

Stag Hunting

An Overview



Background

- Stag hunting pre-dates fox hunting.
- The French were very fond of it, and brought it over here in 1066
- It was an upper class sport – with severe punishments for poaching
- Decline began in the early 20th Century – mostly on account of its obvious cruelty
- Carted Stag Hunting was banned in 1922
- National Trust banned stag hunting in 1997 – BEFORE the Hunting Act



The Seasons and the Animals

- Both stags and hinds are hunted. “Stag Hunting” means “deer hunting”
- Autumn Stag Hunting starts in August and continues to the end of October
- Hinds are also hunted from November to February
- Spring Stag Hunting starts in March and continues to the end of April.

The Hunts

- Only three main stag hunts left
 - Devon and Somerset Stag Hounds (DSSH)
 - Quantock Stag Hounds (QSH)
 - Tiverton Stag Hounds (TSH)
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- The DSSH is the biggest and the most powerful of the hunts.



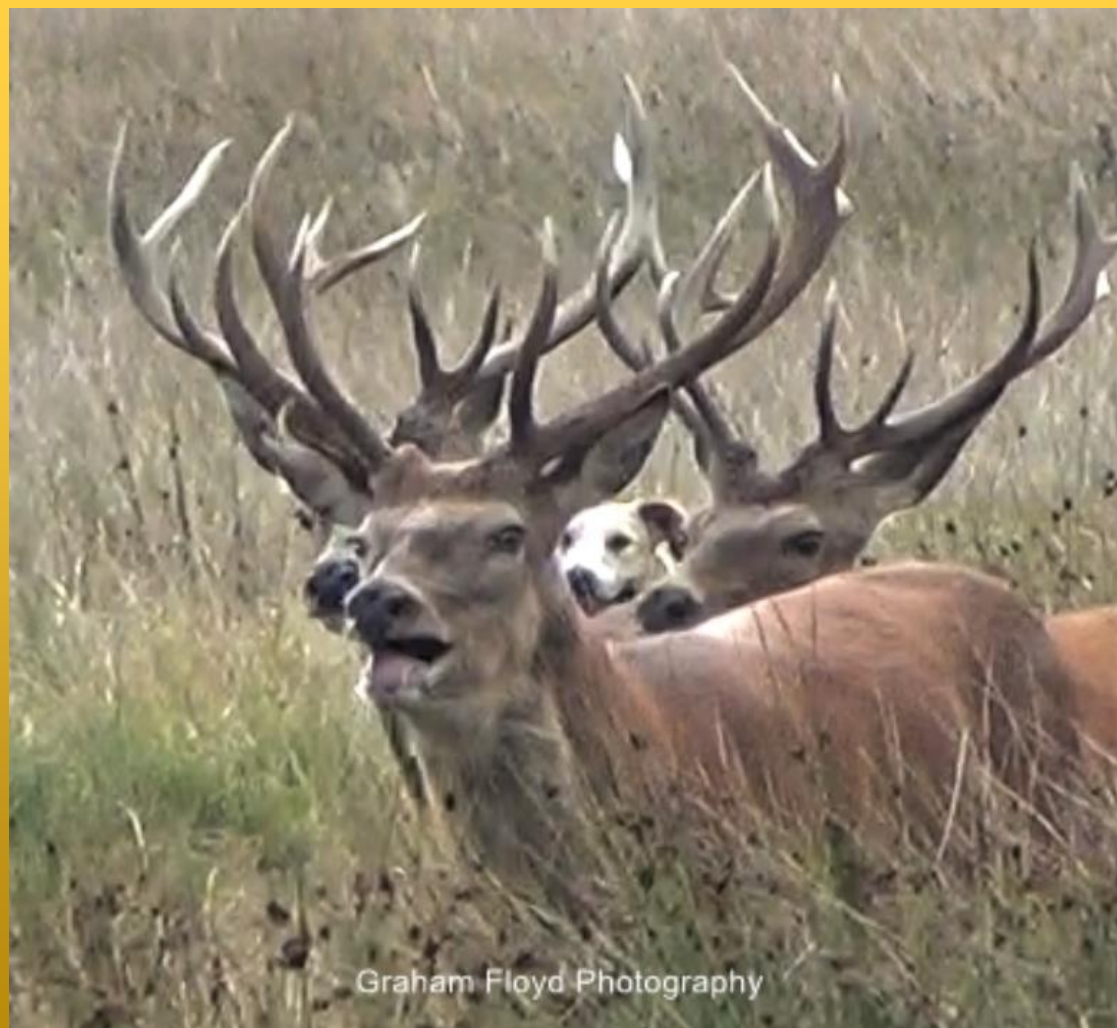
The Locations

- Stag hunting takes place exclusively in Devon and Somerset
- Exmoor
- The Quantocks



The Law

- The Hunting Act made it illegal to pursue a wild mammal with any number of dogs
- The CHASE itself is illegal



Graham Floyd Photography

Exempt Hunting

- The TWO DOG RULE
- It is legal to use no more than two dogs to flush an animal to guns
- It is legal to use no more than two dogs to hunt for the purpose of “research and observation”.

How they get around the law

- The stag hunts use two dogs in relay
- They have a van load of other dogs, who will be deployed in pairs to chase the stag.
- Is this legal? We don't think so.



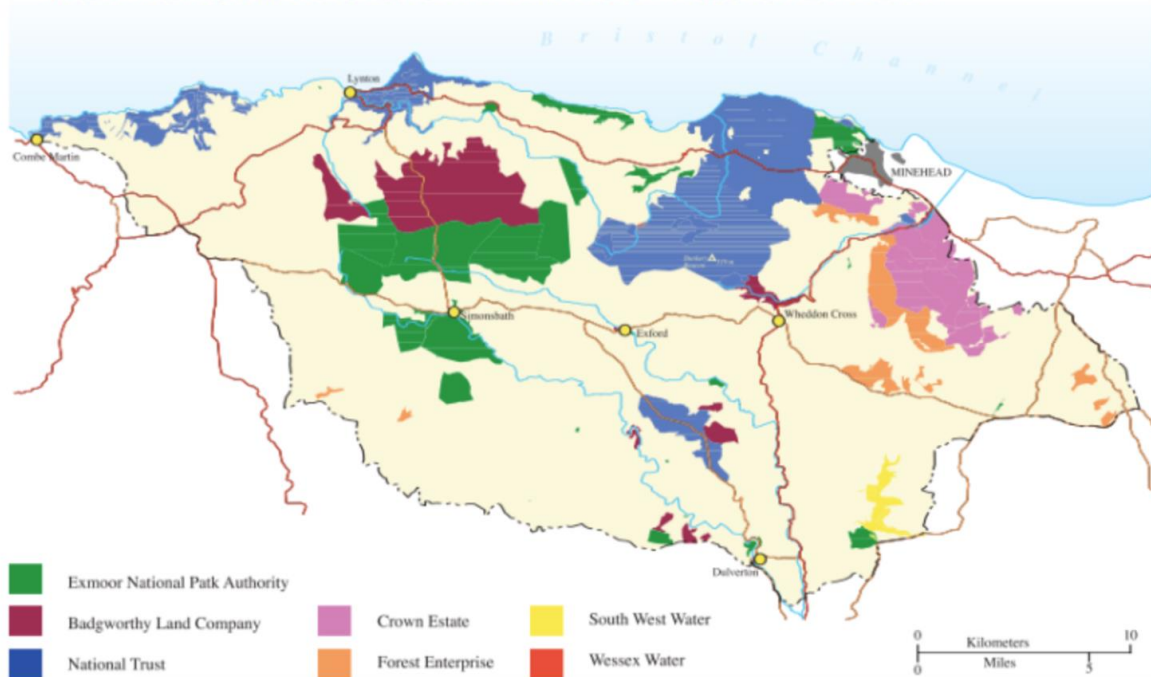
What they do on the day of a stag hunt

- A stag is pre-selected by a “harbourer” – a member of hunt staff
- The stag is separated from the others
- He is chased to exhaustion by the dogs and the hunt followers
- The chase can last several hours
- When he can run no longer, he gives up (often in water)
- He is shot
- He is carved up and taken home in pieces by the hunt

The Landowners

- Both the QUANTOCKS and EXMOOR are owned by a number of different organisations and individuals.
- Some allow hunting on their land, and some don't.
- Exempt Hunting becomes **illegal hunting** if it takes place on land where the hunts have no permission to be
- National Trust, Lacs, Forestry England, the Woodlands Trust, Wessex Water and South West Water don't allow hunting.
- The Crown Estate, anything owned by the Badgworthy Land Company, Friends of the Quantocks* are all pro hunt and all allow hunting.

Main landowners within Exmoor National Park



How we can challenge them

- The hunts do what they do openly – and everyone just assumes that it's somehow all completely legal
- This includes the police and tourists
- But they are on very uncertain ground as the law is vague (especially with regard to “research and observation”)
- Hence our legal review



DEAR FRIEND

Every year stags are forced to endure hours of unimaginable cruelty as they are chased across Exmoor & The Quantocks, before being killed by one of the three remaining stag hunts in the country.

Loopholes in the law are allowing them to get away with this senseless violence but our campaign aims to expose and end stag hunting for good.

www.actionagainstagstaghunting.co.uk

What can you do about it?

- Sign up for our updates
- Follow us on Facebook
- Write to your MP
- Report stag hunts to police and landowners
- Complain to the tourist boards

Our website (see QR code above) gives you all the help you need



It's not just hunting

- Road traffic offences
- Quadbike offences
- Trespass
- Armed trespass
- Other animal welfare legislation

To Conclude

- Whatever the law, most people object to stag hunting because it is unimaginably cruel
- In AAS, we are challenging the hunts in all areas – the law, tourism, public opinion, animal cruelty
- We are building on the work that has been done by monitors, sabs, campaigning groups and individuals.

We plan on winning and
won't give up until we do.



QUESTIONS??

