



## UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

The Old School, Brewhouse Hill, Wheathampstead, Hertfordshire AL4 8AN, UK.  
Tel: +44(0)1582 831818 Fax: +44(0)1582 831414  
Website: <http://www.ufaw.org.uk>  
Email: [ufaw@ufaw.org.uk](mailto:ufaw@ufaw.org.uk)

### **PRESS RELEASE 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2005**

#### **Findings of the first attempt to estimate likely fox wounding rates resulting from shooting**

The findings of the first study to attempt to assess potential wounding rates in foxes, resulting from shooting, is reported in the May 2005 edition of '*Animal Welfare*', the scientific quarterly published by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare. In this study, experienced and inexperienced shooters were asked to shoot at anatomically-correct, artificial, fox targets, that were presented to them for 3-4 seconds, using either shotguns and rifles, from different ranges and using different types of ammunition. The number of targets hit and the nature of the injury likely to have been caused as a result – killed outright, seriously wounded and lightly wounded were then scored.

In the UK it is legal to shot foxes with any type of rifle, shotgun or airgun and with any ammunition. No prior experience of shooting is necessary. It has been reported that, prior to the recent passing of the Hunting Act, at least 80,000 foxes were killed each year through being shot, based upon the number of bodies retrieved and that not every fox that is shot is killed instantly. This is of welfare concern, as any shots which are not immediately fatal may cause suffering and result in the protracted death of the fox.

Extrapolating from the type of injuries scored on the targets, the authors of the study conclude that the type of gun and ammunition used, the range from which the shot is taken and the skill and experience of the shooter are likely to be significant factors in determining numbers of foxes killed and wounded from shooting.

The authors suggest that their study allows a killing 'tax' to be calculated for shooting, based upon the wounding rate per animal killed and that this 'tax' can be used to make comparisons with other methods of killing, such as trapping, snaring or hunting with dogs. They also suggest that the application of standards and controls varies, and that welfare is treated as a secondary priority over efficiency in many cases. They recommend that the Government consider amending their existing guidelines on the shooting of foxes in light of their findings and ask whether standard welfare benchmarks of acceptability should be established for all methods of killing wildlife.

**Ends**

#### **Notes to Editors**

*Wounding rates in shooting foxes (Vulpes vulpes)* by NC Fox, N Blay, AG Greenwood, D Wise and E Potapov, *Animal Welfare* 2005, Vol 14: 93-102

**For more details and for copies of the report, please contact UFAW's Chief Executive and Scientific Director, Dr James Kirkwood. Tel: 01582 831818. Mobile: 07841 701805**

#### **SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE**

Scientific Director: James K Kirkwood BVSc PhD CBiol FIBiol MRCVS  
Secretary: Donald C Davidson

Registered Charity No. 207996 (Registered in England) and Company Limited by Guarantee No. 579991

## **Notes to Editors (cont)**

Other reports in this issue of *Animal Welfare* include:

- Effect of supplementary ultraviolet lighting on the behaviour and corticosterone levels of Japanese quail chicks  
*EL Smith, VJ Greenwood, AR Goldsmith and IC Cuthill*
- Bowhunting deer  
*NG Gregory*
- The effect of breeding schemes on the genetic response of canine hip dysplasia, elbow dysplasia, behaviour traits and appearance  
*K Mäki, A-E Liinama, AF Groen, P Bijma and M Ojala*
- The effects of rearing conditions on grooming and play behaviour in captive chimpanzees  
*JE Martin*
- The use of a cat-flap at the nest entrance to mimic natural conditions in the breeding of fattening rabbits (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*)  
*P Baumann, H Oester and M Stauffacher*
- The influence of visual stimulation on the behaviour of dogs housed in a rescue shelter  
*L Graham, DL Wells and PG Hepper*
- Nest-building behaviour in male rats from three inbred strains: BN/HsdCpb, BDIX/Or1Ico and LEW/Mol  
*IM Jegstrup, R Vestergaard, W Vach and M Ritskes-Hoitinga*

*Animal Welfare* is published four times a year by the Universities Federation for Animal Welfare. If you would like a copy of the issue in which this report appears, or to be put on our press list, please contact UFAW (details above).

---

## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE**

UFAW, founded in 1926, is an internationally recognised, independent, scientific and educational animal welfare charity concerned with promoting high standards of welfare for farm, companion, laboratory and captive wild animals, and for those animals with which we interact in the wild. It works to improve animals' lives by:

- Promoting and supporting developments in the science and technology that underpin advances in animal welfare
- Promoting education in animal care and welfare
- Providing information, organising meetings, and publishing books, videos, articles, technical reports and the journal *Animal Welfare*
- Providing expert advice to government departments and other bodies and helping to draft and amend laws and guidelines
- Enlisting the energies of animal keepers, scientists, veterinarians, lawyers and others who care about animals

***"Improvements in the care of animals are not now likely to come of their own accord, merely by wishing them: there must be research ... and it is in sponsoring research of this kind, and making its results widely known, that UFAW performs one of its most valuable services."***

Sir Peter Medawar CBE FRS, 8th May 1957

Nobel Laureate (1960), Chairman of the UFAW Scientific Advisory Committee (1951-1962)