



2021 IMPACT REPORT





PROTECT THE WILD

Founded in 2015, Protect the Wild is a non-profit organisation working to empower people to protect British wildlife.

We do so by using multimedia to campaign on key issues, inform the public about wildlife matters, and support activists taking direct action in the field.

That's why we say we:

CAMPAIGN | INFORM | SUPPORT

We do things differently because 'same old same old' just isn't cutting it. Whether it's through hard-hitting animations, working to change key pieces of legislation, or reporting events in a powerful and truthful way, we understand the importance of dynamism and of innovation in tackling the persecution that British wildlife faces.

We mean it when we say we aspire to be so much more than just a campaigning organisation. We aspire to be a winning one too.

WHAT WE DO



OUR POLICY WORK AIMS TO ‘CHANGE THE NARRATIVE’

and progress the way we think about and treat wildlife. We’re a forward thinking animal rights organisation and an equal appreciation for all animals underpins the work that we do.

We tackle terms such as ‘game bird’ head on and we don’t compromise on our values and beliefs when it comes to calling for a complete end to all hunting and shooting of animals in the UK.

Our campaigns push key issues onto the mainstream agenda and initiate important conversations. From localised pressure campaigns to nationally focused ones, we ensure decision makers understand why wildlife matters.

We took two of our campaigns to Parliament in 2023 as well as playing a major role in persuading the National Trust and other landowners to ban ‘trail’ hunting on their land.

Our grants fund activists on the frontline defending wildlife and support rescue and rehabilitation work. We have an ever-growing equipment fund powered by our incredible supporters and we are continuously improving how we support the courageous individuals in the field.

Our specially-created content reaches millions of people every year and we are strong believers in innovation and dynamism to reach new audiences. In 2023, we released 5 animations that have been viewed over 6 million times, focusing on core issues from stag hunting and the licensing of hunting on MoD land to the shooting of foxhounds.

HOW WE WORK

Protect the Wild is funded entirely thanks to the generosity of the public. We have no major donors or backers and do not receive any Government funding.

We’re proudly independent and free to use every legal means to empower people to protect British wildlife.

Key campaigns/aims:

END ALL HUNTING

END THE SHOOTING INDUSTRY

END THE BADGER CULL



2021 IN OVERVIEW

2021 WAS A HUGE YEAR FOR PROTECT THE WILD



OUR KEY WORK THIS YEAR

Page 08

Hound shooting investigation

Our undercover investigation exposed the Beaufort Hunt shooting their hounds

Page 10

Covid grants exposé

We exposed hunts across the country who were awarded Covid grants

Page 11

National Trust victory

The National Trust and several major landowners ended the licencing of hunts on their land

Page 12

Mini's Law

We launched the Mini's Law campaign and helped secure a criminal prosecution

Page 13

Media outreach

We secured widespread coverage for the anti-hunt movement

Page 14

Boxing day animation

Our animation 'A Trail of Lies' narrated by Chris Packham was seen by over ½ million people

Page 15

Supporting activists

Granted over £15K+ to hunt saboteur and hunt monitor groups across the country

Page 16

Campaigner of the Year award

Won 2021 Campaigner of the Year Award in the Great Outdoors Magazine

BEAUFORT HUNT HOUND SHOOTING

In 2021 we partnered with the brilliant Hunt Investigation Team to support and fund their undercover surveillance work. After months of tireless work setting up and installing hidden cameras at the Beaufort Hunt kennels, shocking footage exposed the prestigious hunt shooting dead several of their hounds. Two of the poor animals had to be shot twice after showing signs of life.



The investigation was picked up by ITV News and was featured on both evening television slots meaning millions of people were exposed to one of the most vile activities of the hunting world.

Responding to the footage, Ricky Gervais told ITV News:

“It is so deeply upsetting that foxhounds are trained against their natural instinct to hunt foxes and when they catch them, rip them to pieces!”

“Then they are killed, usually by a shot to the head, by...someone who loves to chase and kill innocent animals. Both the hound and the fox become the victim of this cruelty. It’s insane, don’t you think?”

It was the first time that footage of its kind had ever been shown to the public and revealed the sham that is ‘trail hunting’ for what it truly is. If hunts really did lay a trail, then they would have no reason to kill their hounds at half of their average life expectancy. These animals are nothing but tools trained to kill wildlife and thanks to our investigation with HIT the public now know the truth.

The Beaufort Hunt were one of several hunts previously licenced by the National Trust to ‘trail hunt’ on their land and so this footage was invaluable in helping put pressure on major landowner to end their licensing of hunts.

[Click here to find out more](#)



Shocking footage exposed the prestigious hunt shooting dead several of their hounds.

COVID GRANTS EXPOSÉ

In early 2021 we undertook an investigation into the awarding of the Small Business Covid Grant to hunts across the country. It wasn't long before we discovered that over £250,000 of taxpayer funded grants had been awarded (many of which operate as businesses and so were eligible for at least £10,000 from the scheme).

The story hit the national headlines with a front page on the Sunday People along with many other publications picking it up. Our founder Rob Pownall spoke to The Mirror and described how

“It’s disgraceful councils have used taxpayer-backed funds to support registered hunts.”

[Click here to read more](#)



LANDOWNERS CAMPAIGN

In 2021 we continued to call on major landowners such as the National Trust and Forestry England to permanently end their licensing of so-called ‘trail hunts’. In fact, since 2017 Protect the Wild has been putting pressure on the nations’ biggest landowner to cut ties with the hunts. Our petition which was supported by over 370,000 people was handed to the National Trust over four years ago and so the 2021 National Trust AGM presented a major opportunity to finally convert years of campaigning into the right result for wildlife.

At the charity’s annual general meeting (AGM) a landslide majority, 76,816 members voted in favour of a trail hunting ban on National Trust grounds, with 38,184 against it. This vote followed months of educating National Trust members about the reality of so-called ‘trail hunting’. Only weeks prior to the vote, Protect the Wild released a shocking undercover investigation showing the previously National Trust licenced Beaufort Hunt shooting their hounds.

In 2021 Protect the Wild also launched a Government petition calling on Forestry England to permanently end the licensing of hunts on their land. The petition reached the 100,000 signatures required for a debate in Parliament. Forestry England have since suspended the licensing of any hunts on their land.

In summary, 2021 was a great year when it came to limiting hunt access to land. In fact, the only major landowner that still allows ‘trail hunts’ to use their land is the Ministry of Defence. A selection of some of the biggest Landowners that have banned hunts from their land either permanently or temporarily in 2021.

Needless to say, Protect the Wild welcomed the moves taken by these landowners to cut ties with those who hunt and kill wildlife. Literally millions of acres are now out of bounds to hunts across the country and without the land to use these hunts will soon realise that the net is closing in on them.

[Click here to find out more](#)

MINI'S LAW CAMPAIGN

On 6th March 2021 Mini the cat was killed by out-of-control hunting hounds outside her home in west Cornwall. After the mauling, the huntsman was filmed throwing Mini's lifeless body over a neighbour's fence in a cowardly attempt to hide the evidence.

In response, Protect the Wild launched the Mini's Law Campaign to raise awareness about this sickening incident and to highlight how this was not an isolated case. We released our 'Hunting Havoc 2021 Report'



which found that as of March 2021 there is on average one reported incident every two weeks involving hunts terrorising domestic animals or "livestock".

Clearly something needs to be done to ensure the public and animals are protected from dangerously out of control hunts like the Western Hunt in Cornwall. We interviewed Mini's owner Carly to discuss what happened that day and we supported the Government petition for Mini's Law (which reached the 100,000 threshold for a debate in Parliament which is scheduled for 2022).

What followed was a campaign that reached millions of people across the country and culminated in John Sampson of the Western Hunt being found guilty of being in control of out of control dogs at Truro Magistrates Court. His conviction was a major turning point for it was the first time that a huntsman had ever been found guilty under the Dangerous Dogs Act for injuring or harming another animal. What happened to Mini will never be forgotten and she will continue to represent the countless animals that fall victim to the reckless hunts in this country.

Thanks to our supporters a very important conversation was started.

[Click here to read more about the campaign](#)

MEDIA EXPOSURE AND REACH

I think it's fair to say that 2021 was the year that fox hunting and other wildlife crimes really hit the headlines.

Our campaigns were reported on by ITV News, The Mirror, Daily Mail, The Independent, The Metro, The Canary, The London Economic, Plant Based News and others.

Our investigation exposing the hunts that received the small business Covid Grant led to a frontpage on the Sunday People and hit headlines nationwide. And just a few months later and our investigation of the Beaufort Hunt hound shootings resulted in two evening television slots on ITV News.

In 2021 our work was seen by literally millions of people. 46.7 million impressions of our tweets throughout 2021. 9.6 million different people saw our posts on Facebook.

Our work has also been supported by some of the country's biggest influencers such as the brilliant Chris Packham who narrated our animation 'A Trail of Lies' to the queen of fashion Stella McCartney who called on her 6.7 million followers to support our campaign to ban 'trail hunt' licences.



BOXING DAY ANIMATION

On Boxing Day our stunning animation ‘A Trail of Lies’ - narrated by Chris Packham and voiced by Peter Egan was released. It documented the key moments since fox hunting was made illegal in 2004 and destroyed the lie that is ‘trail hunting’ once and for all. The 6-minute video has since racked up over 600,000 views and was picked up by The Metro who ran a lengthy editorial piece.

It is our belief that in the fight to end fox hunting and all wildlife crimes for good, we must continue to find innovative ways of educating the public. What made our animation so powerful was that it was non-graphic and viewable by all ages, making it easily shareable and a powerful way of showing what really goes on in the countryside.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

SUPPORTING THOSE IN THE FIELD

Protect the Wild backs anyone who dedicates their time to save wildlife. That’s why in 2021 we supported hunt saboteur and monitor groups across the country by sharing their work and funding their direct action.

Through the Protect the Wild Equipment Grant last year we gave **over £15,000+** between 14 groups – helping wildlife defenders stay on the frontline to protect wildlife. **The groups we supported:**

- Bath Hunt Saboteurs
- Brighton Hunt Saboteurs
- Three Counties Hunt Saboteurs
- Cheshire Monitors
- Beds and Bucks Hunt Saboteurs
- Underground Badger Syndicate
- Somerset Wildlife Crime
- Cheshire Against Blood Sports
- Humberside Against Blood Sports
- York Anti-Hunt League
- Roaming Sab Squad
- West Cornwall Saboteurs
- North Wales Hunt Saboteurs
- North East Hunt Monitors

CAMPAIGNER OF THE YEAR AWARD

In 2021 Protect the Wild was awarded a gold medal and the title of ‘Campaigner of the Year’ in The Great Outdoors Magazine 2021 Readers’ Awards.

With 30 per cent of the public vote, the project was described by TGO readers as a “brilliant campaign to close the numerous loopholes”, while those involved were praised for their “dedication, diligence and sacrifice in helping animals”.

This award, voted for by the public, was on the back of multiple campaigns in 2021, including:

- Our on-going efforts to end trail hunting on National Trust land, a campaign which resulted in National Trust members voting in favour of the banning of trail hunting on National Trust land.
- Generating over 100,000 signatures to support Mini’s Law, a petition launched following the death of a beloved cat, who was attacked by hunting hounds. This petition called for greater protection to the public and domestic animals from hunts.
- Exposing the shooting of hunting hounds by the Duke of Beaufort Hunt. This investigation was the first time a hunt has been caught killing their own hounds.
- Continued efforts to educate and motivate the public to take action to protect wild foxes. Protect the Wild has grown an online community of over 600,000 people, whilst reaching over 7 million people per month with key campaigns and exposing wildlife crime for the world to see.



