

Polling

The Countryside Alliance claim that a poll conducted in December 2002 showed that “59% say Keep Hunting” has been strongly criticised by independent marketing experts¹ who described it as having “flawed logic, ambiguity and potentially biased wording,” and recommended that its results should be “discounted as measures of public opinion.

Their specific criticisms were:

- that the 59% figure includes 18% who believed “Hunting should be allowed to continue because it is essentially a matter of civil liberties” as well as 41% who believed that “Allowing hunting to continue under regulation would strike a balance between civil liberties and animal welfare.”
- that the term “under regulation” could be interpreted by some people as a near complete ban but by others as no ban at all. Therefore “*given this potential confusion, responses to this question should neither be counted as supporting hunting nor being against it.*”

It could be argued that the desire to “keep hunting” is only truly represented by this smaller group.

MORI has conducted a number of studies over the last four years on behalf of the Campaign to Protect Hunted Animals (CPHA) and also conducted related work on behalf of the media and for the 2000 Burns Inquiry.

John Leaman of MORI comments “Since 1997 – when Michael Foster MP’s Private Members’ Bill received record support in its Commons Second Reading vote – these polls have shown repeatedly that a majority of the British public wish to see hunting with dogs banned. Support for a ban is based primarily on the belief that hunting is cruel (not only to the hunted animals, but to those used in the pursuit). Five years ago, seven in 10 members of the British public (and about the same proportion of MPs) supported Michael Foster’s Private Member’s Bill which sought to ban hunting. Today, after all the debates, publicity and rhetoric, we still find that far more people support a ban on hunting than oppose it. Typically, public opinion in regard to a hunting ban runs at between 2:1 and 3:1 in favour.”

In December 2002 a MORI poll found that 80% of the British public thinks that hunting wild mammals with dogs is cruel.

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