Chace on Boxing Day and the Fitzwilliam on New Year's Day as both hunts killed on those days last year ... this year, however, after all the usual parading around for the public, neither actually hunted; which is a great result.

Get involved, get in touch

North Downs Hunt Sabs

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Donate to account: 65545775/ sort code: 08-92-99

North Downs and Guildford sabs and Surrey Hunt Monitors have had an eventful first half of the season, we concentrated, as always, on the Surrey Union for cub hunting, finding them or having information on many of their meets and successfully disrupting them. The opening meet of the Surrey Union was another good day for us when we were joined by Croydon and South Coast with no kills.

December was truly manic starting when we failed, by seconds, to save one fox (very horrific and upsetting) at the Surrey and Burstow and West Kent at Chiddingstone, but recovered the body which went for a post mortem. The resulting publicity went viral and hundreds of thousands of people saw the images. As it also made two national newspapers, Kent police said they would investigate, sabs dropped off video evidence only to be told a few weeks later that the police would not be reporting it as a crime: we then did another post calling people to action, and the resulting social media and tweet storm ensured that they reopened the case: a great example of people power. Regardless of the fact that it is this sort of publicity that will finally bring an end to hunting, we would rather be saving animals.

When, the following week, at an aggressive Crawley and Horsham meet, we got back to what sabs do best. A fox ran past us and the hounds were stopped by a wall of noise as we rated the hounds off it, which was very satisfying (after the upset of losing a fox the previous week), we rounded off the month by stopping a shoot near Balcombe. Also, unfortunately, we also got our Land Rover stuck in a ditch on Boxing Day, giving the bumpkins a good laugh, but you can't win them all!



North East Hunt Sabs

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We've been busy so far this season and have had more interest than ever with new people wanting to get involved. We worked hard in preparation for Alston Hare week in September and October having an active presence in the area and working with other groups, who kindly helped us out on the run up to the festival.

Back to the day to day, we've been working on hitting each hunt in the area and have to thank a lot of our followers for keeping us going with tip offs and making our lives a lot easier. We hope to keep growing and become a stronger and more formidable presence in the North East as the season continues, hitting hunts that have been left untouched previously.

We're also hoping to build a network of people to help with fundraising and outreach, to make the public more aware of issues that our wildlife continues to face. We had a bit of a tricky time during our 'time off' in the summer, but the group has come together and feels better and stronger and optimistic about what we can achieve in the coming year.

We're always ready to welcome new people so would encourage anyone to get in touch if you're interested in joining a good group of people with a love of making hunters miserable and excessive amounts of vegan cake!

Nottingham Hunt Sabs

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This autumn we moved a few miles north from the Gloucestershire to Herefordshire badger cull zone. Despite low numbers and lots of hard graft it was an incredibly rewarding and successful time. Large numbers of badgers were killed and we mourn each and every one of them but we must also celebrate our successes and the fact we made life as frustrating as possible for the killers on our patch.

Once the cull was over we jumped straight into sabbing fox hunts back in our local manor. We've focused mainly on the Meynell and South Staffs and Burton but also managed to visit the Cottesmore, Quorn and Blankney. It's been a hugely successful first half of the season, with both our vehicles out and up to 15 sabs out each week with more waiting to join.

Most of our hunts seem to have rolled the clock back 15 years and are happy to hunt blatantly in front of us. We've seen more foxes to safety so far this season than we have in a long time and whilst it can be highly stressful at times it shows how effective we are and proves a powerful reminder of why we do what we do.



Severn Vale Hunt Sabs

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Severn Vale Hunt Sabs are a relatively new group formed while fighting the cruel and unscientific badger cull in Gloucestershire. The first part of 2016 saw us working our socks off fundraising and sett surveying in the badger cull rollout zones of the North Cotswolds and Herefordshire.



Once the badger cull started we maintained a daily presence in both zones, doing our utmost to prevent the needless death of these beautiful and iconic creatures.

Post cull, we launched straight into sabbing hunts – both fox hunts and beagle packs – joining with friends South Wales Hunt Sabs, Bristol Hunt Sabs, West Midland Hunt Sabs, Beds and Bucks Hunt Sabs, North Cambridge Hunt Sabs, Dorset Against Blood Sports and Berkshire Hunt Sabs. It is always a pleasure to work with, and learn from, other groups.

Joint outings have seen us travel to Bridgend to visit the Llangeinor Pentyrch and to the Midlands to sab the Atherstone. On separate occasions The Royal Artillery Foxhounds, the Palmer Marlborough Beagles and The Ledbury Hunt have also been in our sights.

Our first solo hit, the result of successfully kennel watching the Wyre Forest Beagles, led to a joint meet with the Warwickshire Beagles near Longdon. Two for the price of one! We're pretty sure this is the first sab attention the Wyre Forest Beagles have received for some time, and it felt good to target a hunt normally able to carry out its murderous business unhindered.

For the rest of the hunting season we intend to be out weekly, holding the hunts to account, before returning to the task of preparation for the badger cull in 2017.

If you have any info about hunts, animal abuse, or would like to join us protecting wildlife please contact us at the address above. Thank you to all those who have supported us so far this year.

Sheffield Hunt Sabs

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After a long stint saving badgers in the south and a decent bath, the 2016/17 season so far has seen Sheffield Hunt Sabs working with friends old and new. Visiting fox hunts, shoots and our local harrier pack week in, week out. Checking up on old adversaries and making new ones. We have grown fond of our weekly trips to the countryside and look forward to seeing the confused expressions on the faces of hunt supporters and staff alike; unfortunately these warm feelings are rarely shared by said people, though we hope regular visits will change their minds!

A particular highlight this season has been visiting the York and Ainsty North foxhounds, not sabbed since 2011; they certainly win the Baffled Frown of the year award. The Badsworth and Bramham Moor FH, Derwent FH, Grove and Rufford FH and High Peak Harriers are all up for nominations, as well.

The season hasn't been without its pitfalls, with hunt supporters, staff and police showing that they are not afraid to use violence when they don't get their way. This, however, is all in a day's work and will not stop us driving, running, map reading, horn blowing and jumping up and down on things to protect our beloved wildlife.

South Coast Hunt Sabs

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Usual nonsense to report, so far this season we have been fired on by catapults and driven at by quads, horses and vehicles. We had one sab arrested (for refusing to remove a mask whilst on the phone taking legal advice), have taken sexist and racist abuse (from hunters not cops) and, of course, the odd thump to the head etc. etc.

We have finally accepted the tag line, "horrible, common, filthy, scum," as given by a farmer we met a few seasons back (watch the video, it's hilarious) and have the T-shirts to prove it.

Our local hunts are going to serious efforts to avoid us; not hunting on Saturdays, stopping the printing of meet cards, moving their hounds the night before or hunting very early or late. This has resulted in a downturn of riders able to go out (and is no doubt hurting their bank balance) also, many of the usual foot followers have gone the way of the dodo. Despite this, we manage to locate a hunt each week and make sure no animals are killed on those days.

Unfortunately the Old Surrey, Burstow & West Kent Hunt (how many times can they merge?!) managed to kill on a day we were not there; but since that day they have barely shown their faces on Saturdays and, when they have, their field has amounted to only 15 riders. We even managed to sab the notoriously elusive (and supposedly violent) East Sussex, on a tip off. As their security appeared to be one grumpy old guy with a cricket bat, plus they managed to ram a police car whilst trying to block our vehicle, a jolly day was had by all and we are anxious to repeat the fun.

The other good news is that we have gone from a hard core of around 6 sabs to now numbering 18; not all come out each week, but we are in the enviable position of filling up our Land Rover and sometimes needing to take a car too. So this summer it will be all hands on deck to raise enough cash for a second vehicle. Any early donations appreciated.

As always we are keen to welcome new sabs, so please drop us a line if you are interested; it's as mad as it sounds, but our wildlife needs protecting.

Southampton Hunt Sabs

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It has been a busy season for us here at Southampton Sabs. When the unfortunate time came to stop the vile scum from cub hunting we were without our trusty Landy. Not Sabs for defeat we teamed up with our very good friends at South Coast Hunt Sabs who opened their Landy door to us so we could join forces for those cold dark mornings to prevent the murder of fox cubs across the south.

Not too far in to main season saw us back on the road (with some much appreciated help), and back on our feet to sab the usual suspects including the Crawley and Horsham, the Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent and the Southdown and Eridge.

This season has seen the introduction of several new Sabs to the group, all of whom have been a valued addition.

We've travelled east, we've travelled west, and the arrival of main season saw us team up with our great pals Bristol Hunt Sabs and South West Sabs to pay a visit to the Tedworth for their opening meet at Oare House. We suspect a bagged fox was released as, within minutes of them setting off, hounds went in to full cry, only to be stopped in their tracks by sabs seeing the fox away to safety.

The Tedworth have also seen the departure of their notorious huntsman, Mike Lane, as of the end of last season. We will be keeping an eye on them to see what this change means for their local wildlife.

The highlight of the season so far has to be a visit to the murderous Old Surrey, Burstow and West Kent at the beginning of October for their final cub hunting meet. Sabs from local groups kennel watched and detected movement from around 5:20am. With several groups in the area we were on them from the off and we stayed with them for the duration. Witnessing huntsman Mark Bycroft lose control of his hounds is a rarity and this morning delivered just that. Sabs had control of the pack for a great deal of the time. Foot teams and vehicles worked together like a strategic thing of sab perfection. Every time Bycroft tried to give us the slip another foot team or vehicle was there waiting. Into coverts, over ravine-like ditches and through heavy woodland; we just don't quit. The look on his face was priceless as he blew for home before 9:30.

We have big plans for the rest of the season and would like to say a massive thank you to all those that have supported us with our efforts so far.

Long run the fox.

South Wales Hunt Sabs

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We saw out the summer in deepest darkest (and sometimes weirdest) Herefordshire, sabbing the badger cull in one of the new zones. We worked with old friends and made some new ones. Lessons learned from previous culls served us well as did the vital weeks we spent surveying before the killing started. We knew where the badgers were and did all we could to protect them.

Once the cull was over, we caught up with the foxhunting season, starting with the ever diminishing Banwen Miners hunt who have been busy enraging local landowners by trashing their fences and fields – how to win friends (not)?

We've also been out on the Llangeinor, the Cotswold Vale, the Curre, the Ross Harriers and the Leadon Vale Bassets – not a trail between the lot of them. We've been greeted by the usual mix of idiots and threats - one particularly memorable, as it was issued by a man with what appeared to be a tea cosy over his head.



Highlights of the season so far? Helping foxes and hares on their way to safety and seeing red faced scumbags well and truly sabbed. We've also had some cracking new recruits join our merry gang.

Lowlight has to be getting our trusty vehicle nicked. We're back on the road now though and raring to go – thanks in no small part to everyone who donated so quickly and so generously to our emergency fundraiser, and those who shared it and those who have helped in other ways to get us back to business so quickly. Thanks also to the HSA for their massive support. It's good to know that sabs have friends.

If you want to get involved, either in the fields or by fundraising then get in touch.

North Wales Hunt Sabs

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We've had great numbers out sabbing this season and we've teamed up with numerous groups, too many to mention, but we'd like to give a mention to the new Sweden Hunt Sabs who recently joined us out in North Wales.

With many sabs we've been able to hit the Flint and Denbigh in North Wales, who seem very angry with us, also we've hit hunts in Cumbria who seem to run away from us, and we were amongst the first sab groups to sab in Cheshire in many years. I think we owe a special mention to the Cheshire forest hunt who seem to be on their last legs. The first time we hit them was with Cheshire sabs, Lancaster sabs and some local monitors. The footage we took of PC Claire Ford out with the hunt made local, then national press; this is still under investigation.

We had a day in court with a gamekeeper who (allegedly) attacked sabs; he got off, but grassed the Flint and Denbigh hunt for illegal hunting, and has now left his post as head gamekeeper. Most the hunts around our area finish at the start of March, but there is still plenty of work to be done with the prospect of the badger cull coming to Cheshire; we expect to find out the verdict on that in the near future.

Members of the public have been great with us, we've been made welcome wherever we've been and received many kind messages of support. Also a massive thank you to everyone who has shared our posts and made donations: you have made this possible.



Three Counties Hunt Sabs

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Once again we started the season fighting the badger cull, this time in the North Cotswolds and Herefordshire areas as well as Gloucestershire. The Ledbury Hunt held the first cub hunting meet of the season in the same day as the cull began and we went into September with wildlife persecution in full swing. A summer of preparation paid off despite the energy already used.

Our early morning sett-blocking patrols have worked well and we unblock numerous setts prior to hunt meets, helping foxes escape from the hounds as well as trying to catch those responsible. With new people becoming interested, we split if we have more sabs available so we can cover more than one hunt a day and, even in small numbers or on our own, we've stopped several dig-outs already this season. Our busiest days were during cub hunting when we might have meets in the morning and evening with cull sabotage either side … and when we sabbed the CVFH cub hunting, followed by the opening meet of the Ross Harriers on the same day.

We wait to see what will happen to the South Herefordshire following the expose from June … and we continue to raise awareness of wildlife persecution within the three counties (and beyond). Check out our website!

With tyres being slashed, wing mirrors kicked off and cameras grabbed by hunt supporters, our costs unfortunately stay high, on top of the fuel we use sabbing 4, sometimes 5 days a week, but we're still out there and we're getting others out checking setts and 'dog-walking' near hunt meets as this has proved an effective way of getting more people out (especially those who don't have as much time or energy to join an established group).

See you in the fields!



Nominated by East Kent Sabs

Email us your favourite undead bumpkin pictures and we'll feature the best....space permitting!

PISS POOR EXCUSES:



HOW BEAGLE PACKS PRETEND TO TRAIL HUNT



In 2015, IFAW produced a report called 'Trail of Lies.' Based on ten years of covert monitoring by their investigators, it is a forensic demolition job of the supposed sport of trail hunting.

Over its 200 pages, the report details the many falsities of this activity and reveals how it is nothing more than an alibi to disguise traditional pre-ban hunting. It is a disturbing story of cynical manipulation, evasion and animal piss. If there is any omission, it is that the overwhelming focus is on foxhound packs, with very little mention of how trail hunting is employed by hare hunters.

As it is the HSA which has led the fight against hare hunting, it is fitting that we fill that gap with our experience of sabotaging beagle and basset packs.

Modus Operandi

'Trail of Lies' details the various MOs used by fox hunters to disguise their illegal activity. This can be as simple as saying trails have been laid when they haven't, or videoing a trail being laid at the start of the day which is then ignored. Packs that see sabs regularly have learnt to have a soiled rag to hand that can be dangled off their terrier-man's quad bike as required. Fox hunts have the advantage of being able to move quickly over large distances and so it is easier for them to give the illusion of legal activity to observers.

Beagle and basset packs do some of these things too, but there are several reasons why it is harder for them to pretend to trail hunt. Firstly, it all takes place on a much smaller scale, often just a few fields. Additionally, hare are much more likely to be put up out in the open and, when hunted, they have an awkward habit of running in large circles back to where they were found, instead of disappearing over the horizon as a hunted fox often does.

So, by far the most common tactic employed by beagle packs is to not be found in the first place. Following the Hunting Act, the beaglers went completely underground. For a group of people claiming to "hunt within the law", their secretive behaviour is more like that of dog-fighters or badger-baiters and is highly suspicious in itself. It was only when the HSA launched a national campaign against them in our 50th year (see Howl, winter 2013) that we started to get a picture of what they were up to.

When sabs do find beagle packs they tend to pack up immediately, with hunt staff falling over themselves to get the hounds out of the fields and into the van. Why? Simply because they are hunting illegally, there is no such thing as trail hunting and pretending that there is can be very difficult!

On the very few occasions that beagle packs have been covertly monitored, illegal hunting has been found. In November 2013, the RAC huntswoman Libby Gilbert was filmed blatantly hunting hare; she evaded justice by fleeing to America. Two years later, the Eton College were filmed doing exactly the same on an away-day to North Yorkshire. Unsurprisingly, the police took no action against these powerful and influential criminals.

Taking the piss: the lack of regulation

One of the key findings of IFAW's report is that trail hunting has deliberately not been codified with any rules or regulations (in contrast to the strict rules, say, of the Masters of the Drag hounds and Bloodhounds Association). The HSA can confirm that, just like in fox hunting, every hare pack has its own interpretation of what trail hunting is. HOUNDS magazine carries adverts for coyote urine ("ideal for beagles and harriers"), the High Peak Harriers claim to use ferret urine, while the Trinity Foot favour a commercial spray made from American jackrabbits. Other beagle packs say they use aniseed (Stour Valley) or even Olbas Oil (New Forest), which would technically make them drag packs. Some say they lay trails the day before the meet, others while the hunt is in progress. The whole picture is totally confused, and deliberately so.



Hare hunting's governing body - the Association of Masters of Harriers and Beagles - know that if their trail hunting is not regulated then it cannot be verified or validated in any way, thus keeping it opaque and confusing to outsiders such as police and monitors.

"Because of the extreme secrecy in which they meet and their tendency to pack up the minute sabs appear, very few people have ever witnessed a beagle pack engaged in the supposed sport of trail hunting."

Meets: now and then

Another key point detailed in 'Trail of Lies' is the fact that foxhound packs tend to stick to their traditional meets - places they know foxes will be found. Again, the HSA can confirm that the same is largely true of beagle packs. In the pre-digital age, sabs used to send in hit reports to the HSA which recorded details of the day's sabbing. There are thousands of these in the HSA archives and an analysis of them reveals that beagle packs are very frequently retaining their old meets, although it is true that many have withdrawn from public venues such as pubs, and there is a suspicious increase in meets on private estates.

Alston Hare Week, a northern 'festival' of hare hunting, provides a good illustration of how traditional meets are retained. When the HSA sabotaged this event back in 2014, we were armed with old meet cards and hunt reports dating from the 1980s. As the week unfolded, we were surprised that it was at these meets (Spadeadam, Wintershield, Park Fell, etc.) that our spotter vehicles found the hunters every day. If beaglers are now involved in the new sport of trail hunting, why do they continue to meet in areas that they know hold hares? The presence of hares - which they cannot legally chase - will surely be an unwelcome distraction from their sport of trail hunting. ▷



Trail Hunting In Action



Because of the extreme secrecy in which they meet and their tendency to pack up the minute sabs appear, very few people have ever witnessed a beagle pack engaged in the supposed sport of trail hunting. A rare exception occurred when a small group of sabs attended a meet of the Trinity Foot & South Herts Beagles at Flamstead, Hertfordshire in March 2013. Instead of packing up, the hunt decided to lay on a display of trail hunting for the benefit of sabs. It is worth recounting and analysing this event in detail as it describes what beagle packs claim they have been doing for the last twelve years. A Guildford sab with over thirty years' experience who was present on the day told Howl:

"As soon as the beaglers identified our vehicle, joint master Katie Higgs approached us, produced a bottle of American jackrabbit scent from her pocket, and proudly told us they use it to lay trails for the hounds. Her husband, Matthew was grumpier, complaining that we were harassing his "trail hunting pack": however, he gave us permission to be there (phew, thanks!) as long as we didn't interfere with the hounds.

We decided our tactic for the day would be to observe the trail hunting activity and only sabotage if an animal was put in danger. The process was this: Higgs held the pack at his feet while Katie ran off, in a straight line, trailing her jackrabbit drag behind her. She only got about a field away before Higgs released the hounds onto the trail. They just about followed the line but with no great enthusiasm or drive and they hardly gave voice at all. It was all over in a couple of minutes and then there was a lot of faffing around while they sorted out the next trail.

So far, so good. But in the middle of the second trail things took a turn for the worse. A hare got up in front of the hounds and sped off, hounds immediately in pursuit and in proper full cry. A panicking Higgs and the idiot Cambridge university students who were in attendance flailed around with whips and, together with help from us, eventually got the hounds under control.

On the third trail, exactly the same thing happened: mid-trail the pack broke off and tore off after a hare! Taking no chances, we jumped into our vehicle, drove round to intercept the pack and rated the hounds off as they checked in a strip of woodland. By the time Higgs arrived on the scene he had completely lost his composure - as well as his hounds - and was screaming that we hadn't intervened enough. You can't win!"

Absolutely everything about this account suggests that the trail hunting on display was an under-rehearsed 'cover' for the usual illegal hunting of the pack:

1. This meet took place in March 2013, a full nine years after the Hunting Act. We are being asked to believe that this pack had been trail hunting two days a week, seven months a year for the previous nine years. Why was it so chaotic? Why did the hounds show so little interest in the trail?



2. Why did the hounds break off the trails to hunt hares and do so very effectively? If the pack had been hunting legally since 2004, none of the hounds present would have had any experience of hunting hares.

3. In traditional hunting, young hounds go through training where they are "entered" to the specific quarry animal. This involves them being trained to "speak to" (i.e. bark at) the scent of this quarry and remain mute when encountering other scents. The hunting of hares should be alien to a trail hunting pack, yet their vocal response to the presence of hares was exactly that of pre-ban beagles. Why?

4. Why did Higgs (a highly experienced huntsman, in post since 1986) and his staff have such difficulty whipping the hounds off the hares they chased?



5. If the pack were engaged in trail hunting why did they choose to hold meets in ideal hare habitat such as Flamstead? The presence of hares must surely have been a distraction from their sport of trail hunting.

6. Why was the trail hunting witnessed so completely different from every account of trail hunting by beagle packs published in the pro-hunting press?

Hunt Reports

Years ago, the pages of Horse and Hound, Countryweek Hunting and HOUNDS magazine were packed with hunt reports, in which notable days were gloated over in detail.

These are much less common than they used to be, especially for beagles. When they do appear, they describe activity that sounds exactly like pre-ban beagling: i.e. long chases in which the hunted hare runs in large circles to avoid leaving its home range. None of the descriptions are even remotely similar to the linear, small-scale, stop-start fiasco witnessed at Flamstead.

Here are some examples:

(a) An account of the West Somerset Beagles Hare Week in HOUNDS March 2009 describes a hunt of the North Devon Beagles:
"With hardened snow gathered on the fields following a lengthy draw, a trail was found which hounds stuck to and hunted steadily throughout the day, allowing fine viewing for the many followers."

(b) In the November 2012 edition of HOUNDS magazine, Angela Heaton filed her annual report on Alston Hare Week:
"The Warwickshire Beagles held the stage at Langdon Beck in the afternoon and there was plenty of action from the start. Trails favoured the right-hand side of the road most of the afternoon rather than round the usual 'basin' and the pack ran well, with some lovely circuits crossing back and forth over the road, in good view of everybody."

(c) In the winter 2012 edition of HOUNDS magazine, the beagling correspondent Al Lonsir (a pen-name based on the hunting term "All on sir" - funny guy) wrote an account of a joint meet between the Warwickshire Beagles and the Westerby Bassets:
" ... and very quickly set off after the first trail, with both beagles and bassets going away at a tremendous pace and with a superb cry. The joint pack took off on a small loop round a couple of fields in front of the "glad throng" before setting out on a large circuit over the hill and right round the meet back to "The find."

(d) In the December 2013 edition of HOUNDS an account of the Catterick Beagles Festival begins with this:
"The Catterick hounds fought hard to hold the trails across the moors but even this tenacious and well-disciplined pack struggled until, as a fabulous sunset crept across the sky, they suddenly went up a gear and flew some terrific circles to finish tired but happy in the rain and dark."

Conclusion

The central finding of IFAW's 'Trail of Lies' report will be no surprise: there is not, and has never been, any such sport as trail hunting. It is nothing more than deliberate subterfuge designed to confuse the public, police and politicians, and to reduce the chances of prosecution under the Hunting Act. The experience of hunt sabs shows that this is even truer of beagles and basset packs who, as illustrated by the Trinity Foot, can't even pretend to trail hunt!

While it is frustrating to think about beaglers getting away with illegal hunting week in, week out, there are reasons to be positive. With every hare hunt we sabotage, it is becoming clearer and clearer that beagling is in terminal decline. Most packs can turn out no more than twenty supporters, and very few of these are likely to be under fifty. There is quite simply no future for hare hunting and it is hunt sabs who are hastening the day when the whole cruel business is consigned to history.



THE KEYBOARD WARRIOR

This is, I hope, a series of reports on how to cause havoc to the hunting community from the safety or your own home.

None of this is a replacement for Hunt Sabotage which as vital as ever, but some people (like me) cannot be active in the killing fields due to personal circumstances, ill health or cowardice (my excuse). However, cowering behind my keyboard I can do some good and cause chaos in the ranks of the blood sport nutters and hopefully inspire others to do the same.

So, wandering around the internet I notice that the Old Surrey Burstow and West Kent hunt were holding their Centenary Hunt ball at a hotel on the 25th February. Now I have created a false email account and Facebook page so I can launch actions without fear of my real name becoming known. Using these, I first contacted the hotel, asking if they were aware that this hunt was not only under investigation by the cops for illegal hunting but also that the huntsman, Mark Bycroft, was known for punching sabs (and had been convicted for it). They didn't seem to care as they did not respond. So I wrote up a Facebook message about this 'event', linked in the hunt's web site, Tripadvisor and Facebook account and asked people to contact the hotel asking them to cancel the event. As always, I asked people to just send polite messages.

I made sure my local hunt sabs groups put the message on their Facebook pages, as well as other anti-hunt groups such as the HSA. Soon the message was reaching thousands of people. I did the same on Twitter and within two days the hotel's rating on Facebook had fallen from around 4 to 2.7 (oh dear), but they still refused to respond except for a bland statement which inflamed people even more.

It said:

'Copthorne Hotel Effingham Gatwick Millennium Hotels and Resorts respects the confidentiality of its customers and does not publicly comment on any event to be held at any of its hotels. Further, Millennium Hotels and Resorts takes matters of animal welfare very seriously, and the activities of any of its customers is in no way a comment on Millennium Hotels and Resorts' position in relation to such activities.'

Turning to other methods, the hunt had advertised that a band called 'Soul City Band' was playing the event. So I tried to track them down... but it turns out there are three bands with that name. First try turned out to be an American band residing in Boston. On my second attempt the band said they had nothing to do with this event, and were so concerned that they might be associated with a hunt that they wrote a statement which said, among other things, *"we would like to make it very clear that this Soul City are not associated, or in any way involved, in the practice of fox hunting."*

Third time I got lucky and found the right band. Emailing the band's manager, I asked if they knew what the events was for. He replied that it was news to him and asked me to call him. Out of this conversation it seems that the band was hired under the pretence of an event for a 'charity' and had not been told of the real nature of the evening. On being told of this, two of the band members refused to play (being vegetarian), and the management company was also not happy about being duped, so they have cancelled completely.

On both occasions I advertised the updates on Social media to keep people interested and to encourage them to keep up the pressure on the hotel, who, to date, have not cancelled the event. I have a few more tricks up my sleeve but that is for another article.

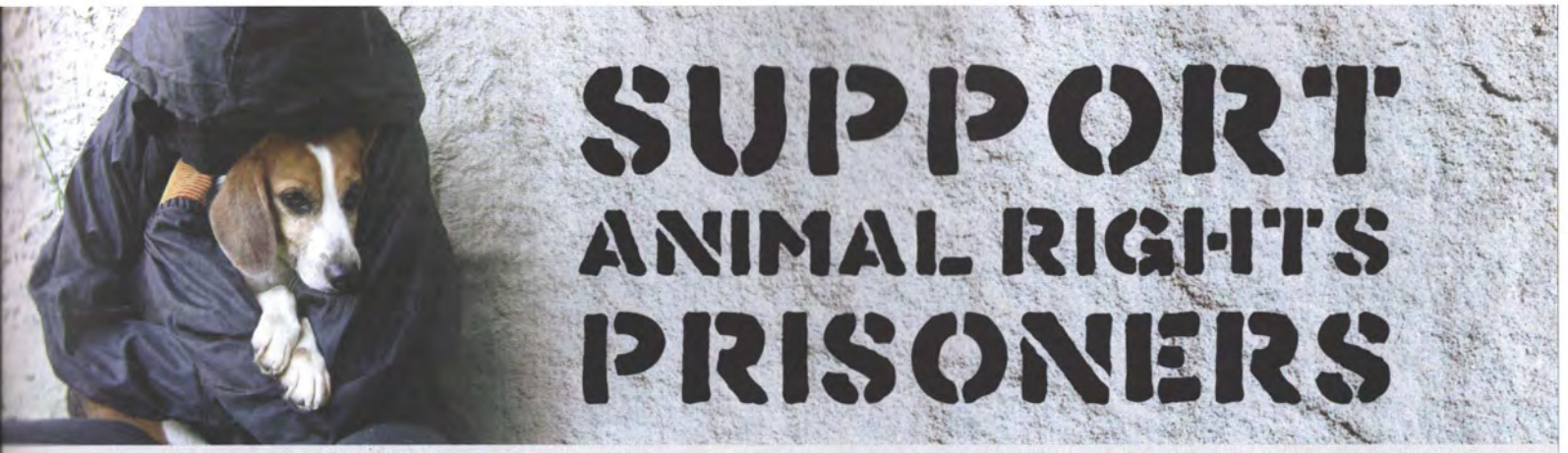
Finally with just a single Twitter tweet I put out that Hardwood Group Land Rover dealers were sponsoring the event, within 4 days with no other social media they had withdrawn their sponsorship.

The whole point is I did this with a few hours work and a bit of persistence. Hunting is as a much as anything a social event, and the other things they do cement their hunting groups together as a social unit. We can help break those bonds and if these 'events' become unpleasant, or they have to hide what they are doing to 'normal' people they will hopefully cease. If we challenge them in every aspect they will increasingly 'go underground' and that way lies the death of any group.

So if you cannot sab, try this method of helping the sabs in the field. Look at hunt's own web pages, see what events they are planning and do your best to disrupt them or at least make life a little bit less pleasant for those who would kill wildlife. Or at least when you see these campaigns, help them by re-sharing and contacting the establishments as requests.

The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing.

The Keyboard Warrior



SUPPORT ANIMAL RIGHTS PRISONERS

Please write cards or letters to the following prisoners. Even if you just send a card with a brief message, receiving a message of support from the outside world can make a huge difference to the prisoner. Remember all correspondence is read by prison staff. Also don't expect a reply as there is a limit to the number of letters each prisoner can write.

UK Prisoners

Debbie Vincent #A5819DE
HMP Send, Ripley road, Woking, GU23 7LJ
Debbie was sentenced to 6 years in prison followed by a 5 year ASBO for allegedly conspiring to blackmail people connected to HLS. The prosecution did not claim that Debbie carried out the blackmail, merely that she must have known about it. Debbie was further sentenced to 1 year in prison, to run concurrently with her previous sentence, for 'interfering with a contractual relationship,' again in relation to 'animal testing companies.' Debbie welcomes letters, but please remember that all correspondence can be read by prison staff.
Debbie's birthday is 12 January



Overseas Prisoners

Marius Jacob Mason (formerly Marie Jeanette Mason, 04672-061)
FMC Carswell, Federal Medical Center, P.O. Box 27137, Fort Worth, TX 76127, USA.
Marius was sentenced on 5th February 2009 to an outrageous 21 years and 10 months imprisonment for ELF/ALF actions. www.facebook.com/supportmariusmason/ and http://supportmariusmason.org, In July 2014, Marius announced that he would no longer be using the name Marie, and will be using male pronouns. Until his name is legally changed, mail sent to Marius in prison will need to be addressed to "Marie Mason."

Walter Edmund Bond, #37096-013
USP Marion CMU, PO Box 1000, Marion IL 62959, USA
Walter Bond is serving a total of 12 years for his actions as the ALF Lone Wolf. www.SupportWalter.org
Birthday:16th April

Joseph Buddenberg #12746-111
FCI Victorville Medium I, Federal Correctional Institution, P.O. Box 3725, Adelanto, CA 92301, USA.
In early 2016, Joseph Buddenberg and Nicole Kissane signed non-cooperating plea agreements in which they pled guilty to Conspiracy to Violate the Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act. Joseph and Nicole were accused of releasing thousands of animals from fur farms, and causing damage to associated businesses in 2013. Joseph was sentenced to two years in prison. Nicole was sentenced to 21 months in January 2017.

Nicole Kissane #20651-111
MCC San Diego, Metropolitan Correctional Center, 808 Union Street, San Diego, CA 92101, USA.

Brian Vaillancourt #M42889
Danville Correctional Center, 3820 East Main Street, Danville, IL 61834, USA
In February 2014, Brian was sentenced to nine years in prison for a McDonald's arson.



HOW YOU CAN HELP END BLOODSPORTS

Organisations such as the Countryside Alliance are backed by some of the richest people in Britain, and can spend millions on advertising and paid campaigners. Their wealth and power gives them a stranglehold over most of the media and some of the most influential people in government.

The Hunt Saboteurs Association, in comparison, runs solely on funds from you, the public, who keep the organisation afloat with donations and membership. It depends on the small band of volunteers who give over their spare time to keep the HSA running smoothly, produce leaflets and salesgoods, staff stalls, manage websites/social media and deal with the press. And most importantly of all it depends on the dedication of the men and women who, week in, week out, defy the hunts on their own turf, and in the face of increasing violence and police powers, *still* manage to save the lives of thousands of hunted animals every year.

There are several ways you can help the HSA.

- Get in touch with your local sab group (details from the office) and either go sabbing yourself or help in other ways such as fundraising, mechanics or donating financially.
- If you are not already a member of the HSA, please join now by using the form below - or join online at www.huntsabs.org.uk/index.php/get-involved/join-the-hsa
- If you are already a HSA member then please photocopy the form and pass it on to someone else you think may like to join us.
- Ask the office for back copies of HOWL to leave in places where they can be read by members of the public (ie. doctors waiting rooms). If you are still at school or college why not leave a copy in the library reference section?
- Support us by buying HSA T-shirts and other merchandise - see enclosed salesgoods catalogue or visit www.huntsabs.org.uk/index.php/merchandise
- Let the hunters know what you think! Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, contact your local newspaper's letters page and your MP to let them know your views on Government plans either regarding hunting or hunt saboteurs.



HSA MEMBERSHIP / DONATION FORM

PHOTOCOPIES WELCOME

I would like to become an active / supporting* member of the Hunt Saboteurs Association
(**delete one*)

I enclose my membership subscription of: (*tick one*)

❒ £20 (1 year subscription) ❒ £200 life membership

❒ I enclose a donation of £..... to help fund the HSA's work

Name.....

Address .....

.....

..... Postcode .....

Telephone Number.....

Email.....

Cheques / PO's should be made payable to "HSA".

Please return to HSA, BM HSA, London WC1N 3XX

For a standing order form, to pay via paypal, or for more information please email us - info@huntsabs.org.uk or visit www.huntsabs.org.uk

USEFUL ADDRESSES

Animal Justice Project
www.animaljusticeproject.com

Animal Liberation Front Supporters Group (ALF SG)
PO Box 1107, Northampton, NN7 9BT
info@alfsg.org.uk www.alfsg.org.uk

ARPS (Animal Rights Prisoner Support)
PO Box 2174, LEIGH-ON-SEA, SS9 0AZ
www.arprisoners.org
info@arprisoners.org

The Black Fish
www.theblackfish.org info@theblackfish.org

The Coalition to Abolish the Fur Trade (CAFT)
PO Box 38, Manchester, M60 1NX
0845 330 7955 caft@caft.org.uk www.caft.org.uk

Digging Out (Campaign for the Abolition of Terrier Work)
BCM Digging Out, London, WC1N 3XX
info@diggingout.org www.diggingout.org

Earth First!
www.earthfirst.org.uk www.eco-action.org

The Fox Project
The Lodge, Kings Toll Road, Pembury, Kent, TN2 4BE
01892 842111 mon-fri 9am-12 noon
fox@foxproject.org.uk www.foxproject.org.uk

Hounds Off
PO Box 162, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 7AZ
www.houndsoff.co.uk

Hunt Watch
PO Box 487, Norwich, NR5 8WE
07952 550054 contact@huntwatch.info www.huntwatch.info

The National Anti-Snaring Campaign (NASC)
PO Box 3058, Littlehampton, West Sussex, BN16 3LG
info@antisnaring.org.uk www.antisnaring.org.uk 07580455223

National Fox Welfare Society
135 Higham Road, Rushden, Northants, NN10 6DS
01933 411996 natfox@ntlworld.com www.nfws.org.uk

POWA (Protect Our Wild Animals)
enquiries@powa.org.uk www.powa.org.uk

Sea Shepherd
Sea Shepherd UK, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3AX
Tel: 0300 111 0501 admin@seashepherduk.org
www.seashepherd.org.uk

SPEAK Campaigns
PO Box 6712, Northampton, NN2 6XR
0845 330 7985 07906 497317 info@speakcampaigns.org
www.speakcampaigns.org

Stop the Cull
www.badger-killers.co.uk

Vegan Prisoner Support Group (VPSG)
BM 2107, London, WC1N 3XX info@vpsg.org www.vpsg.org

The Vegan Society
Donald Watson House, 21 Hylton Street, Hockley, Birmingham, B18 6HJ 0121 523 1730 0845 458 8244
info@vegansociety.com www.vegansociety.com

Veggies Animal Rights Calendar
www.veggies.org.uk/arc

Save us some dosh if you're moving!

If you move house please tell us. The HSA has a disproportionate number of returned envelopes due to unknown addresses, this inevitably means wasted funds.

Please make sure we have your current address!





HELP SAVE A LIFE AFTER YOUR DEATH

REMEMBER THE HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION IN YOUR WILL

You may think that it is not worth your while making a Will but you may be surprised at how much you are worth, especially if you own your own home. Most people in this country die without making a Will and that means that the government gets more than their fair share. Making a Will need not be complicated or time consuming and it could save your loved ones a lot of unnecessary heartache. If you do not have a Will when you die there is no guarantee that those closest to you will benefit from your wealth and property. In addition, many people like to know that the organisations they support whilst alive will continue to benefit after their death.

The Hunt Saboteurs Association relies entirely on the generosity of its membership to function. As the organisation strives to function on minimal running costs more of the money coming in can be put to good use where it counts most – in the hunting field. Leaving a gift to the H.S.A. in your Will helps to ensure that the good work carried out by active hunt saboteurs can continue. With a ban now in place, and so many hunts blatantly flouting it, the role of sabs has never been more important, so your gift will still be put to good use – the HSA will continue until no sentient creatures are abused in the name of sport.

A Will is a legally binding document and needs to be prepared properly. The services of a solicitor should be employed. A solicitor is the only person who can give professionally qualified advice. Have a look in Yellow Pages (under 'Solicitors') or call the Law Society on *020 7242 1222*. If you already have a Will you can include a gift to the H.S.A. by adding an amendment (known as a 'codicil') – you will need to consult your solicitor about this.

If you are able to remember the H.S.A. in your Will it would help if you could let us know.

I plan to / have already prepared a Will and have remembered the Hunt Saboteurs Association as follows (please tick as appropriate):

☐ **Residual Legacy** - a percentage of my estate once my family and friends have been provided for.

☐ **Pecuniary Legacy** - a cash gift of £.....

☐ **Specific Gift** - an individual item of value e.g. jewellery.

Name.....

Address.....

.....Postcode.....

Signature.....

Date.....

MAKING HUNTERS RED-FACED AND NARKY SINCE 1963

JOIN * SAB * DONATE



HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION

www.huntsabs.org.uk