

John F. Robins, Secretary and Campaigns Consultant, Animal Concern,  
Post Office Box 5178, Dumbarton G82 5YJ. Tel. 01389-841-639, Mobile: 07721-605521.  
E-MAIL: [animals@jfrobins.force9.co.uk](mailto:animals@jfrobins.force9.co.uk) website: <http://www.animalconcern.org/>  
Animal Concern is a pressure group registered as a non-profit making Limited Company  
(Co. No. SC109126) established in 1988 as Animal Concern (Scotland) Ltd.  
It incorporates the Scottish Anti-Vivisection Society which was founded in 1876.

To supporters of Animal Concern, Animal Concern Advice Line and Save Our Seals Fund.

Dear Supporter,

On January 9th I told you I would write to you soon concerning important Government consultations which close at the end of this month. I'm afraid the day after I sent you that e-mail I took a turn for the worse (my leg ballooned by 50%) and had to go back to the Doc who gave me more antibiotics and clot busters and told me to stop sitting at the computer for silly hours a day.

I'm nearly finished taking the tablets, feeling a lot better (again) and hopefully going to get this e-mail out giving you at least a couple of days to make submissions to the consultations. One good thing about this is that if we get a good response to this e-mail (feel free to copy it to anyone you think would like to participate) it will be too late for the opposition to mount a response.

You do not have to live in Scotland or the UK to make a submission and it is important that as many of you as possible respond.

I'll e-mail you about the others later but the first and most important consultation I'd like you to participate in is the Scottish Government consultation on "Improving the Protection of Wild Mammals in Scotland" which closes on January 31st. This Consultation concerns amending the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002 following the Bonomy Report which the Scottish Government commissioned following evidence that the 2002 Act had failed to stop organised fox hunts using hounds to kill foxes.

The Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002 was supposed to be a law to ban fox hunting in Scotland. It was brought in by the Labour Government to fulfil a pre-election manifesto promise to ban fox hunting.

I had hoped for a law which would replace fox hunting with drag hunting where a human volunteer lays an artificial scent trail for the hounds to follow. This allows hunts to avoid hazards such as roads, railways and dangerous terrain. It not only protects wildlife and horses and riders, it keeps hounds away from animals on farms, animal sanctuaries and gardens with pet animals. Such a law would increase the number of people taking part as most horse riders do not want to participate in blood sports or put their horse and themselves at risk.

However using the well-known political policy of being all things to all people Labour produced a law which allowed hunts to continue just as before so long as they shot the fox before the hounds ripped it to bits. Like the Dangerous Dogs Act it turned out to be worse than worthless legislation. Unless of course you were involved in fox hunting. After the new law came into force those opposed to hunting celebrated their victory and enjoyed getting their Saturdays back without having to get up at daft am and spend the day trying to keep up with the hunters and stop them killing foxes. The police were also relieved as they no longer had to send out van loads of coppers to illegally detain hunt sabs until the hunters had had their fun and headed for home. Indeed the police still cannot even be bothered sending a cadet on a monocycle to ensure hunts are keeping within the 2002 Act.

Hunts in Scotland had never had it so good. No sabs, no police and no good reason to stop doing what they lived for – getting their kicks by watching foxes being chased for miles and then killed by dogs.

I cannot stress enough that fox hunters kill foxes for fun. Hunts do not “control” foxes. Indeed some hunts have brought foxes into an area to ensure they have animals to chase and kill. Hunts damage farmland and cause panic and distress to pregnant cattle and sheep. Farmers who own their land and are not tenants of fox hunting landlords often tell the hunt in no uncertain terms to stay off their land.

We must also question the very need to “control” foxes. I have watched an adult cat chase an adult dog fox away from her kittens. I have watched film of a ewe chasing a fox away from her new-born lamb. The fox was not interested in the lamb; it was after afterbirth strewn across the field. I have seen several hens killed by a fox which found the birds unprotected by an electric fence or safely secured in their henhouse for the night. This was not an act of bloodlust, if she hadn't been disturbed the vixen would have buried most of the hens as a food store for leaner times.

The main reason foxes, a native species in the UK, are persecuted is to stop them eating the eggs and young of non-native pheasants and other birds which people shoot for fun. Gamekeepers and others who persecute foxes then complain that there are too many rabbits, too many mountain hares, too many rats and mice. These people claim to be guardians of the countryside and managers of wildlife yet they cannot manage to realise that foxes are an important part of our ecosystem and of the wild food chain. Take them out of the equation and you upset the balance of nature.

On the Government Consultation website you will find 23 questions to answer. The Government wants your input on suggestions of changing some words and phrases in the existing Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002. This is a very leading method of consultation and can be designed to produce the type of legislation desired by those drafting the consultation document.

It is not our job to write the minutiae of legislation. We tell politicians what we want them to do (ban fox hunting), they ask their civil servants to draft legislation which is then checked by legal experts and then it goes to Parliament where, hopefully, it will be approved and passed into law.

The time is past for tinkering with a law which was never worth the paper it was written on. Fox hunters had their chance to continue riding with hounds so long as they did not use those hounds to kill foxes. They had their chance and they blew it big time.

The Scottish Government must ban hunting with hounds. It is as simple as that.

What I would like you all to do is submit a short e-mail to the consultation via this e-mail address: [2002ActReview@gov.scot](mailto:2002ActReview@gov.scot) In addition I would like you all to send a second e-mail to First Minister Nicola Sturgeon, Cabinet Secretary with responsibility for Animal Welfare Roseanna Cunningham MSP and Michael Matheson MSP, Cabinet Secretary for Justice. Their e-mail addresses are: Nicola Sturgeon ([firstminister@gov.scot](mailto:firstminister@gov.scot) ); Roseanna Cunningham MSP ([CabSecECCLF@gov.scot](mailto:CabSecECCLF@gov.scot) ); Michael Matheson ([CabinetSecretaryforJustice@gov.scot](mailto:CabinetSecretaryforJustice@gov.scot) )

Please remember to add your own name and postal address to your e-mails. My suggested e-mail to the consultation [2002ActReview@gov.scot](mailto:2002ActReview@gov.scot) is:

“Dear Sir or Madam,

I have looked at your prepared response questionnaire for the consultation on Improving the Protection of Wild Mammals in Scotland. Your questionnaire does not properly reflect my feelings on this and I wish you to accept this e-mail as my submission to this consultation. I give permission for my details to be published along with my submission.

Like the vast majority of people in Scotland I believe there is no place for hunting with hounds in the 21st Century. The Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002 sought to end the killing of foxes by hounds but failed miserably.

Fox hunters had their chance to change to drag hunting and stop killing foxes. They chose not to do that and, free from the attention of hunt saboteurs and of the police who totally failed to police the new law, they continued killing foxes.

Instead of tweaking and tinkering with The Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002 I ask the Scottish Government to replace that Act with a new law which truly bans hunting, lethal or otherwise, with dogs. I ask that it be made illegal to use dogs to deliberately chase wild mammals and that it be made illegal for people on horseback to chase wild mammals.

While I disagree that there is any legitimate need to kill foxes I fear the Scottish Government will continue to allow dogs to be used to flush foxes out of cover to be shot. If that is the case I urge you to do three things.

- 1: Limit the number of dogs to be used to two.
- 2: Make it mandatory that dogs used are fitted with safe muzzles.
- 3: Make it illegal to put terriers or other dogs into any hole in the ground to force any animal to the surface.

I urge the Scottish Government to create a law which truly bans fox hunting.

Yours faithfully, “

Please copy your e-mail to Ministers Sturgeon, Cunningham and Matheson with a covering note saying:

“Dear Minister,

Please don't make minor changes to The Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002. As you can see from my submission to the consultation on improving that Act I believe it is time to replace it with a law that really does ban fox hunting in Scotland.”

If you live in Scotland please also copy your submission to your MSPs (via <https://www.writetothem.com/> ) and let them know that you don't want The Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act amended, you want it scrapped and replaced with a law which truly bans fox hunting.

I'm sorry I've only been able to give you three days to do this but it is very important that you do and please ask anyone else you can think would be interested to make a submission as well.

Cheers4now,

John