

CARTED DEER HUNTING

An Irish Council Against Blood Sports Factsheet

Carted deer hunting is a cruel "sport" which causes horrific suffering to defenceless red deer. It subjects the deer - captive bred specifically for the abuse - to a distressing ordeal, leaving them exhausted, injured and severely at risk of dying from heart failure.

The red deer used are taken from a herd which is privately owned by the Ward Union hunt. This hunt is based in Dunshaughlin, County Meath.

Every Tuesday and Friday between November and mid-March, two deer (stags or hinds) are taken out in a cart to a hunt location. They have their antlers sawn off to prevent injuries being caused to the dogs and the manhandlers who wrestle them to the ground at the end of each hunt.

One deer is turned out of the trailer, and forced to run. The other is kept as a spare in case the first deer is caught too soon.

During the hunt, the deer is at risk of sustaining injuries as it frantically



A deer with its antlers cut off nervously waits for the hunt to begin.



Exhausted and injured: At the end of the hunt, the deer is dragged back to the hunt's trailer. It will be abused again in a future hunt.

ly tries to outrun the horseback riders and the pack of dogs. Being in unfamiliar terrain, the deer has an extremely hazardous route ahead.

Crashing through hedges, over walls, across busy public roads and even into lakes and rivers, the terrified creature does everything it can to stay ahead.

A Department of Agriculture Veterinary Inspector who monitored a Ward Union hunt wrote: "One stag was seen attempting to jump a very high fence and getting his front leg caught on a top strand of barbed wire and hanging, thus suspended, for some seconds before his struggles and/or weight tore him free."

He also outlined how a stag "having run at least 8 miles in 90 minutes showed extreme physical distress, panting through its mouth and

with a lather of white foam around its muzzle."

Reported fatalities highlighted how one deer died of an aneurism while another was "accidentally" choked to death during capture.

In a suppressed 1997 document (only obtained by ICABS in Autumn 2003), another Department of Agriculture Veterinary Inspector concluded that the deer-hunt was "inhumane".

Yet, no action was taken to stop the hunt

which, we contend, is in breach of the 1911 Protection of Animals Act.

ICABS continues to call for a complete ban on this barbarism which surely should have no place in a civilised society.

We have appealed to the Minister for Agriculture, who is well aware of the cruelty involved, to follow the example of her counterparts in Northern Ireland who outlawed a similar hunt, the County Down Staghounds, in 1997. It was ruled that the deer used by that carted deer hunt were domestic animals and thus covered by animal welfare legislation.



Desperate to escape, a deer slips and falls as the hounds close in.

How can I help end this blood sport?

Please appeal to Minister John Gormley (his department issues an annual licence to the Ward Union deerhunt under the 1976 Wildlife Act) and Minister Mary Coughlan (she is responsible for the Protection of Animals Act) to end carted deer hunting.

Minister John Gormley
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Email: minister@environ.ie
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Minister Mary Coughlan
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For more information about carted deer hunting, please visit our website at www.banbloodsports.com