"Not to hurt our humble brethren is our first duty to them, but to stop there is not enough. We have a higher mission — to be of service to them whenever they require it."
St. Francis of Assisi

HSW

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MINK
A SAFE ALTERNATIVE FOR OTTERHUNTERS?

The mink is one of the Mustelidae family which includes the weasel, ferret and ermine. However, the mink that is presently attracting the attentions of the otterhunts is not the European species, but the North American mink *lutreola lutreola visen.*

This species was originally brought to Europe to be farmed for its pelt but due to its amazing skill at escaping it soon became adapted to living in a new environment outside the mink-farmer's cage.

Unfortunately for the mink it has adopted a semi-aquatic habitat very similar to that of the otter and has for many years been hunted as an alternative to the diminishing otter by West Country otterhunts, in particular the Dartmoor.

Since its escape to the wild the mink has inevitably become one of the many species classed as 'vermin' by bloodsport fanatics, who have taken pleasure in despatching them in various ways—shooting, trapping and hunting with hounds. But to what extent is the attitude that mink are "voracious alien carnivores" true?

It is apparent from articles written in New Scientist by Ian Linn and Dr Paul Chanin that the mink can, in fact, be beneficial to fishermen.

Linn and Chanin state that "mink predate in most places on targets of opportunity"—





ie they will eat the prey that is easiest for them to catch and in many cases the prey concerned is the rabbit or brown rat, rather than the young pheasant or domestic chicken.

It seems that the mink's diet is evenly divided between fish, mammals and birds, with a bias towards the particular prey item that is more numerous in the creature's territory. The mink's diet may consist of moles, voles, shrews, rats, squirrels, rabbits, coots, moorhens and fish of various species, notably eels. (According to Walter Black of the Dartmoor OH they are harmful to nesting birds as well because "mink are extremely adept at climbing trees". He further states that "in a fish hatchery or stocked pond they can cause wanton damage and have been known to savage lambs"!!)

One site studied by Linn and Chanin was the River Teign in Devon (Dartmoor OH country). This river has a low nutrient level and hence fish food is scarce. The brown trout in the river are too numerous for the available food and as a result tend to be smaller than usual. If, as seems likely, cropping by the mink is mainly on the resident brown trout, and relatively little on the migrating sea trout and salmon, then a thinning of the brown trout population might well be considered an advantage. It could mean more food for each individual fish and an eventual increase in the number of good-sized fish available to anglers.

An argument offered by gamekeepers and other bloodsportsmen against the mink is that the mink compete directly with the otter for food and habitat and therefore increases the pressure on the otter.

Linn and Chanin dispel this myth and state "there seems to be no substantial evidence that mink exclude otters from their habitat. In optimal habitats mink and otters can probably co-exist and breed successfully, while their more catholic diet and greater toleration of disturbance enable mink to establish themselves in areas which are sub-optimal for otters".

As mentioned earlier, the mink lives in a similar habitat to that of the otter, the effects, therefore, of hunting the mink will undoubtedly cause just as much disturbance to the otter as otterhunting itself.

This in fact happened on the River Arrow, near Eardisland, N. Herefords. last July where 'mink' hunters were hunting an area where otters had been previously sited. The Hereford Evening News reported that the Welsh Water Authority's Wye Fishery, Recreation and Amenity Committee were to take up the matter with the BFSS. However as the BFSS doesn't recognise the mink hunts it's probable that nothing will be done in that quarter.

Similarly the Northern Counties seemed bent on routing mink who, the Master states, "will drive away any breeding otter". (What does he fondly imagine otterhounds will do?) He goes on to say that "otters numbers have declined in England because of the decrease in the number of frogs . . . their staple diet"!!

What is needed is a law giving protection to the otter's habitat, not the otter. This would then protect otters, mink and countless other forms of wildlife that are decimated by the passing hunt.

A fact that has escaped many people is that otters are still being hunted and killed in Scotland, and recent reports show that this part of the country may become a mecca for frustrated mink/otter hunters. In fact Mr Farrow's Otterhunt—which was evicted from the Isle of Mull by angry residents—toured Scottish rivers with his hounds in search of otters last season. If this trend catches on the relatively numerous otter population in Scotland will soon be reduced to the pitiful level in the remainder of the British Isles.

It is obvious that the mink is now regarded in the same mis-informed light as the otter used to be (eg otters do damage in watercress beds by rolling in them!) by hunters; so once again the stories and needlessly harmful adjectives (vicious, voracious etc.) will be repeated to back up the killers' arguments.

Ian Linn and Dr Paul Chanins' articles on mink can be found in issues 2.3.78 p560 and 5.10.78 p38 of New Scientist. They provide both interesting and informative reading and knock a great deal of what hunters say and will probably utter in the future firmly on the head.

FOX SEMINAR



On 21st April this year the HSA held a seminar on the Wild Fox.

The British Field Sports Society refused to accept an invitation to attend—no doubt afraid of what they might learn about their much persecuted quarry. Certainly many myths were expelled.

One solitary hunter did turn up but kept a low profile. Also in attendance was a Man from the Ministry (of Agriculture) and 200 sabs and interested parties.

Various naturalists sent in contributions to the seminar, and others spoke in person. Below we give a short resumé of some of the points covered.

Eric Ashby's paper made it clear that sporting estates were often over-run with rats and other rodents due to the over-destruction of their predators (foxes) by gamekeepers. If a dominant fox is killed others come in to take its territory. Foxhounds often move deer which leads to forestry land being upset. He blamed the hunts for the persecution of the badger due to the blocking of their setts by the hunts' earth-stoppers—badgers may kill their own cubs if danger threatens. The badger population of the New Forest had been halved over the past few years. He believed that the MAFF (Min of Ag)'s fox extermination policy if rabies ever arrives was wrong as an unmanageable plethora of rabid rats would result.

MALIGNED

RSPCA Council member **John Bryant** referred to the fox as "they hygiene officer of the woods" whose image must be changed to fit the truth. He announced the launching of a new organisation called **PRO-Fox** whose function will be to improve the fox's image and dispel the myths that plague this much maligned creature. He was against *all* selective slaughter.

The MAFF classify the fox as "a pest of agriculture" and yet were unable to give the RSPCA's Wild Animal Committee any statistics at all on lamb, chicken or cat killing by foxes.

84% of foxes die before their second birthday. Evolution hasn't evolved the fox to be a natural prey species and wolves wouldn't have bothered with such a small creature anyway. John has reared four injured fox cubs at his animal sanctuary—each one had a vastly different character ranging from courage and playfulness to neurosis and timidity—he felt the latter traits were due to the unnatural, enforced 'prey species' tag they now had. All four foxes were kept in the sanctuary's cattery and had always stepped aside when confronted by a cat on the same path! So much for the cat-killing myth put out by hunters.

SHEEP

In naturalist **Don MacCaskill's** paper, which related mainly to the Highland fox, he maintained that sheep farmers were the main problem. The current methods of snaring, clearing dens and fox drives have only helped to cause vacuums. The Highland fox thrives on Man's leavings such as dead sheep and deer grallochs left on mountain-sides. Winter and the scarcity of food is the great national control. Half a million lambs die each year through disease, exposure and cold. Foxes should be left alone—the limited level of fox damage should be acceptable—eagles are accepted as predators. *Spades (to bury carcases and grallochs) would be more effective than guns or snares.*

Roger Burrows (author of 'Wild Fox') gave a very interesting talk and slide show based on his 17 year study of foxes in Gloucestershire and Cornwall. He had found that foxes don't always run away when disturbed but often sit down when undecided as to what to do (hence the hunters' claim that they often do this when being hunted which "proves" to the hunter that the fox is completely nonchalant about being hunted).

FOOD

Analysis of fox droppings and stomachs has revealed that foxes in many areas live mainly on slugs, beetles, fruit, bank voles, field voles, shrews and, to a lesser extent, rats and moles. Worms are also eaten on wet nights (56 worms were found in one fox's stomach). Wood mice were too quick for most foxes. Foxes take the most easily available food. Rabbits can form 50% of their diet in fell destricts. Carrion is another major food source and dead lambs carried off by foxes (who are then labelled as killers) are probably stillborn. In winter foxes often have empty stomachs and they may eat silage, particularly in the Jan/Feb breeding season, or they may exploit "larders" of food buried after richer summer pickings. He had observed a vixen and 2 cubs walk through a flock of sheep and groom themselves. One of the cubs had run away when a lamb looked at it, the sheep didn't move.

He felt that the fox had a neutral function in the environment and that more money was spent in controlling them than the value of the damage they were supposed to cause merited. He believed that foxes may kill lambs and they can be shot where necessary. The fact that they were disappearing in large areas (due to snaring for their pelts) was worrying hunting people.

continued on page 2

COYPU KILLERS

Now that otters have comparative safety under the Conservation of Wild Creatures and Wild Plants Act 1975 hunts are naturally turning their attentions to mink (see separate article) and coypu. The coypu are, at present, confined to East Anglia and therefore come under the scrutiny of the Eastern Counties Otterhounds (ECOH).

We have yet to write to the Ministry of Agriculture asking them why this creature is considered a pest but suspect it's for similar reasons which led to the otter being pursued so hotly for many years. The Ministry keep a watching brief on the situation and the Anglian Water Authority in the area are using humane traps to capture these unfortunates.

It seems the Ministry are opposed to the ECOH getting involved as their antics upset the cage-trapping operations and don't help in controlling numbers. (They also said that a side effect would be an influence on anti-bloodsport demos!) The hunters, it seems, don't want to know what the Ministry thinks as Lord Somerleyton (BFSS member) "called on the Min of Ag to say more about the localities where coypu were trapped so that the location of the largest concentrations were better known".

860 coypu were killed in Norfolk and Suffolk in October of last year, alone, 65 of them on Orford Island, Suffolk. During the severe winter many coypu were seen away from their normal habitats and the Ministry are encouraging farmers and landowners to do their dirty work for them.

This was only too easy for the resident of 13, Pine View Road, Ipswich (48618), Graham Porter, who spotted a coypu enter his garden looking for food and warmth—he blew its brains out. Whatever HOWL readers think about this they must not phone Mr Porter informing him that he is a gun-toting little toadie.

As otters probably share areas with coypu it is obvious that any disturbance to coypu would result in pressure on the otter and should be discouraged.



VETTING THE HUNT

In March the British Veterinary Association announced that they were investigating shooting and hunting, "in a clinical, rather than an emotive" manner.

They accused a lot of "marsh cowboys", who are unfit to hold a gun, of much cruelty, including mangling animals with wild shots at anything that moves—even cows and horses. They want firearms legislation tightened up.

As for hunting, they do not agree that it should be a political issue—they want to take it out of politics. But they have set up a committee to investigate the barbarity of foxhunting and are considering fitting a captive fox with a sort of electro ence-phalograph* to find out what a fox feels when it is hunted. (*With or without the knowledge of the hunt, we wonder?)

RECOMMENDED READING

The Urban Dweller's Country Almanac. This richly informative and beautifully presented book has been written, designed and illustrated by one of the editors of the former underground magazine 'Country Bizarre'. It conveys within its 256 sumptuously illustrated pages not only a comprehensive insight into many unusual country activities such as topiary, dowsing, sea-coaling, treasure hunting and miniature gardens, but also includes, for the first time published in any book, a chapter devoted to the field activities of the Hunt Saboteurs. Published by Cassells Ltd at £6.95.

FOX SEMINAR *(continued)*



QUESTION TIME

David McDonald is perhaps the foremost expert on the red fox in this country and both he and Roger Burrows patiently answered a variety of questions from sabs after the lunchtime showing of David McDonald's film 'Night of the Fox' and Eric Ashby's film 'Private Life of the Fox'.

RABIES

We learned that in rabies infested countries the aim was to achieve 1 to 2 foxes per Km^2. In some rabies areas 70% of the foxes have been killed but the numbers had returned to square one within a year. The money involved in such exercises could be put towards new methods of stamping the disease out. 19 Km 'kill circles' might have to be drawn up in order to stop outbreaks at their early stages. We've had rabies in Britain every other century—it was here in Portsmouth in the early 20s and in the red deer herd in Richmond Park, and there are at least 3 laboratories with infected rabid animals in this country right now.

Rabid foxes may display "furious or dumb" symptoms but are always less "furious" than rabid dogs. One fox could infect 25,000 others indirectly. Bats are carriers too and even birds can catch the disease. There was some debate on the merits of stopping hunting *now* before unspotted rabies carrying foxes could be scattered hundreds of miles by packs of hounds. Rabid foxes die within 4 days.

POPULATIONS

No one could give us an exact estimate of the number of foxes in Britain. David McD felt that the number in any one area could vary between 1 and 10 per Km^2 depending on their situation. A hill fox may range as much as 5 square miles whilst a downland fox may only range 1/40th of that area.

Foxes venture into towns not because of population pressures but because, "like rats, humans and starlings, they are ultimate opportunists."

Both men agreed that if there was no fox control the fox population would not expand to plague proportions—it would be limited by food supply and territoriality although there would always be people who wouldn't be happy with the current population statistics.

CONCLUSION

All in all a very informative seminar. Our thanks to Mike O'Reilly (HSA Exec) for organising it and to those experts who submitted papers or, in particular, attended in person, only asking for expenses.

A great shame that other experts known to support hunting, such as Robin Page and Ken Jennings of St Mary's College Biology Dept, Newcastle, were unable to appear, although we know that the latter was warned off by the BFSS (he just happens to be one of their Hon Local Secs!). Also a great shame too that renowned fox hunters like the Duke & Duchess of Beaufort and T.R.H. Prince Charles and Princess Anne refused our invitation to find out a little more about the animal they're so pleased to hunt and kill in the winter months. But they all had more pressing duties that day—the 3-Day Event at Badminton!

Note: We expect to announce the availability of the transcript of the seminar in the next issue of HOWL.

FORUM

FORUM is designed specifically for individual members to express an opinion about subjects that interest them and the views expressed therein do not necessarily reflect those held by the Association.

AN EMERGENCY SERVICE FOR ANIMALS

The RSPCA still doesn't have a nationwide emergency service for dealing with sick, trapped and injured animals and it is not uncommon for an RSPCA Inspector to be expected to cover an area of 600 square miles on his own. Often the area is more than this and if an Inspector is not carrying out his duties due to sickness or through being on holiday, or because it is his day off (everyone is entitled to at least one day off each week) another inspector is called upon to cover these duties in addition to his own. It is obvious that even the most dedicated Inspector cannot possibly provide a really effective service.

A 24 hour emergency service for sick, trapped and injured animals is provided in Northampton by an organisation known as Animal Aid Emergency Unit. This unit is completely independent of any other society and is operated entirely by volunteers, who between them cover 24 hours a day every day of each year. The cases that are dealt with include animals injured in road traffic accidents, animals caught in traps and snares, birds and animals tangled in fishing line, and birds trapped in chimneys and central heating ducts.

Throughout the country there are many emergency situations involving an animal. Until RSPCA branches provide a proper emergency service there will remain an urgent need for independent groups to provide a service. If anyone is interested in organising the setting up of an animal emergency service in their area, help and advice can be obtained by contacting Cliff Goodman, Animal Aid Emergency Unit, 48 Boothmeadow Court, Thorplands, Northampton. Telephone Northampton 493402. A S.A.E. would be appreciated.

It may also prove useful for people to write to RSPCA Headquarters complaining about the fact that an effective emergency service is not being provided (RSPCA, Causeway, Horsham, Sussex.)

COURT CIRCULAR

MEDAL POWER

The Queen recently gave an OBE to John Anderton, Director of WAGBI (Wildfowlers Association of Great Britain & Ireland) for his 20 years of dedication to the sport of shooting ducks and geese for fun. Vice President of WAGBI, Les Brockbank, got one of her Silver Jubilee medals last year for his contribution to such public spirited work.

BUSINESS SECRETS

The parents of Capt. Mark 'Foggy' Phillips have been running a mink farm at home for 20 years. After killing the mink Mrs Anne Phillips skins, de-fats and prepares the pelts which then sell for £10 a time—well every penny helps on their sort of breadline. Peter Phillips had hoped to keep the business secret as they are "concerned that someone will let them out". It is believed that he was speaking at his 16th century farmhouse in Great Somerford, Wilts at the time.

PEASANTS & PHEASANTS

Meanwhile back at Buck House Prince Philip, commenting on the bird shooting exploits of Lebanese shotgun-toting youths, asked, "Why? Merely so that they can swagger back to their cities with tiny sparrow-size birds dangling from their belts. Supposedly symbols of achievement—in fact they are badges of barbarity. Controlling the size of a wild population of useable and eatable animals or of pests, I would say was quite clearly a different matter."

True to his beliefs as a conservationist of note the Prince's New Year Resolution was to curb the shooting of pheasants on his 20,000 acre Sandringham estate to two days instead of the usual 4 due to "a shortage of birds". It's rumoured that he gets tired of having to swagger back to the house with all those hand-reared birds dangling from his royal belt.

Prince Philip is President of the World Wildlife Fund.

CHARLIE'S ANGLES

The Sunday People recently said, about our beloved Royal Heir Apparent "if only he'd get over his inherited taste for killing animals Charles would be an almost perfect Prince Charming."

His recent trip to Australia did nothing to remedy the situation.

In an attempt, presumably to impress the girls on the beach, Charles went fishing for marlin, one of the world's largest and most intelligent fish.

Dr Peter Brotherton, the Director of the Environmental Centre of Western Australia, criticised the escapade, "It's a pity that members of the Royal Family take little notice of those who cry out against killing for fun".

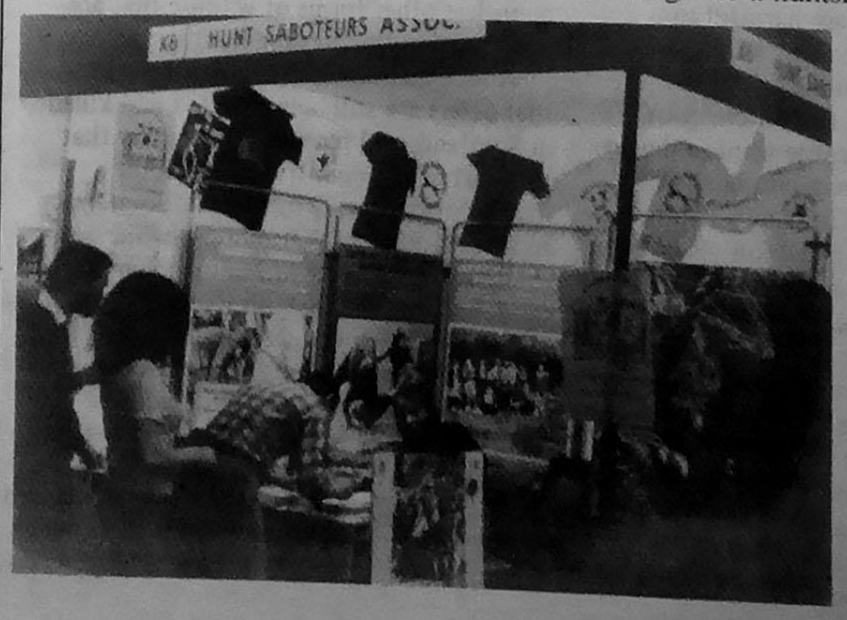
Charles took no heed and landed an almost record-size unfortunate.

MAKING A STAND OF IT

Both the BFSS and the *Shooting Times* had stands at the Country Fayre at Alexandra Palace, North London on the Sunday and Monday of Spring Bank Holiday—but the HSA had a stand there too, and did better (in terms of money taken for sales goods and new members gained) than both lots of bloodsports enthusiasts put together. In fact the BFSS told one HSA member, who was heavily disguised as a bloodsportsman at the time, that they were extremely disappointed at the lack of interest that the general public was showing in them.

The final straw for the hunting fans at the Fayre must have come at about 4.30 on the Monday afternoon, when the Puckeridge and Thurlow Foxhounds were met with a torrent of boos as they paraded in the main arena. About 40 HSA members were there, but a large proportion of the general public joined in the booing, having no doubt read the leaflets that were distributed by the sabs. After a couple of unenthusiastic circuits of the arena, the hunt slunk off with their tails between their legs and with chants of 'scum' and 'off' ringing in their ears.

One obstreperous hunter was seen departing our stall with a notice pinned to his back reading 'Support drag hunting—tie a huntsman to a Landrover'.



HSA stall at the "Festival for Mind & Body", Olympia, which was even more of a success than the last. Thanks are extended to all who helped out — especially Chris Williamson (E.Mids) and Bob Bradley (Brum), who gave up their holidays to man the stall for the nine days.

THE BELLS, THE BELLS!

It is believed that the baggy eyes of the New Forest FH Kennel staff may be due to their being kept awake and running around with their shotguns all night, after the ringing of the alarm bells set off by objects passing through the infra-red beams surrounding the kennels.

ANTI CYCLONE

Bloodsportsmen across the country had all their storms of depression over the last season. Not only have the adverse weather conditions been putting a stop to their evil fetishes and reduced their income from capping fees, they've had to put up with even more hassle from their own predator—the hunt sab.

The **East Midlands** group have organised fund raising events including a sponsored street clean in Derby. The group produces its own newsletter for its members which contains poems, recipes and hit-reports. Tears poured from the pages of Shooting Times and Horse & Hound as the BFSS learned of the never-ceasing chaos the group were causing; they even printed the registration number of the group's van, but they got it wrong—again!
When members of the group got blocked in on the Meynell & S. Staffs FH a cheeky sab got into the offending car to steer it out of the way while other sabs pushed. Hunt heavies started pushing the other way—pushing downhill. The sabs won, however the steering sab was punished when he emerged from the car, with a 1½" pole to the legs!

kerb, on a bend, facing the wrong way on the main road to Liverpool.)
Police didn't help very much in Cheshire either. When the local village 'bobby' was ordered to "arrest those bastards" by a hunt official the officer grabbed the nearest sab to him and placed him into a police car. Later the sab was charged with "action likely" and "assaulting a police officer". When brought to court the latter charge was dropped when the sab agreed to be bound over—a face saver for the police. The Superintendent at the station refused to take statements from other sabs about an assault by one of the hunt staff wielding a knife attached to a long pole! However, following a meeting with the Chief Constable of Cheshire, the situation has improved. But it still doesn't alter the fact that 80% of the past season was spent running from or battling with heavies at every hunt.

The **Manchester** group also mounted a fur picket where 4 sabs were arrested. Another member phoned Radio Piccadilly and 'Release'—with the result that the arrestees were released. ('Release' is an organisation set up to help those busted by the police who have no-one else to contact.)

coursing event had to be cancelled "due to the shortage of hares". Instead a smaller course, the 'Armada Cup', sponsored by the BFSS, was run. Sabbing started in the early morning when hares were flushed from the coursing area. At one point during the freezing cold morning sabs became worried when they noticed two people behind them holding something to their faces and aiming it at the sabs. The immediate reaction was "look out someone with a shot-gun is pointing at us" but investigation revealed a BBC film crew!
At 10am 44 sabs assembled at the Withins, the police continuously marched them up and down the lane (they must have been the Duke of York Constabulary). When a hare was beaten towards the coursing field smoke bombs were let off and everyone created as much noise as possible in order to frighten the hares away. Just after midday when the frost had melted two hares were spotted entering the field at the top and about 20 sabs invaded the field waving banners and blowing whistles to frighten the hares back to safety.

Ormskirk police were on the ball (well it's the highlight of their year) and managed to arrest 9 sabs who were quickly dragged off the field, where they were then **forced** to stand with their arresting officer whilst a police photo was taken! They were then trundled off to Ormskirk where a special court had been set up to try the intrepid.



Further down the country the **Bexhill** group have played their part in the fight to save lives. They used bikes to dodge heavies and keep up with the hunt. This tactic has been useful against the East Sussex & Romney Marsh. They've also found their camouflage gear useful—they took away half the pack without being seen against the covert.

WAPS (Wild Animal Protection Soc, S. London) have had an exhausting season hitting Whaddon Chase, Old Surrey & Burstow, Surrey Union, Surrey & N. Sussex and Chiddingfold, to name just a few. They forced the OS&B to change their Godstone meet after a sab was spotted laying a dead fox in the first covert.

The West Penwith Harriers were acquainted with the **West Cornwall** group and, although small in numbers, sabs made an impression. The irate Sec. of the Western FH reversed his car to sort out sabs after he smelt anti-mate, however he found himself blocked in by fellow supporters. The group are planning an anti-hunt ball.

Meanwhile in **North Devon** one of the newer groups on the scene have been successful. So far they have hit the North Devon Beagles, Dulverton FH and Exmoor FH. On one occasion a sab sat and whispered to a fox hiding under a fallen tree, telling it to stay still; unfortunately hounds came too close for comfort and the fox ran off into the distance and out of sight. They've also used a road-casualty fox as a lure for hounds—they 'caught' it after a mile—however the hunt accused the sabs of killing foxes to use in this way. Scent must have clung to the sabs, as the hounds followed them all day!

One **Aldershot** group member had a shot-gun pointed in his face and was told not to go near the hunt.

Hunts in Essex and Suffolk have come under the hammer of the **Mid-Essex** group. At a meeting of the Essex & Suffolk FH members of HSA and 40 hunt supporters witnessed the hunt's terrier man put a terrier in a drain where a fox had taken refuge. Eventually the terrier came out covered in blood, much to the delight of the woman owner who thinking it was the blood of the fox began daubing hunt supporters' faces with the blood on her hands. When the fox was reached its ear had been torn off.
A hunting horn stolen from a sab by the same hunt was retained by the hunt's joint master, Jeremy Pembroke. A police spokesman said if the owner would like to call in at the police station "we will put him in touch with the finder who has retained possession".

Earlybirds from the **Luton** HSA spent several early morning hours looking for blocked earths in the woods of the Vale of Aylesbury FH. The group has also had hits against the Enfield Chase, Puckeridge & Thurlow. On one occasion sabs' cars were rammed by a hunt heavy who sped off into the distance.

North West group have had their encounters with gout-ridden heavies too. Numbering 60 at one time! In fact the hunts around Lancashire and Cheshire have become so violent that the Manchester, Liverpool & Wirral and Preston & Blackpool groups have had to join forces in order to counteract the presence of imported heavies at hunts. On meets of the Holcombe Harriers sabs have been set upon and two had to be rushed to hospital in an ambulance.
On another occasion one sab received a broken nose and had to have 5 stitches. When the police arrived from the local station (Ormskirk, near Altcar!) in order to show how understanding and sympathetic they were for the injured parties they booked all the sabs' cars for parking on a verge. (The officer who wrote out the tickets had parked his car three feet from the

North Norfolk group hit the Swaffham Coursing Club with 10 members (the coursers numbered 200) and were successful in turning many hares back through beaters and a smoke flare suspended coursing for some time. However they had to beat a hasty retreat when their presence was announced over the loudspeakers and "every able-bodied man over to the back of the field" was ordered. The coursers converged on sabs still scaring hares away; 2 were taken into a wood and assaulted; another was chased by 50 people over 2 fields before being caught and assaulted—not seriously thanks to the intervention of a steward; others were escorted by officials through furious coursers. The demo received TV and radio coverage. After sabs left no hares could be found—the rest of the event was cancelled.

Christ Church & Farley Hill and Old Berkeley beaglers received visits from both **Oxford** and **Cheltenham** members. The hunts seemed surprised that the sabs were not equipped with ball and chains following hassles from local police-persons in the past. Cheltenham sabs picketted the Cotswold's hunt ball and made the front page of the local rag.

Braes of Derwent and Tynedale hunts in the north have had the attentions of the **North East** group, who, once again, recently graced the Teesdale Country Fair with their presence. According to the show programme the hounds were due in the ring at 4pm but at 1pm the ring was surrounded by a squad of 84 policepersons, each one standing next to a post of the newly erected anti-"anti" fence which surrounded the arena. In the meantime the 45 HSA members from the North East and West groups were browsing at the hideous displays at the Taxidermy tent and BFSS caravan, completely missing the 'splendid pageantry' of the parading hounds. Members of the Newcastle University Sporting Club (BFSS rent-a-mob) were called over by the loudspeakers to wherever the antis were having discussions with bloodsportsmen (they must be frightened of losing supporters).
Later in the day sabs handed out leaflets at the exit. At one point some members were assaulted by three semi-drunken hare coursing supporters. Fortunately the instigator of the violence was arrested but in order to keep all even the police also arrested an HSA member!

Exeter group harrassed hunters at the Cotley and used megaphones and sirens to distract hounds from their quarry. Other hunts visited included Dart Vale, Haldon, East Devon and Stoke Hill Beagles where they were offered a stirrup cup.

Southampton have formed themselves into a well-organised group and have held their own tactics meeting. 4 members of their committee attended a local meeting of the BFSS and put HSA's views across. They have produced an info sheet for sabs involved in car accidents (after various experiences of ramming by hunt heavies) covering things like insurance claims—copies available from HSA HQ.

North London and **Hitchin** groups have been so successful against the Enfield Chace that the hunt didn't kill its first fox until 5 months after the start of the season!

A new group in **Dundee** and a group from **Stirling University** have had a go against the Stirlingshire Hunt and should be ready next season for a massive anti-hunt movement in Scotland.

Brighton and North London groups joined forces to hit the Wye College Beagles, numbering 70 sabs altogether. The hunt, sabs and police had a nice day walking up and down a few fields.

Yet again the infamous 'Waterloo Cup' hare-

The HSA members refused to plead so they were all bailed to appear at a later date. A hare-courser who also appeared, for trying to trip up antis, pleaded guilty and was bound over.
On March 7 the nine arrested sabs from the south east, Cornwall, Blackpool, Southampton and Manchester appeared in court charged with 'action likely' on two counts. The prosecution and defence counsels had a natter beforehand and it was agreed that the charges would be dropped if the charged were willing to be bound over. As bad as this may sound past experience of similar incidences has proved that they'd have been bound over anyway (guilty or not) and at least they do not have an 'official' record.
Despite the fact that five hares lost their lives and the police once again got their way the demo was not a failure—the event was never completed and the result was international publicity for the cause.

Farnham group had red paint sprayed on them through the open window of their car by a heavy of the Hampshire Hunt (HH). A policeman was asked to approach the culprit who said "If he (the sab driver) gets out of his car I'll f . . . ing knock him down". Policeman: "Give me your name". Heavy: "No". Policeman to sab: "There's nothing more I can do for you sir". Two weeks later on the same hunt heavies in a Hartwells Oils Ltd (BP) van tried (unsuccessfully) to strangle a Brighton sab and another sab had his head banged against a tree. The driver was reported to his Transport Manager who was most concerned that his firm's van was being used on hunts.

As well as never-ending sabotaging activities, HSA members nationwide have given their aid and support to other animal rights organisations. HSA also played a major part in the distribution of GECCAP literature—"putting animals into politics".
In the light of hunters' enthusiasm over the recent election result we can only assume that the hunter-ridden Thatcher government will do nothing for the hunted animal, but don't lose heart—just give 'em hell!

Good anti huntin'.

WHALE NEWS

Clark's Shoes have undertaken not to use any leather softened with sperm whale oil after Autumn of this year, when their existing stocks have been used. They will then display posters to this effect in their shops.

Burmah-Castrol have replied to our enquiry regarding their use of sperm oil in lubricants with the following, from their public relations officer, "I am pleased to tell you that as a result of an extensive research programme we are now in the position in which it will not be necessary to purchase any further supplies of sperm whale oil".

Activists of the militant pro-whale group, Moby Dick, were responsible for combined paint stripper attacks on scores of Japanese cars on garage forecourts recently in the Midlands and West Country. Moby Dick, who protest against large-scale Japanese slaughter of whales, have been responsible for similar attacks in the past two years.

Eighty-four new and used Japanese cars were damaged in the latest raids, amounting to at least £25,000 in repair bills.

The stripper had been smeared on car doors, bodies, roofs and bonnets.

The police were particularly observant. A spokesman for the Gloucestershire force said 'It appears there is a concerted effort on a national scale to damage Japanese cars'.

ALF STRIKES AGAIN

Britain's most militant animal protection group, the Animal Liberation Front, continues to carry out daring raids on establishments involved in the persecution of animals.

On March 18th, and ALF unit paid a late night visit to Grange Farm, Harewood, Herefordshire. Eleven beagle pups were rescued from the farm which breeds and supplies dogs for use in cruel experiments. The beagles are now safe in good homes.

On May 18th, another ALF unit liberated 100 battery unit hens from their horror cages in a Middle Wallop (Wilts) factory farm. The chickens are now safe and well.

The ALF urgently needs funds to help save animals and to home those that are rescued. Money is needed to pay for petrol, tools, equipment, animal foodstuffs and vet fees. Money and offers of assistance, financial or otherwise should be sent to **ALF, Box 190, Peace News, 8 Elm Avenue, Nottingham.**

ALF GOES INTERNATIONAL

In the United States the New York ALF snatched five animals from the N.Y. University Medical Centre. The four person ALF snatch squad posed as faculty members in their raid. They made off with, and found homes for two dogs, two guinea pigs and a cat that had electrodes surgically attached to its skull.

A Southampton sab has an identification photo taken with his arresting officer.



Photo: courtesy Daily Mirror

SUM'MINK OR OTTER

East Cornwall FOE teamed up with local sabs on April 28th to bring a hunt by the Dartmoor Mink Society to an early halt. The hunt's master, Mrs. Jane Miller, cancelled the hunt due to the numbers of people present and the possibility of an accident occurring if a hound ran into the road. She said they had planned to hunt the River Fowey for mink 'because mink are a pest and go after poultry and young otters'.

Until the otter was added to the protected list in January 1978, Mrs Miller was master of the Dartmoor Otter Hunt!

HUNT HAVOC

Last season was one of the worst on record for all types of hunt up and down the country, with the best part of three months, on average, being lost due to adverse weather conditions.

However, in this drastically curtailed season, the Essex & Suffolk FH still managed to outrage residents of the normally peaceful village of Little Oakley. The incident involved Mrs Hughes, of Rectory Road, who was pushing her 2½ year old daughter up the path when, she said, "20 to 30 horsemen appeared near my back door and more than 30 hounds jumped over the fence. They were going mad and the huntsmen were galloping up the pathways calling them off". Her daughter was terrified and crying. Mrs Hughes got her indoors before seeing the hounds corner and kill the fox in her next door neighbour's garden. Mrs Hughes has always been against hunting, but said, "To see it and hear the screams of the fox is just horrible".



Master of the hunt, Mrs Mary Paull of Wherstead, near Ipswich, said that the hunters had permission to be in the fields behind the houses. "We did kill a fox in somebody's garden, but it was just one of those things. The fox went over a bit of fence and the hounds knocked the fence down, which we are replacing." She claimed that the only person she spoke to said how nice it was to see them. The Parish Council have now written to the hunt telling them they do not want them in the area ever again.

Meanwhile the Banwen miners FH have been displaying another example of incompetent huntsmanship, when they lost four hounds in January, which vanished after chasing a fox into a derelict mine near Llanelli, S. Wales. An extensive search revealed nothing.

The Southdown FH had an unwelcome visitor last year, when part-time fireman, Michael Thomsett, burned down their kennels, causing £14,500 worth of damage. Thomsett said he got no thrill or excitement from starting fires, but he did from attending and putting them out!

A couple of police constables from Leicestershire have gained much publicity about their involvement in two local hunts, namely the Cottesmore and Quorn. One of them, WPC Helen Lodge, said she has strong feelings about the antibloodsports supporters!! although the Quorn has not suffered a great deal from their activities. (Actually the local sabs have been extremely successful against them, doing regular hits over the past two years.) "They are supposed to be animal lovers, but they often frighten horses when they move among them carrying placards", she said. WPC Lodge doesn't see hunting as a barbaric sport, "It is the survival of the fittest"—who does she think she's kidding?

At least one fox had a lucky escape last season. While being pursued by the hounds of the Fernie it slipped into a mobile library, much to the surprise of the librarian, who, realising what was going on and being anti-hunt, quickly closed the doors. After the hunt had gone by she released the fox back to safety.

William Hammond, deputy education officer at Albany Prison, Isle of Wight, has protested to the I.O.W. hunt after they invaded his garden and frightened his 2 cats and elderly dog. Mr Hammond, who has kept chickens for more than three years without having any taken by a fox, stated that ". . . it is about time this barbaric mediaeval pastime was banned".

A meet of Mr Goshens Hunt was called off early in the day after Mr Goshen's top hat fell off, landed in a puddle and was trampled on by a horse!

CANADIAN CLUB

In Norway 13 Greenpeace people chained themselves to the mast of a Norwegian sealing vessel bound for the iceflows of Newfoundland. Eight were cut free and arrested before the boat sailed but the remainder, ensconced in the crow's nest, bravely endured heavy seas and biting winds before unchaining themselves and reaching the comparative safety of the deck.

A British registered boat, the Sea Shepherd, made for the iceflows and during the night before the cull was to start eight activists disembarked and sprayed a number of white furred cubs with red dye to render their skins valueless. Of course they were all arrested. An estimated 200,000 cubs were clubbed to death.

Meanwhile in London only the 'converted' round the base of Nelson's Column at that now annual jamboree, the 'Campaign Against Seal Slaughter' mass rally, could hear the speakers utter their disgust. The march of chanters went to Hudson's Bay & Annings Co (who import the skins) and back—the only highlight of which was a twice round the block dash to confuse the police by HSA members who were earlier accused by fellow marchers of "lowering the tone" by chanting abusive phrases to the tune of "What shall we do with a drunken sailor/Pierre Trudeau/ Hudson's Bay/Fur Shop windows/etc?"

However for us to criticise the Canadians is hypocritical while we still allow the proceeds of the kill to enter this country. The US, France and even cowboy-ridden Italy have banned the import of skins—why are we so slow? Contact the new Secretary of State for Trade—Mr John Nott—and tell him you want a ban NOW!



HSA join the march, against sealing, from Trafalgar Square

In Paris a Save the Seals banner was hung from the top of the Eiffel Tower after an activist had climbed the edifice.

Animal activists on hearing that Harvey Nichols had a rack of white seal skin coats in their fur department decided on a lightning strike. Not too lightning for the store who cleared the rack—probably after a tip from the press—early in the morning. A fur store further up the road bore the brunt of fury. Tomato ketchup followed by bags of flour hit fur coats at an exclusive Knightsbridge shop while Manager and assistant hit the floor with arms over heads fearing an armed raid whilst stink bombs rained down.

March also saw the British Fur Trade Associations Annual Dinner & Dance at the Savoy Hotel, in London, attract a 250-strong noisy picket. To a chorus of "scum, scum" and a barrage of the ubiquitous ketchup and flour the furriers looked very bristly. The demo featured on BBC news and one activist was arrested for threatening behaviour (with a stink bomb) but given a conditional discharge. The magistrate in fact commended him for standing up for his beliefs—makes a change!

Mr Maxwell Croft is spokesperson for the British Fur Trade Association and can be contacted on 01-629 6226.

70 Animal Activists (PO Box 1, Biggin Hill, Kent) sat-in at Harrods for their annual "Meet the Security Guards" conference when they bounce their ideas about a bit! Harrods have now somewhat accepted AA and in a letter have informed them that they can demonstrate outside the shop *without* getting moved on!



£50 WHIP

Sir Richard Newton Rycroft, Master of the New Forest Foxhounds was fined £50 in April after being found guilty of assaulting sab Jenny White, causing her bodily harm.

Jenny was out for the first time with the Southampton group, to sabotage a meet of the hunt at Burley, Hants. Rycroft rode up behind her and whipped her over the head as she tried to save a fox from being caught. The whip left a bruise on her face and a weal on her neck.

In court Rycroft claimed he was merely trying to "lasso" Jenny, and added "I cannot say I regret what I did".

The whipping of sabs by hunters is not an uncommon occurence, of course, but it is rare to see the assailant get prosecuted. Another pleasant aspect of this case is that the magistrates turned down a plea by Rycroft's counsel (the ubiquitous Edward Cazalet) that the sabs should be bound over to be of good behaviour. (This action effectively stops sabs from sabbing—or risk a fine—and refusal leads to prison. Sab Val Waters was the first witness—for the police—to suffer this and her refusal to be bound over cost her one month in prison.)

IMPRESSIONIST

Gordon Benningfield, well-known wildlife artist, expert on 'Country Game and BFSS area rep is pro-hunt because, he says, there would be no small wildlife for him to paint if no-one killed the foxes. The foxes would kill all small wildlife!

YOU HAVE (NOT) BEEN WARNED

When grilled, at a recent debate, about an attack made upon a donkey by his hounds, John Kingswell of the Isle of Wight FH thought he'd be clever by putting the blame on the sabs. His logic went something like this—'the attentions of the sabs has forced the hunt to keep their meets secret by not advertising, which has meant that the hunt are now unable to warn people that they're coming, which means that pet donkeys are liable to get attacked as a result'. *Q.E.D.*

The local sab involved in the debate then stood up and proceeded to reel off the precise locations of the hunt's next two meets!

IN DEFENCE OF OUR DUMB ENEMIES

Arguing in support of Canada's slaughter of the Harp seals one respondent on radio recently put it like this, "They (the seal killers) cannot be found alternative employment because statistics prove that they are all of below average intelligence".

You can't argue with that!

SMOKING BEAGLES PART 94

In March it came to light yet again that multi-national ICI are still nobbing off beagles. 48 beagles were destroyed after being forced to smoke thirty synthetic cigarettes a day for four years. Labour MP Ted Garrett, the then secretary of an all-party committee on the chemical industry said that the dogs died in vain. "They gave their lives for a bad cause and explanations are needed."

GRAVE PLAY

Nice to see our arguments and tactical tips coming across nicely in a recent Crown Court programme, in which a sab couple were charged with daubing the gravestone of a recently deceased huntsman named Brigadier Benstead with red 'Brigadier Blood' graffiti, in a scenario very reminiscent of the 1977 desecration of John Peel's grave. As usual though, the two were found 'guilty' and sent down for 3 months by the judge, who just happened to be the chairman of another hunt!

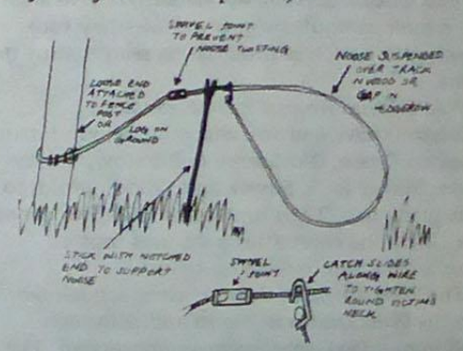
FOX SNARING

The whole issue of snaring foxes—long practised by gamekeepers to 'protect' their pheasant poults (so that *they* may later be shot!)—has recently caused considerable debate in the pages of the hunting press. Snaring can cause deliberate suffering to deer, foxes and badgers, who may take days, or even weeks to die from strangulation, starvation, exposure and injuries.

All parties have, however, condemned one aspect, that sordid business of snaring foxes for their furs. A few years ago the skin of a fox could fetch perhaps £2 from manufacturers of flys for fishing. Today, however, international dealers will pay upwards of £20 for a pelt.

As the price has rocketed so has the trade—to the extent that, in some areas, foxes have all but been wiped out—causing not inconsiderable distress to local fox hunters.

In at least one part of the country sabs have reported finding snares placed at 10 yard intervals (snares can be bought openly for just a few pence).



One dealer in death, Rob Cranham, of 9 Sandford Terrace, Sandford, Wareham, Dorset (Tel: Wareham 6397), boasts of a turnover of up to £500 per week *part time*. In one period of 5 weeks he sold 240 fox skins, which he shoots himself or buys from gamekeepers. (He is now thinking of going full-time.)

Unfortunately snaring is not illegal and is widespread. Mink, polecats, moles and wildcats are also trapped or snared for their skins.

Snares are usually set in hedges and fences or along well-defined fox paths (also used by badgers and deer). Keep an eye out for them when on hunts or walks, especially between August and March (when the pelts are most "Attractive".

JUMBO JAIL

David Smart is planning to erect a permanent big top site in Battersea Park, South London. The 60-foot tent is already under construction destined to seat 4,000 gawping humans for animals to stare at.

COURSING SNIPPETS

The bad weather during the last coursing season halted 30% of the planned meetings—the Cotswold Club were unable to hold any of their five scheduled meetings.

Three landowners have stopped coursing clubs running on their land this year because a few days after previous official coursing meetings gangs of poachers with dogs have turned up threatening keepers and farmers and, in one case, using a van with false number plates. Their cars and vans had Coursing Supporters stickers on them. The Coursing Supporters Club claims to be opposed to poaching but when your bank balance shows an "excess of expenditure over income" of £490.62 for 1978 you can't afford to be choosey when it comes to gathering in the money from subscribers.

Richard Body, Tory MP for Holland with Boston is yet another MP who officially supports coursing. Besides being a member of the BFSS he also just happens to be Vice President of the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS).

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