| Police Scotland logo | Freedom of Information Response Our reference: FOI 25-1019  Responded to: 23 April 2025 |
| --- | --- |

Your recent request for information is replicated below, together with our response.

## How many reports of illegal hunting have you received?

The information sought is held by Police Scotland, but I am refusing to provide it in terms of section 16(1) of the Act on the basis that the section 25(1) exemption applies:

“Information which the applicant can reasonably obtain other than by requesting it […] is exempt information”.

The information sought is publicly available and I have provided a link below. Please use this to search for “hunting with dogs”.

## [Crime data - Police Scotland](https://www.scotland.police.uk/about-us/how-we-do-it/crime-data/)

## How much evidence of illegal hunting have you received?

We have interpreted your question to be fox hunting in the context of the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Act 2023.

Since the Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Act 2023 became enforceable, there have been 11 illegal fox hunting incidents reported to, and investigated by, Police Scotland.

## What steps have you taken over proof of illegal hunting?

If Police Scotland receives information to suggest an offence has been committed, then we would carry out the necessary enquiries and review evidence provided to us to establish if there has been any criminality. If so, we conduct thorough investigations to secure further evidence and bring any offenders to justice.

## How many times have you monitored hunting packs?

This is the responsibility of the licensing authority, NatureScot. It is not Police Scotland’s responsibility to monitor hunting groups.

## When are you going to bring charges against illegal hunting which is taking place in the south of Scotland when you have had evidence of breaches of the hunting act?

Having considered your request in terms of the Freedom of Information (Scotland) Act 2002, I am refusing to confirm or deny whether the information sought exists or is held by Police Scotland in terms of section 18 of the Act.

Section 18 applies where the following two conditions are met:

- It would be contrary to the public interest to reveal whether the information is held

- If the information was held, it would be exempt from disclosure in terms of one or more of the exemptions set out in sections 28 to 35, 38, 39(1) or 41 of the Act.

In this instance, if the information was held, sections 34(1) (b), 35(1)(a) and (b) of the Act would apply insofar as you have requested informationwhich is exempt from disclosure where it is assessed that disclosure would contravene the data protection principles as defined in the Act.

In addition, to disclose whether or not information was held would confirm whether or not the circumstances referred to were in some way known to Police Scotland.

## When is the only person to be charged with illegal hunting going to court?

Police Scotland does not hold criminal conviction/ prosecution data and Section 17 of the Act therefore applies. You may wish to contact the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) and/ or the Scottish Courts Service.

## Some hunts continue to go out with full packs of dogs and when monitors are present they continue with two dogs but still do not flush to guns as required by law.

If this situation is reported to Police Scotland and there is sufficient evidence to suggest a crime has taken place then we would investigate.

## What steps have you taken to ensure illegal hunting is not taking place?

Police Scotland are working closely with the licensing authority NatureScot and are enforcing this legislation when illegal fox hunting incidents are reported to us.

If you require any further assistance, please contact us quoting the reference above.

You can request a review of this response within the next 40 working days by [email](mailto:foi@scotland.police.uk) or by letter (Information Management - FOI, Police Scotland, Clyde Gateway, 2 French Street, Dalmarnock, G40 4EH). Requests must include the reason for your dissatisfaction.

If you remain dissatisfied following our review response, you can appeal to the Office of the Scottish Information Commissioner (OSIC) within 6 months - [online](https://www.foi.scot/appeal), by [email](mailto:enquiries@foi.scot) or by letter (OSIC, Kinburn Castle, Doubledykes Road, St Andrews, KY16 9DS).

Following an OSIC appeal, you can appeal to the Court of Session on a point of law only.

This response will be added to our [Disclosure Log](http://www.scotland.police.uk/access-to-information/freedom-of-information/disclosure-log) in seven days' time.

Every effort has been taken to ensure our response is as accessible as possible. If you require this response to be provided in an alternative format, please let us know.