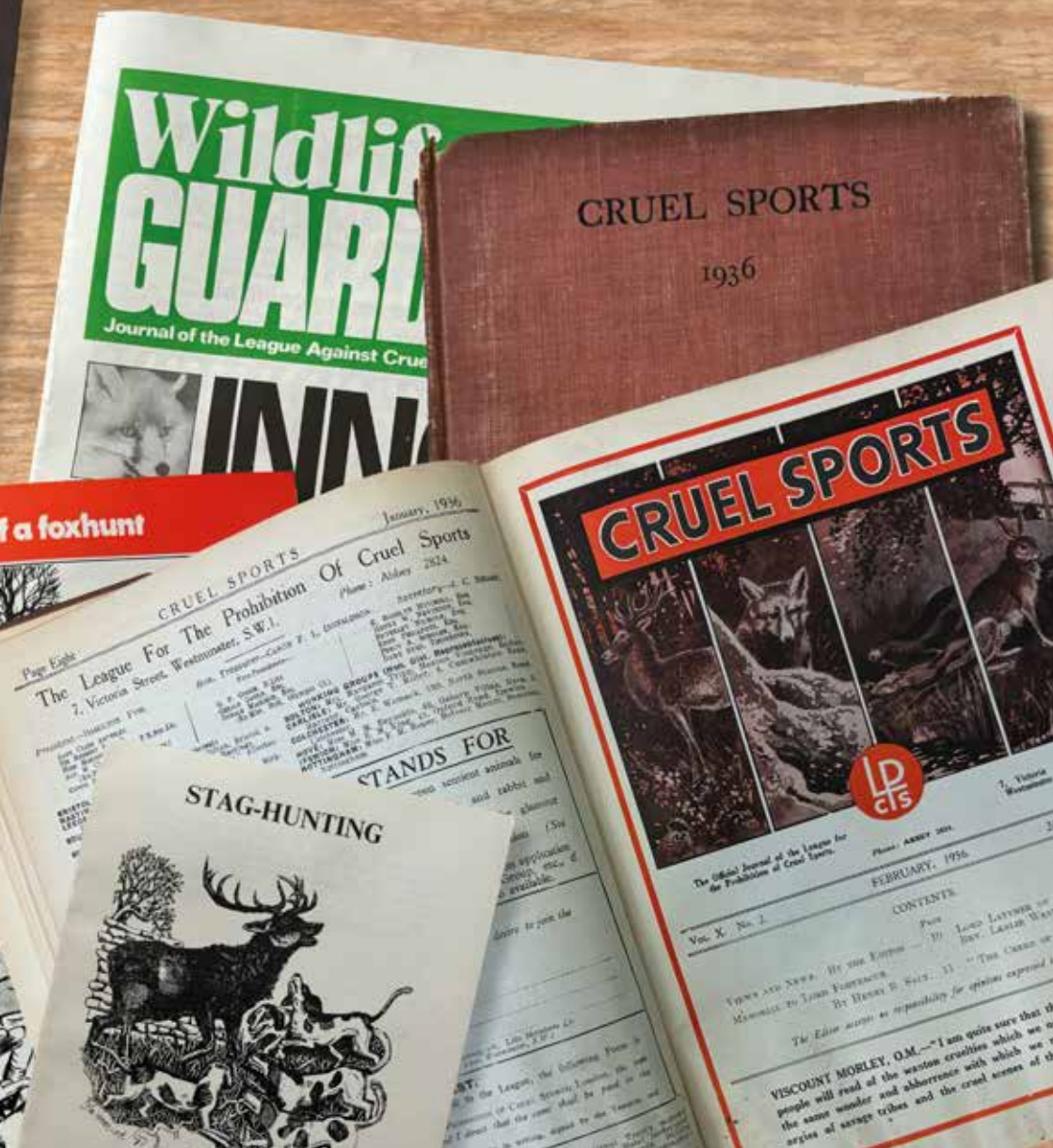


PROTECT

CENTENARY EDITION

AUTUMN 2024



Welcome to your centenary edition of Protect



This edition of Protect is celebrating a very special birthday – the League Against Cruel Sports centenary. We're going to take you on a memorable whistle-stop tour of all our collective achievements over the past 100 years.

We'll pay tribute to our founders, the brave men and women who founded the League and our work in protecting wildlife from cruelty and brutal blood sports.

But we also want to celebrate kind people like you that are helping us now to campaign on behalf of wildlife.

You've helped us successfully ban the brutal wildlife traps called snares in both Wales and Scotland.

You've helped us smash an international dog fighting ring operating across Europe.

Your support has helped us strengthen fox hunting laws in Scotland.

And we stand now on the brink of a whole new raft of victories for wildlife.

We now have a new government promising to improve the lives of animals.

This gives us a very real chance to strengthen fox hunting laws in England and Wales and to really ban this barbaric activity for good.

It also gives us a golden opportunity to ban snares in England too.

After 100 years of compassionate campaigning on behalf of animals, our ideas and vision have never been in such a strong position. We're winning.

Together we're creating a better world for animals who so desperately need our protection. Let's get the job done.

Mike Nicholas
Editor

Jonathan Shortt
Designer

Our Goals

End hunting, shooting, animal fighting and other cruel sports and the associated practices that enable them.



Win the hearts and minds of a broader audience.



This issue at a glance



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Celebrating 100 years of campaigning for wildlife

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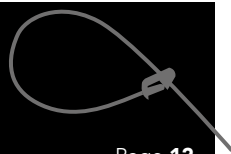
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Celebrating 100 years of campaigning for wildlife

One hundred years ago a brave group of men and women came together, defying the conventions of the age, to campaign around the vital single issue of banning blood sports.

And so, the League for the Prohibition of Cruel Sports was born, later changing its name in 1942 to one we're all now familiar with – the League Against Cruel Sports.

Three years before the BBC broadcast its first ever radio programme, the inaugural meeting in 1924 saw our founders Henry Amos and Ernest Bell establish our founding principles and what we would stand for throughout our history – compassionate campaigning on behalf of wildlife.

They spelled out exactly what they stood for and what they said then remains just as vitally important 100 years later.



“We condemn fox hunting, otter hunting, stag hunting, hare hunting and rabbit and hare coursing because they are organised forms of cruelty for pleasure.”

In the pre-internet age the League was a prolific producer of pamphlets and leaflets highlighting the savagery of blood sports.

Lobbying MPs was a key component of our work and as support grew for our cause, various attempts were made to pass bills in parliament to outlaw hunting with dogs in the following decades.

In the 1950s the League bought the first of its wildlife reserves on Exmoor which were used as sanctuaries by the deer and foxes which faced relentless pursuit by stag and fox hunts in this hunting hotspot.

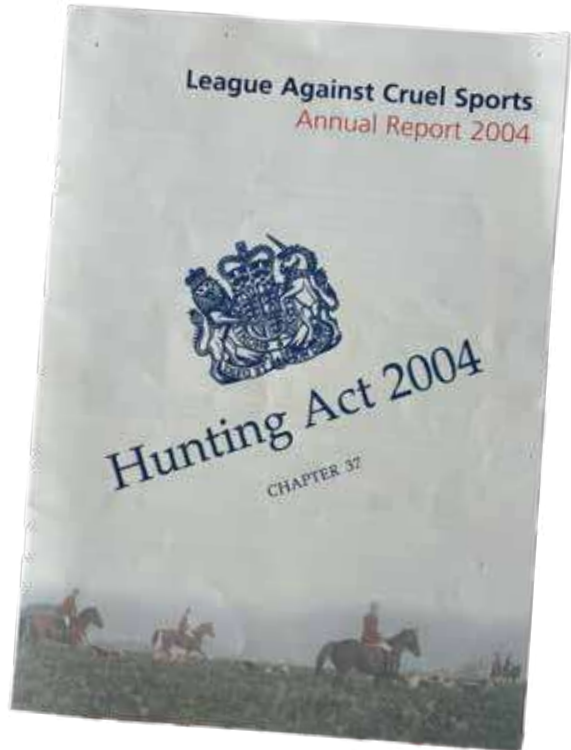
Driven by our belief in creating a compassionate world for wildlife and backed by our wonderful supporters, recent years have seen a flurry of achievements for animals – too many to list and hopefully many more to come.

In the late 1970s we were successful in persuading government to make the much-loved otter a protected species after years of persecution by hunts.

In 2004, the Hunting Act was passed, coming into force in February 2005 and banning the hunting of wildlife with dogs.

Though flawed, the ban provides us with a cornerstone as we battle to strengthen fox hunting laws. Only a few months ago, the Labour Party pledged in its manifesto to ban trail hunting, the smokescreen used by hunts to deceive the British public, police and courts as they chase and kill animals.

The Conservative Party no longer calls for a free vote on the repeal of the hunting ban, as they’ve realised it’s vastly unpopular and political poison for them.



‘Driven by our belief in creating a compassionate world for wildlife and backed by our **wonderful supporters.**’

We've also campaigned successfully to get trail or fox hunting banned or suspended on 2.5 million acres of land including that managed by the National Trust which used to license trail hunting.

We've repeatedly exposed the cruelty of stag hunting which is still taking place in the West Country despite the ban.

We're calling on the government to remove the loopholes in the law which the stag hunts are exploiting to continue their sordid activities.

Another huge achievement, and which goes under the radar nowadays, is that the Hunting Act ended large, organised brutal hare coursing events such as the Waterloo Cup.

This barbaric 'blue riband' event in the hare coursing world which took place between 1836 to 2005, attracted tens of thousands of spectators in its heyday but is now thankfully consigned to the history books.

Only last year stronger fox hunting laws were introduced in Scotland thanks to the work of our Scottish team.

The bans on snares in Wales and Scotland will alleviate the suffering of countless animals.

The most recent win for animals was in persuading the Ministry of Defence (MoD) to stop issuing trail hunting licences on its land.

We've helped domestic animals too. Our intelligence team have helped smash dog fighting rings and our public affairs team were influential in getting the UK to introduce longer custodial sentences for animal abusers.

We have a long and proud history and together we've achieved many successes and a better future for animals. But there's more to do.

We have a new government who have promised to advance animal welfare but we need your continued support to help us see our campaign goals over the line.

With your continued support you can help us end blood sports in this country once and for all.







General election campaign to strengthen fox hunting laws

The general election saw a flurry of activity at the League as staff and supporters worked together to press home our message to all the political parties that it's time for change and time to strengthen fox hunting laws.

Nearly 20 years after the fox hunting ban came into force, the blood sport is still rife and hunts are still chasing and killing foxes and wreaking havoc on rural communities.

To end fox hunting for good we called for parties to adopt policies to ban so-called trail hunting, the smokescreen invented by fox hunts to hide their brutal activities from the public, police and the courts.

We called for loopholes in the law to be removed that enable illegal hunting to continue. These are the exemptions in the Hunting Act which are routinely abused by hunts to continue traditional hunting despite the ban. These include spurious claims by stag hunts that they're conducting scientific research or rescuing injured animals.



We also called for the introduction of custodial sentences for those convicted of hunting offences so that the law in future would act as an effective deterrent to would be hunters.

To back up these key asks we ran a series of online and on the ground campaigns throughout the six weeks of the campaign period.

We secured more than 76,000 signatures for our petition calling for stronger fox hunting laws and 25,000 emails were sent by supporters to election candidates seeking their views on this issue.

In London, a Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting event led by the League and involving representatives from some of the UK's most influential animal welfare organisations gathered outside Parliament to demand hunting laws be changed as a priority.

Elsewhere in the capital, our 'fox postie' made a special delivery to the main political party headquarters dropping off thousands of post cards signed by members of the public and calling for a proper ban on fox hunting.

Hundreds of people dressed up as foxes joined the 60,000 strong Restore Nature Now march calling on the next government to clamp down on illegal hunting.

In Cardiff, members of the Senedd joined campaigners from the League at the Welsh Parliament to back our calls to consign fox hunting to the history books.

Carolyn Thomas MS, Chair of the Senedd Cross-Party Group on Animal Welfare said: "We are a nation of animal lovers and I know the vast majority of residents across Wales will want to see an end to this brutal practice."





League campaigners were joined by members of the Senedd on the steps of the Welsh parliament after the historic vote to ban snares in Wales

Public support for a proper ban was also high. We released polling during the general election showing nearly eight out of 10 (76 per cent) voters were in favour of strengthening the Hunting Act.

We commissioned the polling, but it was carried out independently by Find Out Now with further analysis by Electoral Calculus, both members of the British Polling Council, and hundreds of media outlets covered its release.

And we saw some huge successes for animals during the course of our general election campaign with both the Labour Party and Green Party including a pledge to strengthen hunting laws in their manifestos.

Now that we have a new government, the door has been opened to securing our number one priority which is new legislation to tackle fox hunting so we can end this barbaric activity once and for all.

The new laws protecting animals from hunters with dogs need to be as robust as possible and delivered without delay.

You can help by taking part in the following action or by making a small donation to help fund our next steps:

www.league.org.uk/time-for-change

Ministry of Defence suspends trail hunting on government land

We're on the verge of another big victory for wildlife with the news that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) has suspended indefinitely the issuing of trail hunting licences to fox hunts which will prevent them from hunting on government land.

The job is not yet completed and we'll be pushing for a total ban but we're hopeful that a ministerial review currently taking place at time of writing will see the government back our campaign.



The suspension of licences has affected at least 11 fox hunts who applied for a licence in the first two weeks of September, will cover a very large area of land, and will provide respite to our wildlife.

One hunt, the Royal Artillery Hunt which operates entirely on the Salisbury Plain training area, is set to be hugely impacted by the decision.

Up until this year the MOD had shockingly issued trail hunting licences to fox hunts which permitted them to hunt from the beginning of September – despite the whole notion of trail hunting becoming increasingly discredited and being used as a ruse to hide the chasing and killing of foxes.

We've been lobbying the MOD for many years to end fox or trail hunting on their land and have run campaigns encouraging the public to email MPs calling for an end to this subterfuge allowing fox hunting to continue.

We've written to many defence and environment secretaries but the new government is the first to respond effectively to our concerns.

‘The suspension of licences has affected at least 11 fox hunts who applied for a licence in the first two weeks of September...’



This time around we have the backing of the Time for Change Coalition Against Hunting which represents more than 30 organisations and is one of the largest single-issue coalition of charities ever assembled in the UK.

We've also obtained media coverage in influential newspapers such as the Times about our concerns that fox hunting was still taking place on government land.

Now we're on the verge of victory. No hunts are currently chasing and killing foxes on MOD land right now whereas in previous years they would have been engaged in cub hunting at this time of year – a brutal practice in which hunt hounds are taught to kill young foxes in preparation for the fox hunting season beginning in November.

Chris Luffingham, our Acting Chief Executive said: “That no new trail hunting licences are being issued on MoD land is something the League has long campaigned loudly for and we would welcome confirmation that no such activity will ever take place on government land again, as per Labour’s manifesto pledge.”



A nationwide ban on snares edges ever closer

We're edging ever closer to ending the use of snares – a cruel and indiscriminate device used by gamekeepers to trap wildlife – across the whole of Britain.

We're delighted that after years of campaigning with our supporters, Wales became the first nation in the UK to ban snares in October 2023 after the Welsh Government passed legislation outlawing them.

Earlier this year the Scottish Government voted to ban snares and we're expecting details of when the legislation comes into force to be announced shortly.

Meanwhile, in June the Labour Party manifesto contained a commitment to ban snares in England.

So, we and our campaigning partners have already achieved a great deal but we're also on the brink of something huge. And it will be a huge victory for wildlife across Britain as snares – thin wire nooses which tighten around the necks of any animal unfortunate enough to wander into their path – cause immense pain and suffering.

It'll also be a big blow for the shooting industry which uses snares to maintain artificially high stocks of non-native pheasants and partridges, only for them simply to be shot.



Photo courtesy of Wild Moors

It's estimated that there are around a quarter of a million of these cruel devices lying hidden in our countryside at any one time according to Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) figures, which gives you an idea of the scale of the problem.

The same Defra research shows almost three quarters of the animals caught aren't the intended target species such as foxes but include other animals like hares, badgers, otters and even people's pets. Far too often we hear the tales of anguished owners who've lost their loved cat or dog to these barbaric devices.

These historic bans will come about because of your fantastic efforts in taking part in League campaigns.

But we need to get the ban on snares in England over the line and we'll be working with you to achieve this in coming months.

Together we can get this big win for wildlife and end the agonising torment so many animals experience.



Tackling the brutal world of animal fighting

The League's intelligence team has played a vital role in uncovering and providing evidence to the police on brutal blood sports including dog fighting and badger baiting, helping convict the people behind a string of animal cruelty offences.

In June, a prolific dog fighter was sentenced to jail at Chelmsford Crown Court, after the intelligence team supplied information to Essex Police, that pointed to him being part of a large dog fighting ring operating across Europe.

Many of you will be shocked to hear that dog fighting, which was banned nearly 200 years ago, is still taking place in the UK in the 21st century, but sadly it is and we're determined to expose the culprits behind it.

It's one of the most horrific forms of animal cruelty with the dogs suffering horrific injuries or dying in the dog fighting pit.

Thanks to the tenacity of our intelligence team who conducted an online investigation, the criminals behind it have now been punished.



Billy Leadley was jailed for four years for 12 offences under the Animal Welfare Act including keeping a premises for use in dog fighting, taking part in a fight by refereeing and keeping and training a dog for use in a dog fight.

His wife Amy was also convicted of animal welfare offences and both have been disqualified from keeping dogs for 10 years.

We campaigned for many years to increase the maximum sentencing for serious animal cruelty offences from a paltry six months to five years, which culminated in the Animal Welfare (Sentencing) Act 2021 being introduced.

We welcomed the court in Chelmsford using these new sentencing powers which reflected the severity of the offences and which we're proud to have been instrumental in bringing about through our lobbying of parliament.

And we also welcomed the outcome of a police raid in which 16 dogs from the defendants' address were seized and taken away from this world of cruelty, pain and suffering.

Elsewhere and in the same month, another court case took place in Northern Ireland in which Joseph Kennedy was jailed for setting his dogs on badgers, foxes and cats which were then mauled to death in the most horrific of circumstances.

The judge at Dungannon Crown Court said: "I find it impossible to understand how any human being could deliberately set up the circumstances for such cruelty to another animal."

The League supplied photos and videos we uncovered of Kennedy online with injured dogs and dead foxes to the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) and Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA) which indicated he was setting up fights between his dogs and wildlife.

We're proud of the role we played to convict this barbaric animal abuser who now faces a 27-month sentence. We're delighted to say the dogs have now been taken into care and found new homes.

However, while badger baiting and dog fighting is illegal in Northern Ireland, the killing of foxes with dogs is not. We're now lobbying Stormont to introduce an effective and robust fox hunting ban in the country.



ANIMAL CRIMEWATCH

If you have suspicions that someone in your neighbourhood is involved in animal fighting, please contact our confidential supporter funded Animal Crimewatch service. You can contact us via phone, online, email and now WhatsApp:



0300 4441234



league.org.uk/crimewatch



crimewatch@league.org.uk



0755 278 8247 (WhatsApp)

**Together we can help expose and end
these abominable animal
welfare offences.**



You can't rebrand cruelty

The chilling sound hunt hounds make as they close in for the kill of a fox was played outside the fox hunting world's showcase Festival of Hunting in Peterborough this summer.

The League arranged for a specially equipped digital advertising van with speakers to play a film highlighting the horrific sights and sounds of fox hunting and to show how this brutal blood sport carries on despite it being banned nearly 20 years ago.

Rebranded this year for the first time as the Festival of Hounds, it saw fox hound packs from all over the country join this annual celebration of hunting.

We think rebranding this event won't hide the fact that this festival is all about celebrating an illegal activity and sanitising the sordid world of fox hunting.

As our Head of Campaigns Emma Judd says: "You can't rebrand cruelty. This is a tawdry PR exercise designed to put a respectable face on animal cruelty."

Elsewhere in the city the 'League fox' and supporters met shoppers and residents in the city centre to encourage them to sign a petition saying it's time for change and calling for stronger fox hunting laws and to make England and Wales a hunting free zone.



“This is a tawdry PR exercise designed to put a respectable face on animal cruelty.”

Our latest figures show 1,396 incidents involving fox hunts took place last season in the five months between November 2023 and the end of March 2024.

This included 526 cases of suspected illegal hunting, and 870 incidents of hunts wreaking havoc on rural communities – including trespass,

hounds loose on railway lines and roads, badger sett interference, livestock worrying and anti-social behaviour.

That’s why our campaigners and supporters are taking our message around the country - **that it’s time to strengthen the fox hunting ban.**

Wildlife reserves

Protecting animals from the hunts

The League's wildlife reserves in the West Country – over 3,000 acres of land which hunts are prohibited from entering – have seen lots of changes since the first one was purchased back in 1958, but hunting continues around them.





In the late 1950's, the hunting of deer, foxes, hares and otters was legal, and the hunts advertised their meets each week in the local press and in Horse & Hound magazine. Nowadays, most hunting with dogs is illegal and exists under a cloak of secrecy, with meets only shared between trusted supporters.

Fox hunts use the discredited pretence of 'trail hunting' while stag hunts use the ridiculous 'research and observation' or 'rescue of a wild mammal' exemptions found in the Hunting Act, and which they use to chase and kill their quarry.

August 2024 once more saw the start of the deer hunting, cub hunting and hare hunting seasons. So yet again, League staff need to be constantly vigilant in case a hunt attempts to trespass on a reserve.

This isn't just a problem for the League, it's a problem for every local resident and landowner that doesn't want the hunts disrupting their lives, rampaging through their property, and chasing and killing wildlife, livestock and pets. It must end!

Of course, the daily business of maintaining the League's wildlife reserves has to go on regardless.

The reserves are excellent places for wildlife to thrive, but we recognise that on their own they cannot stop the decline in nature that is happening across the countryside.

That is why we're now working on joint projects with neighbouring landowners for the benefit of nature.

We're in partnership with the National Trust in a landscape recovery scheme that will link and expand existing wildlife sites, while elsewhere we have joined with other landowners in another nature recovery project that has already seen beavers and barn owls breeding.

This year, we've had foxes, badgers, red, roe and fallow deer breeding on the wildlife reserves, and it was exciting to see the footprints of otter cubs on one of the reserves too.

Birds have had mixed breeding success, with migratory birds in particular suffering from the vagaries that climate change is bringing, but it's the lack of flying insects that has been particularly noticeable, which of course has knock-on effects along the food chain.

October sees the annual spectacle of the red deer rut arrive on the wildlife reserves. Mature stags appear as if by magic to challenge for the right to breed.

Our supporter events at the Baronsdown wildlife reserve are a great opportunity for supporters to see these magnificent creatures and some of the other great work that we do for animals.

Baronsdown Rutting Event

Saturday October 19 and
Sunday October 20, 2024

**For more details please
contact Supporter care:**

T: 01483 524 250

E: supportercare@league.org.uk

W: league.org.uk/autumn-rutting-event/



Calls for greyhound racing ban to end the shocking scale of deaths and injuries

We've renewed our calls for greyhound racing to be banned after the industry's governing body published figures this summer showing the scale of deaths and injuries sustained last year.

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain (GBGB) figures showed there were 109 deaths at trackside and 4,238 injuries at its 20 tracks in 2023, a high proportion of the 15,000 active racing greyhounds in the UK.

We think one death is too many. Greyhounds are being sacrificed for people's entertainment and the profits of the gambling industry.

So why is greyhound racing so dangerous?

A report into greyhound racing conducted by Professor Andrew Knight and published by greyhound campaigners Greyt Exploitations, established in 2018 that racing around oval tracks at great speeds put huge strain on the greyhounds' bodies and made deaths and injuries inevitable.

Accidents or pile-ups at or approaching the first bend are notorious and the report quotes from another source showing that congestion here accounts for many fatalities.

Put simply, the inherently unsafe nature of racing greyhounds around oval tracks is causing an unacceptable death toll and inordinate number of injuries.

Deplorably, a further 55 greyhounds were found no home or designated unsuitable for homing so were put to sleep as the industry didn't have a use for them anymore once their racing days were over.

The figures, which Defra stipulates the GBGB provides every year, go back to 2017 and show a large number of deaths and injuries every year.



The government's own Code of Practice for the Welfare of Dogs requires the public to keep their dogs healthy and safe, but these GBGB figures show a world of pain, suffering and injury among racing greyhounds.

It's why we're calling for a ban.

Emma Judd, the League's Head of Campaigns, said: "The scale of greyhound fatalities and injuries we're seeing is shocking so we need to see an end to greyhound racing which flies in the face of animal welfare standards in the UK."

You can support our campaign to ban greyhound racing by taking the following action. Make your voice heard:

www.league.org.uk/bangreyhoundracing



Philanthropy and major gifts

Our vision is to create a kinder society where persecuting animals for sport is a thing of the past.

Major gifts by kind donors are helping us to achieve this by tackling pressing issues such as illegal fox hunting.

One of these gifts recently enabled us to commission polling showing widespread support for a strengthening of hunting laws, including in rural areas, which helped shape our campaign strategy for the general election.

Other major gifts helped us maintain our wildlife reserves and create nature corridors providing safe havens for foxes, red deer and other species.

Our dedicated Philanthropy Manager Paula Mignucci cultivates lasting relationships with our most generous supporters, ensuring contributions are directed to the areas that align with their passions.

If you're interested in joining a very special group of League Partners and making a long-term transformational difference to the lives of countless animals, please contact Paula at [**paulamignucci@league.org.uk**](mailto:paulamignucci@league.org.uk)

**Together we can put an end
to the persecution of animals
for sport.**

Centenary Collection

To celebrate 100 years of campaigning for animals we've created a special collection of ethical clothing and accessories.

Our Centenary Collection features T-shirts, hoodies, sweaters, mugs and tote bags in both contemporary designs and those inspired by the vintage fashions of the decades through which we battled to end animal cruelty – from the 1920s when we were founded through to a range of unique 1980s influenced products.

The collection features designs for men, women and children. You can look stylish and also help protect animals from blood sports by shopping the collection here:

league.org.uk/clothing



LEAGUE
AGAINST CRUEL SPORTS

Team League



We're only able to continue our vital work for animals thanks to the ongoing commitment of our loyal supporters. Here's some of the great ways you can support us:



League Lotto

From just £1 a week you have the chance of winning up to £25,000, every week!

Visit: league.org.uk/leaguelotto

Help us celebrate our 100th anniversary!

To celebrate 100 years of campaigning for animals, we're calling on 100 people to raise £100! Keep an eye on your inbox; we'll soon send you a wealth of easy fundraising ideas to help you join in the centenary celebrations.



Fundraise while you shop

Did you know you can raise money for the League every time you shop online? Simply shop at one of the retailers found on the Easyfundraising site and they'll make a small donation to us as your chosen charity.

Visit: easyfundraising.org.uk/lacs

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