



2022 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



2022 IN OVERVIEW

2022 was a major year for Protect the Wild. It marked our transition from a single-issue campaigning organisation to one that had evolved to work to end both hunting and shooting in the UK.



OUR KEY WORK THIS YEAR

Page 08

New website

We rebranded and launched our new website, with hundreds of thousands of visits in just a few months

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World's Worst Sport

Created the 'World's Worst Sport' campaign video in collaboration with House 337 to educate the public about 'cubbing'

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Jumping out of a plane

Our founder jumped out of a plane from 10,000ft to expose how up to 10,000 fox cubs are killed every year through the act of 'cubbing'

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Heading to Parliament

We heard our demands in Parliament, after two of our petitions reached the 100,000 threshold for debate

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VWH Undercover Investigation

Vale of White Horse Hunt undercover investigation exposed the relationship between landowners and terriermen in procuring foxes to be hunted

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Exposing raptor persecution

Exposed raptor persecution on the Hilborough Estate

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Exposing the shooting industry

Uncovered the sickening realities of the bird shooting industry through our investigations of the Highlow and Leighton Hall Estates

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Badger cull investigation

Badger cull 2022 - our undercover investigation exposed the grim hypocrisy of the cull

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Bonfire night animation

'Remember Remember' - a bonfire night animation narrated by Megan McCubbin educated thousands about the dangers of bonfires and fireworks to wildlife

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Ending Boxing Day hunt parades

Boxing Day Hunts Campaign - we teamed up with Action Against Foxhunting to lead a successful pressure campaign to end several Boxing Day hunt parades in the southwest of England

FROM KEEP THE BAN TO PROTECT THE WILD



In 2022 we renamed ourselves from Keep the Ban to Protect the Wild. The reason for this was very simple, we wanted to do even more to help end wildlife persecution, and ‘Protect the Wild’ encapsulated our mission.

While our work against hunting was proving effective, we realised we were only scraping the surface when it came to ending the cruelty inflicted on animals in the British countryside. Indeed, the shooting industry alone is responsible for slaughtering literally millions of birds and thousands upon thousands of mammals every year.

That’s why in 2022 our work reflected a reinvigorated focus to take on all forms of wildlife persecution across the UK. In addition to educating the public about hunting and launching our innovative campaign video ‘the world’s worst sport’ we also launched several undercover investigations to expose the shooting industry and the badger cull.

And a new and improved website was vital to housing our investigations and campaigns.



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

THE WORLD’S WORST SPORT

Thousands of fox cubs are killed every year preparing hounds for the hunting season in a barbaric practice called cubbing.

In August 2022 we teamed up with House 337 and Glue Society to create an innovative sports show parody to educate the public about this vile pastime. We were sickened by the groups in charge of hunting rebranding to the ‘British Hound Sports Association’ and so we sought to present cubbing as the ‘World’s Worst Sport’.

In our two-minute piece a television sports presenter and expert commentator in a TV studio discuss the countdown to a cubbing session as they might preview a football match, also interacting with a reporter “live” from a field where the families of foxes live.

Earlier in the year our founder Rob jumped out of a plane to fundraise for the project, jumping from 10,000ft to raise awareness of how up to 10,000 fox cubs are killed each year. An incredible £28,354 was raised in the process and some of these funds were also used to support undercover operations.



LIVE FIXTURES AND TALBOT CUBS BRINKLEY HUNT v BRINKLEY CUBS BURNCO

TAKING OUR CAMPAIGNS TO PARLIAMENT

On Monday 25 April, two petitions launched by Protect the Wild were debated in Parliament. These were ‘Stop Forestry England granting licences for Fox & Hare hunts’ and ‘Mini’s law - Protect the public and animals from hunting activities’

By the time these petitions were debated both campaigns had moved on significantly from the time at which they were launched. Forestry England had months prior made the right decision to end ‘trail hunting’ on their land and on the very same day (April 25th) John Sampson had his conviction appeal rejected.

And whilst the debates ultimately led to very little in the way of progressive conversation (sadly to be expected with the Government at the time) it was a symbolic day in many ways. It marked the tremendous progress of the anti-hunt movement that many major landowners have now banned hunting on their land and reinforced the considerable backing that organisations like us have from the public.



UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION VALE OF WHITE HORSE HUNT

On January 5th 2022 Protect The Wild supported the Hunt Investigation Team (HIT) with their investigation of the Vale of White Horse Hunt which saw them deliberately and intentionally hunt a fox.

VWH member and land-owner Verity Drewett was seen visibly shouting and identifying the fox to the hunt so that the mammal can be hunted. She ensured the fox was unable to seek safety in the barn and she stated how she ‘turned him’ before describing the whereabouts of the animal to Duncan Drewett, senior member of the VWH Hunt.

The terriermen responsible for bolting the fox from the barn on January 5th were also filmed doing the same thing at a meet on December 8th 2021.

A fox was also seen at the back of the barn this day and hours later a red coat is seen at the exact same spot as the fox.

The site was filmed for a period of two days and over this time not a single trail was seen being laid through the farm or anywhere around the farm. This investigation was incredibly powerful as it demonstrated the collusion between landowners and terriermen in ensuring there is a supply of foxes to be hunted. And it will prove invaluable evidence of the sham that is ‘trail hunting’ for years to come.

[Click here to read more](#)



EXPOSING RAPTOR PERSECUTION ON THE HILBOROUGH ESTATE



In April 2022, Protect the Wild supported the Hunt Investigation Team (HIT) with their uncovering of illegal raptor persecution on the Hilborough Estate in Norfolk.

The Hilborough Estate's reputation has been built upon and protected by its royal connections and historical conservation credentials. The Van Cutsem family, friends of Princes Charles, William and Harry, own the estate and manage it for shooting. In 2017, former head gamekeeper Geoffrey Gray, was lauded as a conservation 'hero' for his management of wildlife on the estate. In 2022, our investigation documented a very different picture of wildlife 'management' here.

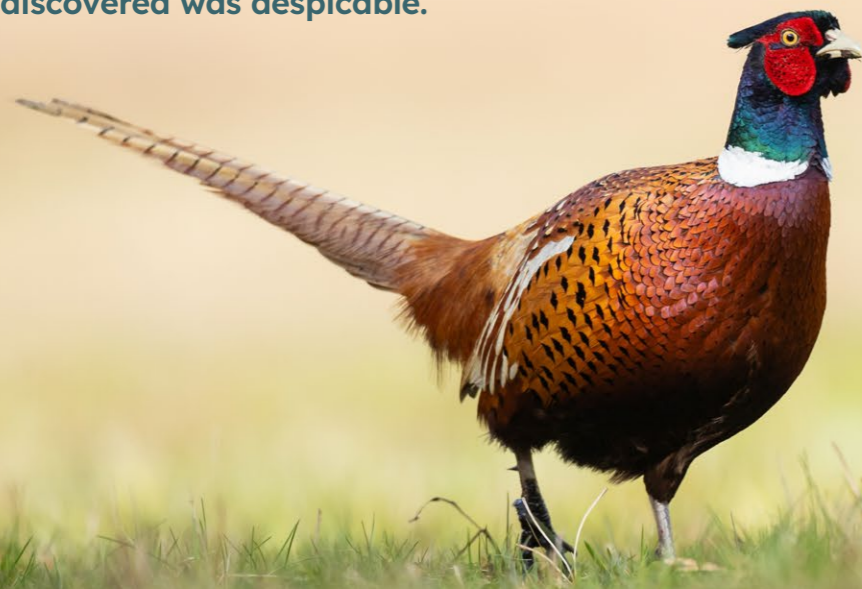
Acting upon reports of illegal trapping on the Hilborough Estate, HIT began covert surveillance in spring 2022. Our team navigated the estate, day and night, evading the gamekeepers during their most active season. Two illegal active hawk traps were discovered: large ladder traps, each containing live white pigeons. Such traps are recognised as illegal because the white pigeons specifically attract birds of prey, especially goshawks. [Offence: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 - the unlawful use of a cage trap].



[Click here to read more](#)

UNCOVERING THE SICKENING REALITIES OF THE BIRD SHOOTING INDUSTRY

Over the course of 2022, Protect the Wild supported HIT with two undercover investigations into the conditions faced by birds raised by the shooting industry. And what we discovered was despicable.



LEIGHTON HALL ESTATE

In September 2022 Protect the Wild was sent gigabytes of video and photographs taken by investigators who visited pheasant pens on the Leighton Hall Estate in Lancashire. They witnessed birds being plucked clean of their feathers, gasping for breath, and attacked by stronger birds or flies. There was no evidence of treatment being used to help these birds, and numerous dead bodies attest to this fact. It's incredible that professionals could stand by and allow sentient animals to suffer in this manner.

It is clear that shooting leads to a mentality where familiarity removes compassion, and the birds become data points on a profit and loss sheet rather than living beings.

Every year, 40 million Common Pheasants and up to ten million Red-legged Partridges are released into the countryside to be shot. A quarter of these birds die before shooting even begins. Shooting is subsidised by taxpayer-funded grants, and Leighton Hall Estate receives grants that cover the woodlands where their pheasant pens are located. Shoots are regular beneficiaries of taxpayer support, and the industry is not being checked on how the funds are spent.

The Leighton Hall estate investigation proved exactly why Protect the Wild is fighting to shut down the cruel shooting industry for good.

“It will be a battle to shut shooting down, but a battle we feel utterly compelled to take on. Piece by piece, estate by estate, and campaign by campaign.”

Protect the Wild



[Click here to find out more](#)

HIGHLOW ESTATE

In September 2022 we published footage that was filmed during the summer heatwave on an estate in Derbyshire, though it could have been taken almost anywhere the shooting industry has set up shop.

It shows young Pheasants and Red-legged Partridges in the rearing pens typically used by the shooting industry. In less than 90 seconds we can clearly see how poorly maintained pens leave young birds trapped in loose netting, unable to escape. How diseases like ‘bulgy eye’ (infectious diseases caused by micro-organisms called mycoplasmas) are rife within the industry.

How the industry’s casual approach to the proper disposal of dead bodies is risking even more disease – including the spread of the highly pathogenic virus that causes Avian Flu – by leaving them for swarms of flies, or even for other young birds to eat. Given that shooting estates make money selling live birds for the gun, you’d think they’d take more care wouldn’t you?

But then the industry releases a staggering 40 million or more Pheasants into the countryside every year, and a massive 10 million Red-legged Partridges.

If they lose a few along the way, well, there’s plenty more where they came from. And they can factor in the cost of those young corpses anyway – by charging more to the very shooters who line up to kill the birds that do survive.



So who cares about a few dead birds? We do. That’s why we are building a movement to shut this appalling industry down.

[Click here to read more](#)

UNDERCOVER INVESTIGATION BADGER CULL 2022

Midway through the 2022 badger cull, Protect the Wild released shocking undercover footage of badgers being carelessly handled and stored at Grafton pet crematorium in Northamptonshire. The videos taken in September and early October show the grotesque reality of the badger cull. A cull in which the government claims to only licence operators with the highest biosecurity measures in place.

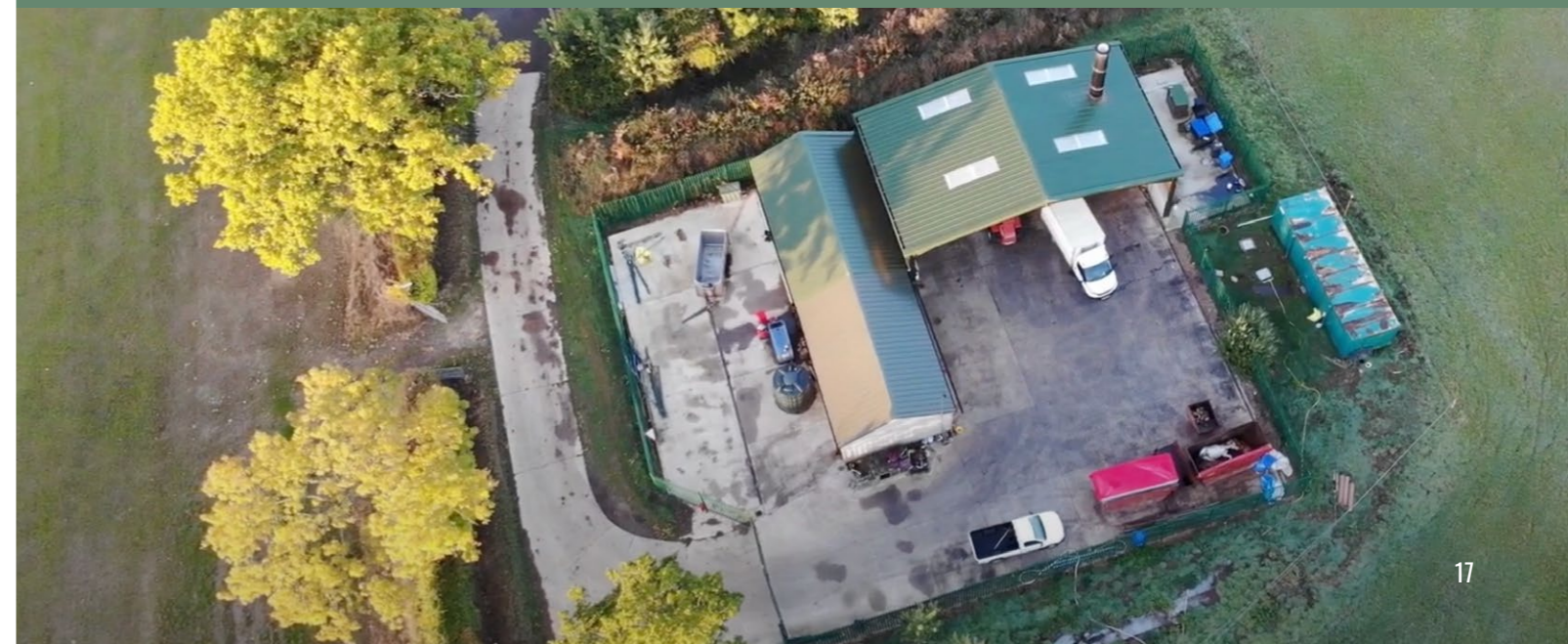
Throughout the undercover recordings at Grafton Pet Crematorium, Northamptonshire, there is a blatant and consistent disregard for potential biohazards and spread of disease.

We would not be at all surprised if these scenes of recklessness and non-adherence to important regulations are commonplace across the UK.

We want to see the end of the badger cull.

“The science isn’t there to back up claims that culling these mammals will stamp out bTB in dairy cows. Indeed, if these animals are diseased, why is such blatant disregard being shown to government regulations? The cull needs to end. Badgers are not to blame.”

[Click here to find out more](#)



REMEMBER, REMEMBER

A BONFIRE NIGHT ANIMATION

November 5th. We usually remember the bonfire, the fireworks, the Guy Fawkes effigy.

But while we're (rather oddly) celebrating the failure of a plot to blow up Parliament more than four hundred years ago, what happens to the wildlife that would normally be sharing our gardens, our parks, or our public spaces?

Sadly, while we're blanketing the country with deafening noise and toxic air pollution our wildlife we seem to largely have forgotten

about them. Every year animals like hedgehogs that have curled up in the pile of wood and brush we've piled up are injured or killed. And every year roosting birds are sent rocketing into the air along with the flashes, bangs, and colourful sparkles.

That's why we produced our animation 'Remember Remember' narrated by the brilliant Megan McCubbin. Released a week before November 5th it gave practical solutions and alternatives to bonfires and fireworks.



[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

BOXING DAY HUNTS CAMPAIGN

In December 2022, Action Against Foxhunting revealed a plan by Somerset County Council to use emergency roadwork powers to facilitate three Boxing Day hunt parades sparked outrage, leading to over 2,000 letters of protest. Protect the Wild campaigned against the use of emergency powers for hunts, and within three days of hosting a letter calling on the council to reverse its decision, it had been signed and sent over 2,000 times.

The pressure worked. Somerset County Council issued an apology for the “misunderstandings” caused by their plan and confirmed that the hunts would now meet on private roads, with no public roads closed. Protect the Wild received a statement from a spokesperson at the council confirming that they would not be closing any roads for hunt meets that year.

The success of the campaign shows the power of petitions and putting pressure on decision-makers. Protect the Wild hopes that councils across the UK will recognize that supporting fox hunting through the use of emergency powers will prove to be extremely unpopular and cause protests.

We will continue to work with grassroots organisations to ensure that supporting fox hunting will always be a lose-lose situation.

Looking to the future – a closing message from our founder

“In 2023 we will fight even harder to end hunting and shooting in the UK. More campaigning, more investigations, more animations, more support for hunt saboteurs and wildlife rescuers. I would like to say a huge thank you to every single person who supports what we do. Together we are stronger. Together we can and we will Protect the Wild.”

[Click here to read more](#)



