

# Fox Hunting: Who are the real bad guys?

**Fox hunting has always been a controversial and opinionated subject; everybody has a view on it. However do we really know enough about fox hunting to make a steady opinion?**



I personally prefer the drag hunt as it's a planned route so no foxes are harmed and due to it being planned, it is a lot safer, also the fields and jumps are checked beforehand. I still go to watch the other hunt though and I know many people that are involved and love it. The hunt is a fantastic experience and you really cannot describe the fantastic atmosphere, it's honestly an indescribably amazing feeling.

Fox hunting is an activity involving the tracking chase and sometimes killing of a fox, traditionally a red fox, by trained foxhounds or other scent hounds, and a group of unarmed followers led by a master of foxhounds, who follow the hounds on foot or on horseback. However there is an alternative hunt called The Bloodhounds/ Drag Hunting where they have a runner on foot that spreads a scent leaving the hounds and horses chasing a scent they believe to be a fox on a planned route (I take part in the Cheshire Bloodhounds). This way no animals are killed during the sport. Nowadays the hunt don't do what they did ten years ago by purposely flushing a fox out for the dogs to chase. The Hunting Act 2004 is an act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom which bans the hunting of wild mammals (notably foxes, deer, hares, and mink) with dogs in England and Wales; the Act does not cover the use of dogs in the process (of flushing out an unidentified wild mammal) nor does it affect drag hunting, where hounds are trained to follow an artificial scent.

There are many pros and cons to fox hunting as there is with everything. Fox hunting is just like any sport...enjoyable! The thrill, the rush, the excitement, it can't be beaten! It's great for the horse and the rider, it's enjoyable, it's exercise and it's experience. Also as horrible as it sounds, numbers need to be kept down on foxes somehow. Foxes are animals, when they kill, they don't always kill to eat. How many of you can honestly tell me that you haven't heard a story where a fox has been and killed someone's chickens and just left the dead bodies uneaten? I say not many!

Also foxes have such a wide diet therefore if we didn't kill them, how much of the other species would decline? Not only this, but foxes are very fast, alert and clever animals, they could (and do) easily get away from a few tired out dogs, apart from the odd one they're only really likely to catch the old or the ill. Aren't we doing them a favour? But with everything there are also cons, unfortunately many injuries can occur to the horse and riders during this but that is the risk we take. Another con is obviously the one we all know, sometimes a fox is killed which is very unfortunate and upsetting but that is just part and parcel of the hunt and we just have to accept this.

Now we have the very upsetting part about the hunt, the saboteurs that follow. Peaceful protesters aren't a problem, everyone has a view and these are doing something about it... it's the non-peaceful ones that are the trouble. In the past saboteurs, known as sabs, have been known to become violent and dangerous. They have been photographed carrying knives, they have pulled small children off their ponies, and they have thrown acid over horses and riders. They have also been known to steal and torture dogs, injure horses, set traps for the horses, open the wrong gates leading horses onto main roads! The list goes on and on. And these people are supposedly here to save the animals and are animal lovers? Strange way of showing love! Most of the sabs are professional protesters, they don't have a true reason to be there and are just there for the protest. They don't care about the cause or the reason, they just want to protest! Putting other animals and people especially children in danger is pathetic and wrong. If we don't like something we should just stay out of the way and leave people be instead of causing unnecessary trouble!

Right: A photo of myself hunting.

So, what's your opinion?

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