



Stormont bill to outlaw barbaric hunting with dogs passes second stage

Description

default watermark

Hunting with Dogs Bill – Stormont

A bill that would outlaw the cruel practice of hunting wild mammals with dogs has now reached the committee stage at Stormont. Moreover, the [Hunting with Dogs Bill](#) sets out to:

– prohibit hunting wild mammals with dogs; to prohibit trail hunting; to prohibit terrier work; and to set out exemptions from these prohibitions.

It was introduced by Alliance party MLA John Blair at the [end of April](#). Additionally, it passed the second stage of the legislative process by [60 votes to 15](#). The League Against Cruel Sports (the League) and the Ulster Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (USPCA) celebrated the bill's progression. They said they were:

– delighted that MLAs have seen through scare tactics;

These included feeble attempts by opponents to suggest dog walking and lawful protection of livestock would be criminalised.

In Stormont, Democratic Unionist MLA Tom Buchanan [repeated these distortions](#), claiming the bill was "vague" and would "criminalise rural life" – sure.

However, Blair made it clear that the bill still enabled farmers to use a gun to stop foxes attacking livestock.

DUP dinosaurs endorse cruel so-called "sport"

In addition, he pointed out that in Britain, where [fox hunting has been banned](#) there have been no prosecutions for dog walkers whose animal set off after a fox. However, the DUP and Traditional Unionist Voice (TUV) remain determined to exist decades behind the rest of the planet. These are the only parties to vote against the bill.

Aine Murphy of Sinn Féin said the party would back the bill to ensure its progression to committee stage. She expressed some reservations about whether it allowed farmers to lawfully engage in wildlife management. Moreover, Robbie Butler of the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) said:

The UUP is broadly supportive of the principles underpinning [the] bill.

[Presenting the bill for its second stage](#) Blair immediately set out the reality of the cruelty inherent to the so-called sport, saying:

I'm about to paint a very graphic picture for members and I make no apologies for it, because we need to face the facts and the cruelty behind this debate, and be truthful about what this practice truly is.

A wild mammal such a fox is pursued over a long distance by a pack of dogs until the point of exhaustion. If caught it will be torn apart by the hounds. If it manages to escape, it may still be left severely injured, traumatised and bleed to death.

In some cases if the animal goes to ground, terriers are sent underground to flush it out, prolonging suffering further still.

â??Faces stapled togetherâ?• â?? dogs suffering too

The Alliance party representative said the horror doesn't merely extend to what the fox suffers, but the dogs used can often sustain horrendous injuries too. He said this occurs:

â??particularly when an animal fights back or during terrier work underground.

He said these dogs often receive â??inadequate treatmentâ?• for the wounds they endure. In addition, he spoke of reports from vets describing â??terriers with their faces stapled togetherâ?•. Blair spoke of poor general welfare for hounds used in the barbaric so-called â??sport,â?? saying animal welfare groups have compiled reports of malnutrition endured by these animals. He said there was also:

â??filmed evidence of healthy hounds being shot in the head when they are no longer considered useful for hunting.

Hunting dogs are generally considered past their prime at just six years old. This mirrors the horrific sort of practices found in another cruel â??sportâ?? yet to be banned in the North of Ireland. For instance, see [greyhound racing](#)

The South Antrim MLA highlighted the contradiction of pro-hunting groups. They claim that dogs are beloved family pets and that huge numbers would need to be immediately euthanised if the bill passes. Hardly a way to treat a cherished part of the family.

Blair went on to cite the "biosecurity concerns" hunting with dogs creates. These stem from delightful-sounding instances of "hounds contracting parasites from raw carcasses". Furthermore, the practice of hunts roaming across vast tracts of countryside then leads to potentially widespread contamination. This includes contamination of livestock.

Huge majority in North of Ireland back ban

These marauding bands of sadists continuing a colonial practice also [wreck fields and hedges as they go](#) disturb other animals and block roads. Blair said he:

"regularly heard from farm landowners and country residents who don't want hunts on or near their land.

This indicates, in line with [existing polling](#) in the North of Ireland, that rural people largely despise the cruel practice. Besides, a consultation on this legislation received [mammoth 12,000 responses](#) in the North of Ireland. That is far more than typically received on Stormont bills. 72% of residents from the north of Ireland who responded oppose hunting wild mammals with dogs.

The bill also seeks to close loopholes exploited in places where a ban exists, banning trail hunting and terrier work. [Trail hunting is not banned in England](#) and is often used as a means to hunt foxes under the guise of a legal practice.

If the Stormont bill passes, offenders will potentially face 12 months in jail or up to a Â£20,000 fine in a magistrates court. However, in a crown court, the fine will be unlimited and time behind bars could be five years.

Graeme Robertson/Getty Images

By [Robert Freeman](#)

[Source link](#)

CATEGORY

- News

Category

- News