

BRITISH PUBLIC OPINION ON HUNTING

Laws affecting the rights of a minority should never be decided by the superficial opinion of the majority. However, politicians and the anti-hunt lobby, in the absence of logical arguments, have repeatedly claimed that their mandate for a ban is “the will of the people”.

Anti-hunting MPs frequently repeated claims of "clear public support" for a ban on hunting, with “70% of the public” being the most frequently quoted figure. The evidence contained within this document clearly shows that these claims, if they were ever supportable, are completely out of date.

The analysis reveals that:

- 1. There is no clear majority of public opinion for a ban on hunting – support for a ban has been declining since 1997**
- 2. The general public consider that hunting legislation should be a low priority for government action**
- 3. Legislation to ban hunting is rejected by those who know most about it and by people who live in rural areas**

1. There is no clear majority of public opinion for a ban on hunting – support for a ban has been declining since 1997:

23/05/2004 ORB Countryside Alliance	'the government should insist that hunting is banned completely'	'the government should allow hunting to continue subject to licensing and regulation'	'the government should drop the issue and allow hunting to continue as it is now'	no view
	38%	37%	20%	4%
28/09/2003 ICM Countryside Alliance	'the government should insist that hunting is banned completely'	'the government should allow hunting to continue subject to licensing system'	'the government should drop the issue and allow hunting to continue as it is now'	no view
	38%	30%	24%	8%
18/07/2003 ICM Countryside Alliance	'the government should insist that hunting is banned completely'	'the government should allow hunting to continue subject to a strict licensing system'	'the government should drop the issue and allow hunting to continue as it is now'	no view
	39%	38%	19%	3%
15/12/2002 NOP Countryside Alliance	'hunting should not be allowed to continue at all as cruelty is more important to me than civil liberties'	'allowing hunting to continue under regulation would strike a balance between civil liberties and animal welfare'	'hunting should be allowed to continue as it is now because it is essentially a matter of civil liberties'	no view
	36%	41%	18%	5%
27/10/2002 NOP Countryside Alliance	'hunting should be made a criminal offence'	'hunting with dogs should be controlled by a Government licensing scheme'	'hunting should remain as it is – subject to self-regulation'	no view
	43%	28%	26%	3%
27/09/2002 YouGov Telegraph	'hunting should be banned completely'	'hunting should be licensed by an independent authority'	'hunting should carry on as now'	no view
	50%	30%	18%	2%
24/03/2002 NOP Countryside Alliance	'the government should insist on a ban on hunting'	'the government should now insist on both sides compromising'	'it is now time that the government dropped the issue completely'	no view
	48%	23%	25%	4%
18/03/2002 MORI CPHA	'support government bringing in a ban'		'oppose government bringing in a ban'	no view
	62%		26%	12%
01/03/2002 NOP Countryside Alliance	'hunting with dogs should be made a criminal offence'	'hunting should continue under a licensing system'	'hunting should continue in its present form'	no view
	48%	27%	22%	3%
08/06/2001 MORI Economist	'support a ban on foxhunting'		'oppose a ban on foxhunting'	no view
	57%		31%	11%
22/04/2001 NOP Countryside Alliance	'hunting should be made a criminal offence'	'hunting should be controlled by a new regulatory authority'	'hunting should remain subject to its own existing system of self-regulation'	no view
	37%	36%	22%	5%
18/03/2001 MORI Mail on Sunday	'support a ban on hunting with dogs in Britain'		'oppose a ban on hunting with dogs in Britain'	no view
	63%		24%	13%
31/12/2000 MORI Mail on Sunday	'support a ban on hunting with dogs'		'oppose a ban on hunting with dogs in Britain'	no view
	59%		23%	17%
14/12/2000 NOP Powerhouse	'hunting should be banned'	'hunting should continue under a statutory body'	'hunting should carry on as now'	no view
	48%	37%	14%	1%
15/07/1999 MORI Mail on Sunday	'support a ban on hunting with dogs in Britain'		'oppose a ban on hunting with dogs in Britain'	no view
	63%		24%	13%
26/12/1998 MORI CPHA	'in favour of a ban on hunting with dogs'		'opposed to a ban on hunting with dogs'	no view
	66%		21%	13%
28/10/1997 MORI CPHA	'believe hunting should be stopped'			
	73%			

2. The general public consider that hunting legislation should be a low priority for the Government:

25/04/2004 NOP Countryside Alliance	'Which of the following do you consider to be the most important for the Government to tackle? Hunting:'	1%
15/12/2003 NOP Countryside Alliance	'Which of the following do you consider to be the most important for the Government to tackle? Hunting:'	2%
25/05/2003 NOP Countryside Alliance	'Which of the following issues do you consider to be most important for the government to tackle? Hunting:'	2%
24/09/2002 MORI NSPCC	'Which issue is the most important for government to tackle? A ban on foxhunting:'	4%
30/04/2000 MORI Mail on Sunday	'What would you say are the most important issues facing Britain today? Animal welfare/fox hunting:'	0.5%
23/07/1999 NOP Countryside Alliance	'Do you see hunting as priority legislation? Yes:'	5%

3. Legislation to ban hunting is rejected by those who know most about it and by people who live in rural areas:

21/10/2001 NOP Poll of rural Wales Countryside Alliance	'hunting should be made a criminal offence'	'hunting should be allowed to continue under a system of government licensing'	'hunting should be allowed to continue without supervision or subject to independent supervision'	no view
	33%	25%	39%	3%
19/07/2001 NOP Poll of rural vets Countryside Alliance	'support a total ban on hunting'	'support hunting with dogs subject to statutory regulation'	'support self regulation of hunting subject to independent supervision'	no view
	24%	32%	34%	10%
05/04/2000 MORI Poll of rural communities Burns Report	'opposed to hunting continuing'		'hunting should continue'	no view
	25%		52%	23%

Public Support for a Ban on Hunting

This graph should not be used as a stand alone document. It must only be used in conjunction with the accompanying table 1

