

Hunting Havoc

A report by Protect the Wild.

January 2021.

An evidence-based report detailing the problems caused by reckless hunting hounds in relation to domestic animals and livestock from October 2020 to January 2021.



**PROTECT
THE WILD**

The Report

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Introduction by Rob Pownall, Founder of Protect the Wild

Since hunting wild mammals with hounds was made illegal in 2004, hunts across the country have claimed to be following a pre-laid artificial scent. This is a claim that has been disputed ever since and there has been an abundance of evidence showing intentional hunting of foxes, deer and hares with criminal prosecutions secured under the 2004 Hunting Act. Indeed, a freedom of information request sent in by Protect the Wild in January 2021 to Kent Police revealed that there are several ongoing cases relating to the arrest offence of hunting a wild mammal with dogs. On average, a person in Kent is found guilty every year of either the offence of hunting a wild mammal with dogs or knowingly permitting a dog to be used for hunting a wild mammal.

Furthermore, the recently leaked Hunting Officer webinar of senior hunting officials admitting to “trail hunting” being a “smokescreen” for the real thing has only served to solidify what anti-hunting campaigners have known for years. However, one aspect of hunting that is sometimes overlooked is the significant impact that hunts have on domestic animals and livestock. This report summarises and details some of the most recent incidents from the short-lived 2020/21 hunting season and reflects growing concerns of not only antihunting campaigners but members of the public as to the reckless behaviour of hunts across the country. This report also examines the existing legislation surrounding out of control dogs and asks the question as to how and why hunts seemingly continue to get away with illegal behaviour time and time again.

Summary and reasons for report

In the past decade there have been numerous reports of hunting hounds chasing terrified animals and, in some cases, killing domestic animals, livestock and pets. These so-called “accidents” are taking place across the country every year and the hunts repeatedly apologise for their actions and promise that they will review their procedures to ensure it doesn’t happen again.

However, there are few reasons why anti-hunting campaigners and members of the public should simply accept these promises and forgive the hunts for their behaviour. The issue only seems to be getting worse. In the past 4 months there have been as many incidents of reckless behaviour of hunts and domestic animals being killed or frightened as there were between 2018 to 2019, based on incidents that were reported and received press coverage.

Since October 2020 there have been 7 reported incidents involving hunting hounds terrorising or killing domestic animals and livestock. These incidents involve a variety of animals and reflect the sheer recklessness of hunts across the country who continue to claim they are following artificial scents as opposed to live mammals despite overwhelming evidence that is simply not the case. The question must be asked as to how and why hounds are running out of control and killing domestic animals if hunts really are following a pre-laid artificial scent as they claim. This report logs the incidents dating from the beginning of the most recent hunting season (October 1st 2020) to the 4th January where the hunting season was postponed. **This report reveals how there has been an incident involving hunts terrorising domestic animals or livestock on average every two weeks.** This is shocking not only considering the number of incidents in such a short space of time but considering it is highly likely that there are more incidents not reported. It is also worth mentioning that the most recent hunting season took place under unprecedented circumstances and that the number of hunting days would have been considerably lower than in 2019/20.

Out of control dogs: The Law

According to the law it is illegal to let a dog be dangerously out of control anywhere, such as:

- In a public place
- In a private place, for example a neighbour's house or garden
- In the owner's home

The law applies to all dogs. Your dog is considered dangerously out of control if it: injures someone or makes someone worried that it might injure them.

You can get an unlimited fine or be sent to prison for up to 6 months (or both) if your dog is dangerously out of control. You may not be allowed to own a dog in the future and your dog may be destroyed.

If you let your dog injure someone you can be sent to prison for up to 5 years or fined (or both). If you deliberately use your dog to injure someone you could be charged with 'malicious wounding'.

If you allow your dog to kill someone you can be sent to prison for up to 14 years or get an unlimited fine (or both).

If you allow your dog to injure an assistance dog (for example a guide dog) you can be sent to prison for up to 3 years or fined (or both).

The following compilation of incidents outlined in this report clearly show cases of out of control dogs in public places causing injuries to animals and making members of the public concerned that they will also be injured. Protect the Wild asks the question as to why time and time again hunts get away with terrorising animals and members of the public?

Case Studies –Major incidents between 2018-2019

09/01/2018 - Hunting hounds tear through cat sanctuary, leaving dozens of rescue animals 'traumatised' and missing

“A whole pack of hunting hounds in pursuit of both a fox and deer thundered through an animal sanctuary, displacing more than 60 terrified animals during their evening feed.

The pack of hounds tore through the Celia Hammond Animal Trust, which provides shelter for 130 rescued animals, many of which are unwell and or in the later years of life and difficult to rehome.

The shelter mainly cares for cats, 60 of which fled the chaotic scene as volunteers and police both battled to chase the pack of hounds away from the cats on Monday.”

Source: Independent

03/02/2018 – Pregnant alpacas could lose their young after hunting hounds tear through farm

“An alpaca farm fears its pregnant animals could lose their young after it was terrorised by out-of-control hunting dogs.

Police are investigating after a pack of hounds tore through barbed-wire fences and into the farm, sending about 65 animals fleeing.

The farm’s owners said they feared the chaotic scene could spell “the end” for their business, which breeds alpacas and relies on selling the animals and their fleeces for income.”

Source: Independent

13/03/2018 –

“A cat has been "mauled to death" by a hunting hound in its owner's back garden.

In a Facebook post, Helen Keyzor, from Norbury in Staffordshire, said her cat Rosie had been killed on Tuesday.

Ms Keyzor said she was "heartbroken and angry" at the death of her 15-year-old cat who "didn't stand a chance".

The Albrighton and Woodland Hunt said one of its dogs fatally injured the pet and it was investigating the attack "thoroughly".

Source: BBC News

18/11/2018 – Family's pet is mauled to death by hounds

“A family was devastated after their beloved pet cat was mauled to death by a pack of hounds near Newcestown.

The cat, which its owners had since it was a kitten, was savagely killed by the dogs as they passed through a nearby farmyard in Mossgrove last Sunday week while hunting.

The animal’s owner, Michael Scanlon, said it had been very upsetting and he has called for hunting groups to give advance notice before they arrive in an area.”

Source: The Southern Star

21/12/2018 - Alpacas 'viciously attacked' by hunt hounds

Hunt hounds "viciously attacked" a herd of alpacas, leaving one so badly "ripped apart" she had to be put down, prompting a police investigation.

Langley Alpacas in Derbyshire said another of its animals was recovering from numerous wounds he suffered in the attack.

The hounds were from the Meynell and South Staffordshire Hunt, which was hunting nearby on Tuesday.

The hunt has apologised and said incidents like this were "very rare".

Source: BBC News

14/03/2019- Hound mauls lamb as dogs storm through field of sheep

“This is the savage moment a foxhound sinks its teeth into a fleeing lamb's neck while horrified onlookers scream at the hound to let it go.

A pack of the dogs which were part of a hunt in Roston, Derbyshire, jumped into a field of sheep and pursued the flock which ran for their lives.

But a couple of canines picked off the struggling lamb and shepherded it away from the herd before mauling it.”

Source: Daily Mail

Case Studies – 1st October 2020 – 4th January 2021

1st October 2020 -Pet cat killed by Braes of Derwent Hunt

In October 2020 hunt hounds from the Braes of Derwent Hunt were suspected of killing a cat as they allegedly ran through a kennels and pet-rescue centre. As reported by The Independent, “The Braes of Derwent hunt was accused of allowing at least 10 of its hounds to run loose in the kennel grounds, frightening small dogs and the owner’s tabby cat, which has not been seen since.

Tracey Hobbs, owner of the Tendercare boarding kennels and cattery at Burnhope, Co Durham, said there was no sign of any riders to control the hounds when the alleged incident happened.”

Miss Hobbs also said the following;

““We didn’t know anything until we heard the horns and saw some of the hounds on the top of the hill.

“I said ‘seriously not’ because I knew what was going to happen.

“I heard my cat scream, one lot seemed to go after him and I presume killed the poor thing because I haven’t seen him since.”

17th October – Cheshire Forest Hunt terrorising sheep

In video footage uploaded by Cheshire Against Blood Sports, hounds from the Cheshire Forest Hound can be seen chasing and frightening a flock of sheep with “Sheep clambering over a barb wire fence, colliding with hounds in desperation to get away”. The sheep are clearly in considerable distress as a huntsman watched on.

4 November 2020 – Calf runs for its life after being chased by hunt hounds

Nottingham Hunt Saboteurs filmed the young cow being swarmed by dogs after they burst into a field near Broxtowe, Nottinghamshire, on Wednesday 4th November. A spokesperson from the group said “We’ve never seen anything like this and we’ve been doing it for a long time, they just burst into the field and starting chasing the calf.”

16 November 2020 – Cury Hunt hounds chase dog for miles

Speaking to Cornwall Live, a dog owner from the Lizard Peninsula spoke of her fear after herself and her dog Bear were “attacked by over 30 hounds when irresponsible owners at the Cury Hunt Cornwall lost full control of these hounds.”

“The personal trainer, who has reported the incident to police, said when she eventually found her dog at a quarry near Goonhilly satellite station she was forced to swim across a lake to rescue petrified Bear”

26th December 2020 – Derwent hounds chase ewes through field

On Boxing Day 2020, East Yorkshire Coast Hunt Sabs filmed the Derwent hunt at Wykeham Abbey chasing ewes through a field. The group commented to say “The huntsman seems quite content to let them get on with it.”

Incident – 31st December 2020 – Pet cat killed by High Peak Hunt

A hunt has apologised unreservedly after its hounds killed a much-loved pet cat as they “ran out of control”.

One dog snatched the terrified animal from under a car in a private garden and “shook her like a rag doll”, the owner told *The Independent*.

The hounds “ran ahead of the horses uncontrolled” while the riders were out exercising in Bakewell, Derbyshire.

January 2021 – Alpacas incident – Tynedale hunt

As reported by Bingfield Alpacas on 2nd January, hounds from the Tynedale Hunt terrorised their herd of alpacas three times before the Xmas period. As reported by BBC News, “Teri White, from Bingfield Alpacas, said that hounds from the Tynedale Hunt had got on to her land, near Hexham, Northumberland, on three occasions. She said they chased newlyweaned alpacas into a corner, terrifying them.”

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