

I regularly monitor fox hunts in Scotland. I felt compelled to start going out to monitor hunts as I believe them to be hunting illegally on a regular basis. Since I first started monitoring hunts I have seen them break the law more times than I can count. Unfortunately the police do not seem interested and it is so difficult to get evidence of illegal hunting that it's impossible to get a hunt prosecuted.

I have witnessed fox hunts encourage hounds to hunt in cover where there is no guns in position on a regular basis. There is the odd occasion that there will be a gun man but this is unusual and in those cases it is only one or two people with guns, so there isn't enough people covering every possible escapes point that a fox may use. I have also witnessed gun men near cover, apparently waiting for the hunt to enter the hounds to flush from, but then the have hunt ridden past the cover with the gun men and hunt in another area of cover where there is no guns. I assume this is an attempt to mislead anyone watching to believe that they are acting legally.

A hunt will hunt in several areas of cover during a days hunting, sometimes moving on very quickly. In order for them to be hunting legally the gun men would have to be in position before the hounds enter cover, yet not only can I not see any guns in position, but I cannot see guns get into position, or even any nearby vehicles which guns could have travelled in. If they were genuinely flushing to guns then I would expect to see the gun men arriving and leaving areas of cover. As I cannot see any evidence of guns arriving, in position, or leaving their position I do not believe that they are present.

I was once in woods when the huntsman came into the woods on foot. When the hounds picked up on the scent of a fox he encouraged them to hunt using horn and voice calls. The huntsman could not keep up with his hounds as he was on foot so was unable to properly monitor and control the hounds. The hounds ended up running through fields and across a busy road. I don't believe that there was any guns in position at this woodland, and if there was they made no attempt to stop the hounds from running off on their own, apparently in pursuit of a fox.

The current law makes it next to impossible to prove that a hunt is acting illegally as the hunt can just claim that they did have guns in position but that they were not seen by anyone filming.

I have two videos on CDs filmed by myself showing what typically happens at a Scottish fox hunt. The hunt were unaware that they were being filmed in both clips. It is the Fife Foxhounds in both videos.

Description of events in Video 1 -

Video from 23/01/16 00012 - Video starts with the horn being blown and voice calls to encourage the hounds to hunt the line of a fox. The hunt are riding through a field, the hounds are close to the hunt and huntsman, they ARE NOT in cover or near cover.

00:55 - Hounds enter a gorse thicket after running through an open field, they are some distance from the huntsman who has taken another route. No sign of guns waiting to shoot anything that may be flushed from the gorse.

1:30 - Huntsman [REDACTED] and Whipper-in [REDACTED] get to where the hounds are. No obvious attempt to gather hounds

3:25 - Hounds in cry and run past the Whipper-in and up hill into another gorse thicket, again no sign of guns and no attempt to call hounds back. Even if there was guns at that particular thicket it would not be a safe place to shoot as there is several people on horses at the top end of the thicket and the whipper-in is at the bottom end.

4:15 - The whipper-in appears to be waving or pointing in a certain direction, presumably he is pointing out where he has seen a fox go.

4:35 - Hounds are in field with huntsman and whipper-in. The horn is being blown to encourage the hounds to hunt. Hounds enter cover with no sign of guns. Again there are multiple people on horses near the thicket so not safe for shooting

4:55 - Hounds start to come out of cover and into an open field, seemingly following the scent of a fox.

5:20 - Hounds running fast through field. Huntsman and whipper-in enter the field then go in opposite direction to the hounds. No attempt to call the hounds off the fox.

6:12 - Hounds following a scent on hill opposite to where the camera person is. The hunt are quite some distance away so wont even be able to see the hounds or keep them under control.

7:45 - Hounds still on their own following scent. No sign of guns. No attempt by the hunt to get the hounds back.

8:15 - Huntsman and whipper-in finally in the same field as hounds, although the hounds are some distance ahead of the hunt staff

9:05 - A hunt supporters car is seen driving onto the hill where the hounds are.

10:10 - The hounds are still following the scent. The huntsman and whipper-in can be seen riding very slowly through a field

11:11 - The hunt including huntsman and whipper-in are riding away from where the hounds are and towards a jump

Right from the start the hounds are being encouraged to chase a fox which was most likely seen by the hunt. The hounds are repeatedly following the scent in open fields and when they do enter cover they are most often on their own with no members of the hunt nearby. No gun men are seen at all, there isn't even any vehicles seen parked which could potentially have been used to transport gun men. As the hounds are entering cover on their own with no supervision or instruction after following a scent it seems very unlikely that there is any waiting gun men as no one would have any way of knowing that the hounds were going to enter any particular cover before hand. The hunt make absolutely no attempt to gather the hounds and just allow them to continue hunting.

(Other details about this day- the hunt is Fife Foxhounds, they met at [REDACTED]. When the hunt had finished for the day they were observed back at the farm. The terrier man for the hunt [REDACTED] was seen to empty a bag, it contained the remains of a fox. The huntsman [REDACTED] handles a part of the dead fox then puts it back in the bag. It is not known how the fox died but the hounds had obviously been allowed to bite at the carcass as it was so badly damaged.)

Discription of events in video 2

Video from 11/11/15 00008 – 00:00 - Hounds are running ahead of huntsman towards the corner of woodland

00:30 - Hounds running across field near to huntsman

1:05 - Hounds enter gorse, under control of huntsman

1:40 - Whipper-in and other riders come into view

3:20 - Hounds are visible at the bottom of the gorse thicket but no sign of any guns, as the hounds are so clearly visible I would assume that a human would also be visible there

3:30 - Two terrier men on quadbikes come into the field, these men have guns with them but are following the hunt rather than going ahead and getting into a position where they can shoot anything that the hounds may flush from cover. By this point there is a lot of people on horses in the field which would make it a lot more difficult for any gun men to shoot safely should any foxes be flushed from the gorse.

4:05 - Most of the pack is back with the huntsman

4:25 - Hounds enter gorse again

5:05 - Terrier men still driving their quads in the field

This video shows that the huntsman can control his hounds, they are close to him the whole time and at 4:05 the pack return to him.

No guns can be seen. The only people who have guns in the field are the two terrier men but they arrive after the hounds have entered the cover and they don't get off their quadbikes. When the hounds get to the bottom end of the gorse thicket at 3:20 the hounds can be clearly seen but no gun men can be seen, as a hound is a lot smaller than a human I would assume that a human standing there would also be visible.

It would be dangerous if anyone was to try shooting in that field as there is so many people riding in the field.

(Other details about this day – The hunt was the Fife Foxhounds and the meet was at [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] The Huntsman is [REDACTED] the Terrier men are [REDACTED] and
[REDACTED])