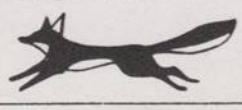
Hunt Saboteurs Association

PO Box 87 Exeter EX4 3TX

NEW MEMBER'S PACK.





"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

Introduction.

WHAT IS THE HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION?

We are an organisation made up of people dedicated to non-violent, direct-action (sabotage), against any bloodsport. We define a bloodsport as any activity which uses an animal in a manner which does not accord with its natural lifestyle. This definition naturally includes hunting with hounds, shooting and angling, but also includes "sports" such as falconry and rat hunting and illegal ones such as dog-fighting and badger-baiting. We are also officially opposed to seemingly harmless pursuits such as horse-racing and greyhound-racing which in our opinions and according to many official reports do involve suffering for the animals involved.

Although that is the official range of our activities, many of our members are also actively engaged in fighting other abuses of animals such as the fur trade, vivisection, circuses and factory farming, either individually or as members of other national or local organisations.

Many of our members are vegetarian or vegan (refusing to use any animal product: milk, eggs, cheese, butter, leather, wool as well as meat). We do not encourage those who are opposed to hunting on political or class grounds as we are solely concerned for the welfare and the rights of the animals involved and are totally unconcerned with other arguments against bloodsports.

THE HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION'S MEMBERSHIP

We currently have a membership list of some 3,000 scattered throughout Britain and a recent survey has shown that the proportion of our members living in rural and urban areas, their political beliefs and employment are in the same ratio as those of the general adult population. The active HSA membership age grouping lies mainly between 18 and 35 years of age, although there are many activists whose ages lie outside these limits. As far as we are concerned, if you want to be an active member we do not care how old or young you are. If you cannot be active do not worry; we have many non-active members whose subscriptions and donations play a vital part in keeping the HSA going and who often contribute in other ways, by fundraising, for instance.

THE METHODS OF THE HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION

Most sabotage is directed against hunting with hounds. Successful hunting depends almost entirely on the close harmony between the huntsman and his hounds. It is the task of the hunt saboteur is to break down this relationship by fooling the hounds and creating as much confusion as possible to give the hunted animal a better chance of escape. This is done by imitating the huntsman's use of his hunting horn and his voice calls. Other methods include giving false cries (known as holloas), to draw the hounds away from the huntsman. We also spray harmless liquids (which we call scent dullers), over the line of the hunted animal to disguise its scent; the unseen thread which hounds follow to their quarry.

We do not use any method which could harm hounds, horses, people or the hunted animal.

THE ORGANISATION OF THE HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION

The HSA's affairs are conducted by a twelve person Committee, the members of which are elected annually by the paid up membership of the Association. The

HSA's constitution does not permit membership to any member of a racist organisation or to those who make a living from the direct exploitation of animals.

The HSA's main strength lies with its local groups of which there are about ninety throughout the country. Each of these groups has a Contact whose job it is to keep in touch with the Committee via a Committee member known as the Contact's Liaison Officer. These local groups are, however, entirely independant and organise their own activities without recourse to the national Committee. Sometimes a number of groups organise amongst themselves, even to the point of creating regional organisations.

THE RUNNING COSTS OF THE HUNT SABOTEURS ASSOCIATION

At the moment our major expenditure is on postage, printing and telephone expenses. Most of our income is derived from membership fees, donations and the proceeds from our salesgoods department. Occasionally when our finances can cope with it, we are able to donate or loan money to local groups.

Usually, however, local groups fund themselves by running jumble sales and other fundraising events: all active members have to pay out of their own - usually near empty - pockets.

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

Primarily by becoming a member. Membership of the organisation is £5.00 for wage earners and £3.00 for those without income or on low wages.

Once you have joined you will be sent a copy of the latest issue of our magazine, "HOWL", a list of area Contacts and a starter's pack which tells you how to sabotage bloodsports properly. If no group exists in your area and you have indicated that you are willing to help form one , you will be sent a sheet giving information about this. You may of course wish to operate alone, many do, there is no obligation to join a group although doing so helps you to gain experience.

Apart from becoming an active member you can also help either a local group or the national organisation by raising money through organising various fundraising ventures.

Some members also help by watching their local media and replying to any issue concerning bloodsports. It is important that any press coverage of bloodsports is reported to us but you can help by writing letters answering hunt claims; ammunition for this can be obtained from our magazine and more detailed material can be obtained from us at a small charge.

H.S.A MATERIALS

1) Fact sheets are available at £1.00 each and these cover hunting, fishing, shooting and the arguments against these activities.
2) Fact sheets are also available again costing a pound dealing with the various animals (the fox, red deer and fallow deer, brown hare and mink), which are hunted.
3) Leaflets are available at a small charge which explain the aims and methods of the organisation and include a membership form.
4) Other leaflets are being produced which deal with the various bloodsports again these have a small charge on them.
5) The H.S.A. sells at £1.00 a very informative , illustrated "Tactics Book", which explains how to sabotage the various bloodsports.

Hunting.

WHAT IS HUNTING?

In Britain hunting is the pursuit of a wild animal with a pack of hounds following the quarry's scent until it is overhauled and killed by them, or in deer hunting brought to "bay" and shot, usually by a member of the hunt staff chosen for the job. Different types of hunt use diffent breeds of hounds: the fox is hunted by large hounds (known as foxhounds); hares are mostly hunted by beagles (small versions of the foxhound) and basset hounds, but are also hunted by a larger breed of hound, lighter but similar in size to the foxhound which is known as a harrier; deer are hunted by staghounds which are large versions of the foxhound; mink are hunted by a mixture of otter hounds, foxhounds and cross-breeds of the two. The participants in hunting follow hounds on foot or in a vehicle; mounted followers usually only accompany foxhunts, harrier packs and deerhunts.

WHY WE OPPOSE HUNTING

Our objection to hunting is based entirely on the cruelty involved in it; we are not concerned by any perceived "class" issue. Hunting is cruel because it is intended that the quarry should be forced to run to exhaustion and we are convinced that the victim is, at some point during the chase, terrified. Other practices involved in hunting cause further suffering; the digging out of a fox which has sought sanctuary underground is just one example.

SOME ARGUMENTS USED TO JUSTIFY HUNTING

1) Hunters claim that hunting is a traditional part of country life and should be preserved for this reason alone.
2) They claim that it is a popular activity with over 200,000 participants.
3) Hunters claim that hunting provides employment for thousands of people.
4) They also claim that hunting helps to conserve the countryside.

OUR REPLIES TO THESE CLAIMS

1) Hunting is certainly an ancient pastime but we do not accept that this is in any way a justification for its continuation.
2) We concede that hunting has a broader base of support today than at any other time in its history, a result of its shift away from being the preserve of the wealthy. There are about 50 more hunts today than at the turn of the century. Nevertheless we are convinced that in general public opinion is overwhelmingly ranged against hunting.
3) We accept that hunting provides employment for perhaps 800 people but we no more feel that hunting should be allowed to continue for their benefit than we would condone the continuation of the Nazis Concentration Camps for the benefit of those who worked in them.
4) We cannot accept that hunting has any role to play in the conservation of the countryside. It is true that a few of the more fashionable hunts maintain woods for foxes to live in. The loss of these which might result from a ban on hunting pales into insignificance when compared to the havoc wrought on our countryside by agricultural, forestry and industrial interests. We believe that the conservation of the countryside is far too important an issue to be left to self-interested individuals and organisations.

THE PRINCIPAL DEFENCE OF HUNTING

The principal defence of hunting, offered by most adherents of the activity, is that the quarry species are pests whose populations require control and that hunting with hounds is the best and most humane method of doing this.

The fox certainly does on occasion kill poultry and sometimes, if one is able to enter a hen house, it may kill every bird within reach. However, 95% of the nation's poultry are now reared in inhumane "factory farms" where they are unavailable to foxes. Those few that are still maintained under free, or semi-free range conditions can be protected from foxes quite easily; too often a poultry pen is badly maintained which, with the expenditure of a little money and time, could be made safe.

We accept that foxes do occasionally kill new born lambs, however, the number they kill is always exaggerated by the hunting and agricultural communities. Few lambs are taken by foxes in lowland regions, most problems occur in the traditional sheep-rearing regions in the upland, moorland and mountainous districts of the British Isles. In these areas a combination of factors, which includes poor feeding, lack of individual care for sheep and harsh conditions especially in winter and early spring, often leading to new-born lamb mortality rates of between 15-50% a year. In such areas foxes may indeed kill some lambs, but in most cases where postmortems have been carried out it has transpired that the lambs would have died anyway as a result of under-nourishment, disease or general weakness. Those that have been found to have been healthy may have been abandoned by their mothers and in the first stages of decline when the fox discovered them. It has been shown that where the sheep are well looked after and the ewes are healthy and strong they will defend their lambs against all potential enemies so in may cases a high loss of lambs to foxes may be an indirect result of poor husbandry on the part of the sheep farmer.

In most cases where foxes are seen in a lambing field, the fox is simply scavenging for dead or dying lambs and after births.

Foxes also kill game birds (pheasants etc.), and as a result, many gamekeepers kill them. Since the birds are only reared to be shot for "sport" we have no sympathy for the gamekeeper's view that foxes need to be controlled.

The natural food of foxes consists largely of small mammals and birds some of which are regarded by the rural community as pests (ie. rabbits, squirrels and rodents), so we believe that they have their part to play in the countryside and should be left alone.

Scientists have shown that fox control does not work and that the fox population has its own form of regulation; for instance, in areas where the fox population is high only the dominant vixens breed, producing small litters, but if control begins to have some effect in these areas the old social controls break down and more vixens give birth and litter sizes increase. Similarly in poor habitats foxes live at very low densities because the lack of food prohibits any increase in population size. In the 1960s foxes were artificially reintroduced to the Isle of Anglesey in small numbers. Those litters that were discovered in the subsequent breeding seasons were unusually large (as high as 9 or 10 cubs per litter). This was natural population regulation at work and by the 1970s the fox population on the island was large enough to support an annual kill rate of over 300 animals. Clearly, when all natural factors are taken into account, artificial control has no influence on the fox population.

At any rate a fox hunt kills on average only about 150 foxes a year, all of them together thus account for about 30,000 foxes countrywide each year; yet some people estimate that as many as 100,000 foxes a year may be killed by

other forms of "control", yet despite this immense slaughter, the national fox population is said to be increasing. Rest assured, however, that it will only do so until it reaches a level supportable by the environment, after which it will stabilise regardless of human aspirations to reduce the total population.

The brown hare: The status of this animal is in some doubt at the moment; some say that its population is in general decline (due principally to changes in agricultural practices), although others, especially the hunting and farming interests in the country, hotly deny this. Either way we do not believe that hunting has any effect on the national or local hare populations. All the hare hunts put together probably account for less than 2,000 hares nationally and the population can easily withstand this loss. Clearly hare hunters cannot justify their activity by claiming that it controls an agricultural pest.

Hares certainly are a nuisance to farmers as they eat crops destined both for human and animal consumption, but the damage they do hardly justifies the amount of time and money spent on attempting to control their numbers.

The North American mink, though not a native of the UK, hardly deserves its reputation as a threat to our native wildlife. Most of those who have taken the time necesary to study the animal are satisfied that the claim that it would become a major threat to wildlife and farming is not borne out by fact. The animal appears to have become fully assimilated as part of our wild life and is subject to the same controls as any of our native predators.

Like the fox, mink do occasionally attack unprotected farmyard poultry, but suggestions that it has killed lambs and calves cannot be true.

Like the fox, mink populations are controlled principally by the food supply. Unsuccessful human attempts to control the animal include the Ministry of Agiculture's massive extermination campaign during the 1960's in which literally thousands of mink were killed without preventing an increase in the population or its expansion into new areas. Today with a much larger population spread throughout the country the score or so mink hunts, which claim that they are attempting to control the mink, account for less than 800 animals a year.

Anyone who is still uncertain about the effect mink have on our native wildlife should visit Devon where mink first began to breed in the wild. Since the 1950's the animal has colonised all of Devon's rivers and yet the county's wildlife is still as varied and healthy as it was before the mink arrived.

The red and fallow deer: both these species are hunted in England; three hunts in Devon and Somerset hunt the red deer of Exmoor and the Quantocks whilst one hunt pursues the fallow deer of the New Forest in Hampshire.

Deer can be a real nuisance to agricultural and forestry interests. They can damage crops and certain aspects of their natural behaviour and feeding leads to severe damage to the Forester's trees. Unfortunately because deer are large and the damage they do can be very great, few farmers or foresters can allow their population to go unchecked. Deer have no large predators in this country (wolves etc. were hunted to extinction by humans), to exert a natural influence on their numbers so artificial methods of control such as shooting with high powered rifles are employed in most areas. To maintain a constant population between a third and a quarter of the deer are normally "culled" each year.

The New Forest Buckhounds which hunt the fallow deer of the New Forest, have the weakest claim as far as control of deer is concerned. They kill less than 10 animals in most years whilst the Forestry Commission wardens using rifles account for abcut 500 animals a year. Each year about 30 deer are killed on the Forest's roads. Clearly this hunt's existence cannot be justified on the grounds of deer control.

In Devon and Somerset the three red deer hunts operate in an area where about 1,500 deer live and together they account for about 200 animals a year; a significant proportion of the number it is "necessary" to "cull" each year in order to maintain the population at its present level. The rest are no doubt killed both legally by landowners and unlawfully by poachers. Thus in this one case it would appear that the hunts concerned are more or less fulfilling their objectives: the control of the red deer.

We in the HSA are of course opposed to deer hunting and indeed to any killing of animals which is not in the interests of the individual animal concerned (ie. we are not opposed to "mercy killing" intended to put a suffering animal out of its misery). Thus we look forward to the day when non-fatal, but efficacious methods of population control can be brought into operation for some animal species. Already experiments with contraceptives administered through food during the mating season are being conducted in some parts of the world.

THE REAL REASON FOR THE CONTINUATION OF HUNTING

Although few hunters will admit it, the real reason that most of them hunt, is that they enjoy it: some hunt simply for the fresh air and a run or gallop across open country; others enjoy watching hounds work; some are just bored with life and hunt to break up a monotonous existence; some - very few - hunt because they are by nature cruel people and indulge in even less savoury bloodsports in secret at other times.

It is because hunting is enjoyed by many in the so-called "upper-classes" who have friends in the upper tiers of British Government that hunting has survived the many attempts to abolish it during the last few decades. It has not survived because anyone seriously believes the arguments made by the hunting fraternity in the defence of their "sport".

The organisation upon which the hunting fraternity most relies for the defence of their bloodsports is the British Field Sports Society (BFSS), which works chiefly behind the scenes in Parliamentary and other Government circles. It has many M.P.s on its list of friends whose main task seems to be to talk any proposed legislation which might damage the interests of hunting, out of time. Many of these M.P.s seem to spend more time defending bloodsports than looking after the interests of their constituents. It is our view that unless there are radical changes in the political arena, hunting will never actually be made illegal and that if it were little would be done to enforce the law. Since 1963, however, the almost unassailable fortress of hunting has met its match in the form of the Hunt Saboteur's Association. Week after week, year after year the Association's activists have vigorously struggled against bloodsports of all description and are now having a major impact countrywide. Increasingly the hunters are going on the defensive, ceasing to advertise their activities and withdrawing from the public arena. The threat to the survival of hunting from the HSA is only now being recognised by the BFSS.

Sport?

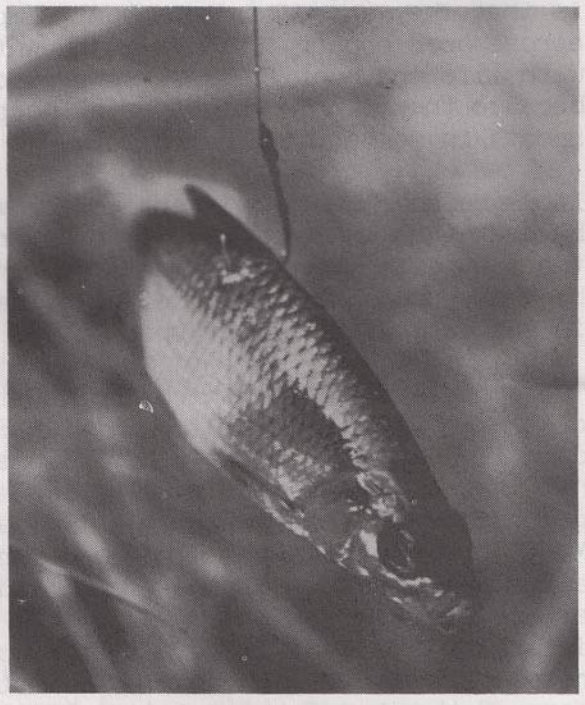
These pictures speak for themselves. They depict only a few of the maimed and tortured victims of bloodsports. These and others are the activities which our members oppose with tactics developed over many years and proven to save lives.



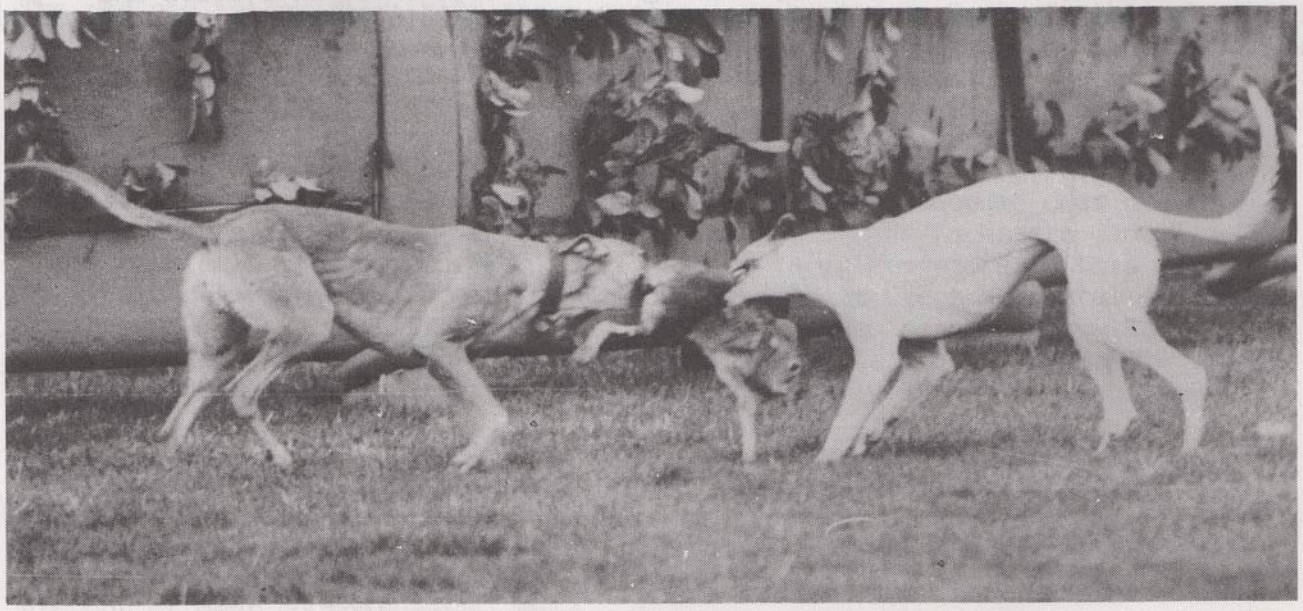
The Master of a mink hunt holds a mink above his hounds.



A shot pigeon lifeless beside a spent shotgun cartridge.



A live fish is hooked in the back and used as 'live bait' to attract a pike.



Two greyhounds play 'tug-of-war' with this victim of hare coursing.

Angling.

WHAT IS ANGLING?

Angling is an activity which involves the catching of a fish on a line and hook, (literally an "angle"), and in Britain is divided into several forms: coarse angling in which the quarry is purely a fresh-water fish (the most important species being barbel, common bream, common carp, crucian carb, chub, dace, perch, roach, rudd and tench.To these can be added eels - which do not spawn in fresh-water - three types of pike perch - American, European and zander - some small fish, of which gudgeon, bleak and ruffle reach recorded weight status and sea-going species like the lamprey); game fishing in which the quarry are members of the salmonid family (trout and salmon); and finally sea fishing which concerns salt-water species.

WHY DO WE OPPOSE ANGLING?

Our opposition to angling is founded on our belief that fish are capable of experiencing pain and that angling causes pain to fish. Not only this but that certain aspects of angling involve suffering to other creatures as well and other animals are killed because of the damage they are alleged to cause to fishery interests.

DO FISH EXPERIENCE PAIN?

The scientific study of pain in fish and other animals involves a great understanding of highly complicated biological substances and mechanisms and the truth is that little is understood about pain even in human beings. Many biologists and other researchers have differing views on the mechanism of pain perception in animals and it is probable that if asked whether fish could experience pain or not, most authorities on the subject would answer that they simply did not know. The most important attempt to collate all the evidence on the issue was sponsored by the R.S.P.C.A. between 1976 and 1979. In 1980 its findings were published in the "Report of the Panel of Enquiry into Shooting and Angling" and concluded that:

> "All vertibrate animals should be regarded as equally capable of suffering to some degree or other, without distinction between cold and warm-blooded members".

But one does not have to be a scientist to know this for a fact; having a little commonsense will help. Why, if fish do not feel pain, do they display all the reactions normally associated with that capacity? When touched, fish take avoidance action; when caught on a hook and released they are more difficult to catch again (despite the angler's attempts to disguise the hook with enticing bait); and when foulhooked in the body rather than in the mouth they do not fight against the pull on the line as hard as they do when hooked properly. All these features indicate that fish do indeed experience pain.

Further they show signs of fear. When caught on a hook they fight against the pull on the line; some see this as proof that fish are incapable of feeling pain. The contrary is true, however. If the roles were reversed and it were the angler which was hooked and a large fish was trying to pull them into the water would the angler not fight rather than be pulled into and under the water? Of course they would, the fear of drowning would over-ride the pain. The situation is the same for the fish, after all the open air is poison to fish. It has often been stated that human beings injured in battle feel nothing

whilst fighting for their lives but that later suffer agony from their wounds.

Stress is the pyschological equivalent of pain and is known to be dangerous to the health of all life. Studies by Dr. Gabriele Peters in West Germany have demonstrated that the whole process of angling is stressful for the fish involved. Fish have similar reactions to stressful situations as humans and other animals: typical symptoms of stress amongst others are; a contraction of the blood vessels and the shrivelling or contraction of the stomach tissues especially of the spleen. Peter's discovered that in fish the spleen is a very sensitive indicator of stress. With carp, for instance, which have been caught and contained in a keep-net, the fish's spleen may shrink to one-third of its original size, resulting in an increase in the production of stress hormones, an indication that the fish is in a state of considerable alarm. If this condition is allowed to continue so much energy is used that the fish is likely to be seriously weakened as a result of its experiences and its chances of survival are minimised.

Damage to the fish's sensitive skin layers caused by handling, even if invisible to the naked human eye, may leave the fish vulnerable to fatal skin infection.

THE ANGLER'S DEFENCE

1) Fish do not feel pain.
2) Anglers are careful with the fish they catch.
3) Three million people enjoy angling.
4) Anglers care for the environment and waterways where they fish.

OUR REPLIES TO THESE ARGUMENTS

The very fact that some anglers are careful with the fish they catch proves that they do believe them capable of suffering: indeed there are regular criticisms in the angling press about the way anglers treat their catch. The angling press also frequently carries stories about fish dying in keep-nets as a result of being contained for too long or in unsuitable nets.

The fact that three million people go fishing is not, in our view, a defence: it merely means that the total amount of suffering is very great indeed.

Whilst it is true that anglers do have some good points with regard to looking after the environment in which they fish, it must be remembered that this is not a result of altruism but because a polluted or unhealthy environment does not support fish. These days, conservation of all habitats is such an urgent task that to leave it to self-seeking volunteers is to disregard our very real responsibilities to the world in which we live.

ANGLING AND OTHER WILDLIFE

Angling clubs, in an attempt to preserve fish stocks, often wage campaigns of extermination against other wildlife on their waterways. Herons, goosanders, cormorants and even kingfishers are killed in some parts of the country, often illegally. Of the mammals, mink are frequently trapped and even the protected otter is killed in some areas because of the damage it allegedly does to fish stocks.

Anglers are also very careless with their equipment, virtually all of which is a threat to wildlife. Each year hundreds of miles of nylon fishing line is lost or discarded, later to get entangled around the bodies of animals and to strangle them to death. Millions of lead weights are lost, later these tiny pollutants are ingested by water birds and slowly poison them. Discarded hooks lie in wait until becoming impaled in the flesh of animals, birds or humans.

Shooting.

WHAT IS 'SHOOTING FOR SPORT'?

This is an activity which involves the discharging of a legal firearm at an animal or bird for the purposes of "sport"; it does not, in the contextthis sheet, include the illegal shooting (poaching), of birds and animals. There is also a distinction between shooting for sport in which the quarry is usually, but not always, reared or artificially maintained at high densities in order to provide a surplus of the species which can then be "harvested" (this includes game birds such as grouse and pheasants, and animals such as deer), and shooting aimed at "controlling" populations of animals and birds deemed to be "pests" such as squirrels, rabbits, pigeons and deer. Certainly most of those engaged in "pest control" do enjoy the activity and since the distinction between the two branches of shooting is so fine it will be ignored here.

WHY DO WE OPPOSE SHOOTING ANIMALS AND BIRDS?

1) We oppose shooting principally because we believe that every animal has a right to live free and unmolested by human beings.
2) Whilst we accept that most animals and birds which have been shot are killed instantly, we are also aware that many, probably thousands each year, are injured and escape detection and thus die long, lingering and painful deaths.
3) In order to maintain game populations at their highest level many thousands of their natural predators are ruthlessly exterminated by gamekeepers using traps, snares and shooting, all of which are cruel.
4) The eradication of predators and the maintenance of game species at high densities causes great disruption to the local natural wildlife balance.
5) The discharge of lead shot from shotguns, especially on or near inland water estuary or sea shore endangers life; the ingestion of lead shot by wildfowl, as with anglers' lead weights, leads to lead poisoning and lingering death.

TYPES OF SHOOTING

Deer stalking as a "sport" is principally carried out in the Western Highlands of Scotland. The right to shoot red deer is sold by the landowner at very high prices and is thus an important source of revenue. The stalker will wish to shoot a stag with a good set of antlers which can then be kept as a trophy. The stalker is not usually asked to prove his ability with a rifle and non-fatal injuries are common. Injured animals should be followed up but this is not always possible. The deer are often maintained by winter feeding.

Elsewhere, deer are shot as part of a management programme but the stalkers have often paid for the priviledge.

Game-birds are maintained at high densities by rearing combined with the persecution of their predators (fox, stoat, weasel, hedgehog, squirrel, mink and in areas where they occur, the rare polecat, otter, wildcat and pinemarten). Birds of prey, although protected by law, are also frequent victims of gamekeepers, especially on grouse shooting moors. Other birds killed include the jay, magpie, crow, jackdaw and raven). In the 19th Century, when our countryside consisted of a patchwork of large shooting estates owned by wealthy "sporting gentlemen" who employed 'keepers to rear game birds and to kill their their predators many of which were persecuted almost to extinction. This is no longer a real threat since only about 5,000 gamekeepers are employed today and many endangered animals are now protected by law.

Game are also maintained by rearing them in pens and then releasing them into the "wild". Commercialism has stepped in and today most young pheasants are hatched under incubators and then sold as chicks or poults to shooting estates. The young birds are fed and looked after by the gamekeeper and know humans only as friends until the day of the shoot.

The habitat is managed in order to maximise the density at which the birds can live. This is especially the case with grouse moors: left to themselves the moors would gradually revert to their prehistoric natural state but because grouse require heather for food and shelter trees are not allowed to grow. The old heather is regularly burned in rotation to ensure that there is always a patchwork of young heather on which grouse feed and nearby, older heather which they require for cover. Grouse are by nature birds of the sub-arctic where they survive best at low density populations and can be found in Britain and elsewhere living as such, but for the purposes of sport their habitat is altered, their predators are exterminated and their natural history corrupted.

Most game birds are driven to lines of waiting shooters by people known as "beaters", but in some cases the shooters engage in "walk-up" shooting, when they, themselves walk in a line shooting whatever gets up in front of them.

Wildfowling is the "sport" for the patient loner; the hunter lies in wait in the winter months for ducks and geese to fly into their feeding or roosting grounds along estuaries or coastline. The birds are shot as they fly in. If a bird is wounded it is often difficult to retrieve and little can be done to alleviate its suffering. Such shooting of course disturbs the birds, preventing them from feeding and resting during the "hungry months". The lead shot discharged of course poses an additional threat.

Shooting "pests" includes killing virtually all the animals and birds that you can think of. Hares are usually shot during "drives" in which a long line of shooters beats across fields shooting any hares that get up. Large drives are rare today because of the apparent decline in the hare population but less than ten years ago huge "bags" of more than a thousand hares might be attained in a day's drive.

Pigeons are shot throughout the country, whole flocks are encouraged to settle in a field by the clever placement of decoys and then the hidden hunter shoots them.

A FEW FACTS AND FIGURES

Firearm Licence holders in the United Kingdom.....850,000
Part 1 certificate (rifles and pistols), holders.....160,000
Estimated to be regular users.....600,000
Of these only about 3% do not shoot live quarry.

Those shooting "pests" (rabbits, hares, crows, foxes etc.).....340,000
Those shooting wood pigeon.....290,000
Those shooting wildfowl, waders and ducks.....160,000
Those shooting driven or walked-up game birds.....130,000
Those going rough shooting on their own or other peoples' land.....270,000

Of the part 1 users:

Those who regularly shoot live quarry.....46,000
Those shooting deer.....3,000 - 5,000

Together these account for: 10 million pheasants; 12 million pigeons; 500,000 grouse; 1 million ducks; 150,000 woodcock and 300,000 hares. No figures are available for other species but it must number millions.

Hunt 'Sabs' In Action.



Hunt 'sabs' calling hounds out of a wood.

Hunt sabotage is largely a matter of knowing when and where to be and what to do when you get there given the situation you encounter.

You must always ensure that nothing you do endangers any animal whether it be the hunted animal or an animal belonging to the hunt.

The aim of the hunt saboteur is to take control of the hounds and break the bond between them and the huntsman.

This can be done with the use of a hunting horn or even with your voice. If the hounds are with the sabs they are, of course, not hunting.



Hunt saboteur (left) gathers hounds around him with a hunting horn.



'Sabs' using whips, horn and voice calls take charge of the hounds whilst the huntsman (on the horizon) looks on.

If the hounds find the scent of a fox, hare, deer or mink the saboteurs must pull them off it; voice and horn calls are effective here, but whips often achieve miracles.

Harmless spays are also used to cover the scent of the hunted animal making it very difficult for the hounds to follow.

How we save lives.

What follows is a general description of the tactics used by an HSA group in sabotaging a fox hunt although there may be many variations from this in the course of a "hit". The tactics described only apply to foxhunts for tactics differ according to the type of bloodsport. Far more precise and technical tactics are to be found in the HSA's Tactics Book (price £1.00), which is essential reading for any active hunt saboteur.

A successful fox hunt depends on two things: the rapport between the "huntsman" (this role is only rarely fulfilled by a woman and even then she is still described in the masculine), and the hounds and the scent left behind by the hunted fox.

The first tactic used by "sabs" is designed to reduce the hunt's chances of finding a fox. Before the hunt meets the sabs will flush foxes out of the woods which they expect the hunt to visit. At the same time they may spray the ground in and around the wood with strong-smelling but harmless substances such as garlic water or anti-mate (a commercially produced spray used on in-season bitch dogs). Sometimes members of the hunt will have blocked up badger setts and fox earths to prevent a hard-pressed fox from seeking sanctuary underground. The sabs will unblock these.

The next task is to break the huntsman/hound bond. This begins from the moment the hunt leaves its meet and starts looking for a fox. When the hunt moves off the sabs will stay close. They will imitate the huntsman's hunting horn and voice calls and try to call the hounds out of woods and out of the control of their huntsman. Efficient groups can often take complete control of the hounds and on several occasions the huntsman has been heard to ask sabs for the hounds back at the end of the hunting day.

If the hounds find a fox, the real work begins. The sabs must get the hounds off the fox's scent line as quickly as possible before it is killed. Good horn calling can sometimes pull hounds off of the scent but usually a more direct form of intervention is necessary. The horn, however, can distract the hounds for several minutes, buying the fox enough time to get a good head start. It may even cause enough confusion in a pack torn between obeying the huntsman's horn or that of the saboteurs' to enable the fox to escape.

If the horn does not work the group must think and act quickly, anticipate where the fox will run and get between it and the hounds. Teamwork is vital at such times; whilst some sabs will spray over the line of the fox to cover its scent, others will crack their whips in the air, "rate" (tell the hounds off in a loud scornful voice), in order to stop the hounds.

As with any form of direct-action, hunt sabotage, has both its rewards and its risks. A good day in the field can leave a tired group driving home with the knowledge that they have contributed to the saving of a life and the prevention of needless cruelty. A bad day may mean cuts and bruises, or even hospital after another of the violent attacks sometimes launched by frustrated hunt supporters. Even then, of course, the sabs will know that they must have been effective in their work to warrant such attacks.

Occasionally the police view the saving of lives as a crime and arrest sabs for blowing horns or any other form of interference in what is still regrettably a legal pastime. The outcome at rural Magistrates Courts is predictable: they remain notoriously biased in favour of the hunt.

But whilst hunters contemplate the real possibility of a ban on their "sport", hunt saboteurs will stay in the front line, getting on with the job of saving wild animals until the hunter's blow their horns and put away their hunting jackets for the last time.

The local Contact.

The Local Contact is the person who forms the link between the local group and the national HSA, their task is often quite arduous since in many cases the Contact is also the sole organiser of their local group's activities.

What the exact role of the Contact is in the local group is something for each group to decide but their relationship with the HSA and the tasks they must carry out are as follows:

1). The Contact should maintain regular communication between their local group and the national HSA (usually this would be done through a member of the national Committee appointed as Contact's Liaison Officer). The kind of information the Contact should be passing on would include any notable incidents which occur in their area, the general views of their group, criticisms of the HSA, new ideas for tactics, dates of proposed activities and any comments that the group may like to pass on to the Committee.

2). The local Contact should ensure that they, or at least someone else in the group, makes out "hit reports" after each sab and that a copy of this report is sent to the HSA for inclusion in the HSA's hunt files.

3). Each month the local Contact will receive a Contact's Mailout produced by the HSA Committee or the Contact's Liaison Officer, the mailout will include the views and news received by the Committee from all the Contacts. The local Contact should ensure that the mailout's contents are passed to all the members of their group.

4). Whilst in many local groups the Contact does little more than maintain the lines of communication in the ways described above, in most local groups the Contact is more or less the sole organiser. In such areas the task of the Contact is much harder. They will be responsible for local recruitment and fundraising, the organisation of group activities, the group's tactical adviser and so on.

Ideally in such groups we would hope that if the group is run efficiently its membership would gradually increase and as individual members become more experienced devolution of the responsibilities for group organisation would be possible.

5). If for some reason the group's fortunes take a turn for the worse the Contact is expected to ensure at least its nominal survival and to prepare it for eventual regrowth.

6). If for some reason the local Contact feels that they can no longer fulfill their task they are expected to ensure that someone else can take over their role and of course to inform the HSA of any such change.

The role of the local Contact varies considerably from group to group, the above is a guideline to the job. Being a local Contact is both difficult and rewarding and is well worth considering as your contribution to the active struggle against bloodsports.

If you live in an area where there is no local group and you would like to try your hand as a local Contact then please get in touch.

How can you help?

The HSA was created to serve the active struggle against bloodsports but of course the organisation has been forced to branch out from this simple stated aim in order to attract members and funds to the cause. It has had to produce literature (the Tactics Book, essential reading for the activist, the quarterly magazine, "Howl", which keeps all our members in touch with the news, issues, tactics and other developments, leaflets have to be printed for the purposes of recruiting members etc.). All this literature and more is needed to ensure the continuation of the active struggle against bloodsports. Without it new members would not be recruited, communication and the exchange of ideas would cease, funds would diminish and our membership would fade away.

Regrettably the day-to-day running of the HSA absorbs funds which some would argue could be directed straight into the active struggle. This is of course true. Therefore, there are two main ways in which you can assist the HSA; neither should be given more priority than the other.

ACTIVE MEMBERS:

For those who have joined the Association on the "active ticket" the first task is to locate and get in touch with your nearest local HSA group. Enclosed with this pack is a list of local groups and their addresses, write to them enclosing the Introduction Form after you have completed it, this you will find also enclosed in the pack. We on the Committee do of course inform local Contacts of any new members in their areas but many Contacts are too busy to approach new members immediately. A letter from you will speed up the process by which you become involved in local activities.

If you receive no reply from your Contact please inform us.

If there is no local group in your area you may consider volunteering as a Contact and try to establish a new group in your area. Before you do so please read the section on Contacts and ensure that you are able to put the required commitment into it. If you still feel you would like to do it please get in touch. If we accept your application we will help you in any way possible to get a group off the ground and actively involved.

Your next task, if you have not already done so, is to purchase a copy of our Tactics Book (price £1.00). This contains the accumulated knowledge of over twenty years of hunt sabotage. You should read it again and again until you are thoroughly conversant with its contents. Nothing, however, can replace experience so get out there and learn.

One word of warning: hunt saboteurs, in common with anyone else, have both good and bad days, the good improves with experience so if at first you do not succeed ..... etc.

SUPPORTING MEMBERS:

For a variety of reasons many of our members are unable to take part in direct action. There is, however, much important work to be done outside of the sabbing field.

As you will have noticed, the lack of money is the most serious hindrance to increased activity. The HSA is rarely in a position to make gifts of money to groups which are struggling due to poor finance. Thus the most important task for any supporting member is to help raise funds.

You could for instance adopt your nearest local group and fundraise on its behalf or else raise funds for the HSA for re-distribution to needy areas. Do not worry if you have no previous experience with raising money, just get

in touch with the HSA's Fundraising Officer, he/she will be able to offer you a great deal of advice and help.

IF YOU HAVE ANY RELEVANT SKILLS OR EXPERIENCE:

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you feel you have any useful experience or skills (ie. Legal Training, Design, Printing, Typing, Photography etc.) we will almost certainly use them.

PRESS:

We do not have a Press Cutting Service and rely upon our members to scan their local and national newspapers and send relevant cuttings to us. If you do this please send us the cuttings immediately and enclose details such as the name of the newspaper/magazine, its address and telephone number and the date of issue. This enables us to reply to any incorrect statements while the issue is still "hot".

INFORMATION:

Many of our members live in areas where bloodsport activities take place and may be privy to local gossip or information about their local bloodsporting fraternity. This information, no matter how seemingly trivial may prove very useful to us so please keep us informed.

LEAFLETTING:

This is not everyones' cup of tea, but in order to recruit new members the HSA can provide leaflets (see enclosed salesgoods form), for local distribution. If you would like to leaflet on behalf on the HSA in your area, please get in touch.

Finally, if you can think of any other ways in which you can help, please do not hesitate to inform us.

Together, if we all try hard enough, we can rid the country of the cruel treatment of animals.

REMEMBER THE ANIMALS IN YOUR WILL

By leaving a legacy to the Hunt Saboteur's Association you help the HSA to continue its campaign against bloodsports and helping to save lives.

It is important that those intending to leave the HSA money state in their wills its full name and address.

The following form of wording may be useful:-

"I give free of duty to the Association called Hunt Saboteur's Association whose address is P.O. Box 87, Exeter, Devon. EX4 3TX., the sum of £..... and I direct that the receipt of the Treasurer or other authorised officer of the Association shall be sufficient discharge for this gift."

A Will (or Codicil) containing such a gift must be in writing signed by the Testator in the presence of two persons who must sign their names as witnesses in the Testator's and each other's presence.

If you would like any further information please do not hesitate to write to us at:

Hunt Saboteur's Association, P.O. Box 87, Exeter, EX4 3TX.



Hunt saboteurs sitting at the entrance of a fox earth resist the efforts of hunters (right), to dig out an exhausted fox.

Fox Cubs



Fox Cubs is a branch of the Hunt Saboteurs Association for children aged 7 - 14 who would like to join but are too young to go out sabbing.

A new fact sheet has been produced which tells you of projects you could start, answers some of your questions and gives you puzzles to solve.

The fact sheet will be mailed to you 3 times a year. If you are interested or know someone who is then write to this address and tell us

FOX CUBS
PO BOX 87
EXETER
EX4 3TX

Membership fee £2.00 per year.

Hunt Saboteurs Association

FROM THE CONSTITUTION [as agreed at the 1986 Annual General Meeting]:

CLAUSE 2: The beliefs of the Association shall be those expressed in the RSPCA 'Declaration of Animals' Rights' (1979) viz:

'In as much as there is ample evidence that many other species are capable of feeling, we condemn totally the infliction of suffering upon our fellow creatures and the curtailment of their behavioural and other needs, save where it is necessary for their own individual benefit. We do not accept that a difference in species alone [any more than a difference in race], can justify wanton exploitation or oppression in the name of science or sport, or for the use as food, for commercial profit or for any other human gain. We believe in the evolutionary and moral kinship of all animals and declare our belief that all sentinent creatures have rights to life, liberty and natural enjoyment. We therefore call for the protection of these rights.'

CLAUSE 3: The policy of the Association shall be:

To oppose and undertake to sabotage, where practicable, the pursuit, harrassment or killing of any sentinent creature for sport or pleasure until such time as these practices cease to exist.

IT'S IN YOUR HANDS



OCCUPY THE KILLING FIELDS!

STOP BLOODSPORTS

Hunt Saboteurs Association, PO Box 87, Exeter EX4 3TX