

Biting the Bullet

Hunt Sabbing in Sweden

It's August 1999 and the Swedish direct action group Peace in the Forest is preparing for its second year of hunt sabbing. So, what's hunt sabbing like in Sweden then? Well, first of all it's a new phenomenon here, although I suppose only if you don't count the hundreds of hunting towers which get torn down every year! Actually I think we are the only and first hunt sab group 'over here' which initially was a problem, but here's an account of what we did...

We needed information so we checked out the hunt sab homepages in the UK, especially the Hunt Saboteurs Association (see page XXX for their contact details) which was really useful, and we also read some books on hunting. In Sweden every hunter has to have a license and they have to attend a course to get it—so we read that coursebook too. We then decided to concentrate



on the yearly hunt for the elk (moose) where they hunt it for a couple of weeks every autumn by posting a hidden hunter, and then, using dogs and men, they scare it towards the man with the gun.

some stupid car chases were some of the hunters tried to trick us away from the place. A woman from the documentary staff of the government controlled national television station and a camera man followed us during the whole day. We had had some discussion about whether or not to allow them to go with us, but we thought that they provided us with additional

security and as we had some confidence in her, we thought that if it could provide some inspiration for others, we would gain more involvement—remember hunt sabbing was new here.

The day ended with mixed emotions. In another part of the forest they had managed to shoot one mother elk with two young. But we have showed them a new threat to their murdering business. It is all so very real when you put your body between the animal and the hunter and his rifle. We also learned some things: to have better communication gear and one additional car.

We've had a lot of response from people all over Sweden and we've since met other people who are planning their own groups now. There is some hope, although I still get very very sad every time I hear a shot in the forest. One more mother dies, one more father is maimed. They won't get away with it. Not any more—we'll be back. For more details on hunt sabbing in Sweden e-mail Peace in the Forest at: staffan.melin@usa.net.se

We scouted an area near to where people lived in the centre of Sweden close to Stockholm. Because it's close to populated areas they are only allowed to hunt for five days each year. That way we figured we had a good chance of really making a practical difference. We had to do some undercover work in the town to get some details (along the lines of "Hi, my name is 'Jo' and every day I take my dog for a walk and I just wonder where you are going to hunt so I can take another path").

Next we assembled the group. We were going to hire a minibus so we figured eight people would be a good number. Then it would be easy for us to split up into two groups if necessary. Communication was to be handled by using two cellular phones. We set out for the action early one morning looking for hunters. We left a group in one end of the area, and the rest of us took the car to the other end. The plan was to walk towards the other group, scouting out hunters. But as we climbed out of the bus, we immediately discovered a hunter waiting with his car and his dog. We handed him an anti-hunt leaflet (which I think was a mistake as it was too early) and he took his car and drove away. We lost them in a short car chase.

We picked up the other group and started circling between the different potential hunting sites. Finally we found some of them. One man was sitting hidden between some bushes, overlooking a big field. So we occupied the field, making it impossible for him to fire. The other half of our group were involved in

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