

Dear

I am writing today as your constituent because I am livid that hounders (people who use dogs to chase down wildlife so they can kill the them) act with impunity in Vermont. In recent months, **hounders have allowed their dogs to [attack hikers and their dog](#), [traumatize children and cause property damage](#), frighten animals and their caretakers at two different animal sanctuaries, and most recently injure a dog by breaking its jaw while it was trapped in a leg hold trap.** Usually these incidents happen while the human “hunter” (if you can really call them that) is miles away using a GPS that’s connected to the hounds’ collars.

Hounding is glorified dog fighting. Dog fighting is illegal in this state. Often the dogs run wildlife to exhaustion and when the hounder catches up, the animal may be non-lethally injured by the hounder. The hounds then get to “chew on” the animal for a while (as one hounder put it) as their reward. Much of the time, the hounders aren’t with their dogs as they chase, terrorize, attack, injure and potentially kill wildlife, other animals and people who get in their path.

Not only are these hounders cruel to wildlife (though cruelty laws don’t apply to hunters/trappers), they are also **known to neglect their own dogs**. One of the dogs that entered the sanctuary looked emaciated and tattered (see the attached picture of the hound with its ribs showing and wounds on its legs). I was told that the [hikers who were attacked](#) talked to the hounder who’s dogs attacked them and their dog. The hounder’s remedy was to identify the dog that attacked them and then punch the dog in the face.

Each time the Fish & Wildlife Dept. is called in, but there is **no recourse, even for those people who post their land properly**. Posting is complicated and impossible for some people who own large swaths of land and/or are elderly or disabled. ([See article about posting land.](#)) Hounders’ defense for their trespass is that dogs can’t read. The result, land posted against hunting and trapping is not protected from hounders. Further, this cannot be a few bad apples as the Fish & Wildlife Dept. attempts to portray them each time. What are the chances this would happen to two of my friends who run animal sanctuaries in different parts of the state within months of each other? More likely, it has been happening for years, but is now coming to light.

I ask you to protect people, wildlife and property rights by ending hounding in Vermont. I implore you to put forward legislation and do all that you can to get a bill passed by the legislature. Hounders should no longer be able to trespass on private lands and terrorize people, pets and wildlife with no recourse.

Sincerely,
Kristen Cameron
Burlington, Vermont

10/31/2019: News story about hounds attacking hikers and their dog:

<https://addisonindependent.com/news/bear-hunting-hounds-attack-hikers-and-pup>

2/26/2019: News story about hounds scaring children and causing property damage in Craftsbury:

<https://www.necn.com/news/local/vermont/animal-advocates-push-for-vt-coyote-hunting-regulations/1619/>

Article about posting land:

<https://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2019/12/03/hunting-private-property-posting-signs-vermont-law-hunters-landowners/2575563001/>

