

Betting industry condemned over greyhound deaths



The MPs' report condemned the betting industry's refusal to pay for all dogs that can no longer race to be rehomed Punchstock

Ben Webster Environment Editor

Last updated at 12:01AM, February 25 2016

Hundreds of greyhounds are still being killed in secret each year after being injured in races or because they are no longer considered fast enough, according to an MPs' report.

Up to 3,700 retired greyhounds are "unaccounted" for each year and the report condemned the betting industry's refusal to pay for all dogs that can no longer race to be rehomed. The industry only pays for rehoming of a quarter of those who stop racing.

A decade after *The Sunday Times* revealed that healthy greyhounds were being systematically killed and dumped in "canine killing fields", MPs have called for urgent steps to improve the welfare of dogs.

Hundreds of traumatised or emaciated former racing greyhounds are rescued by charities each year.

Greyt Exploitations, a welfare organisation, said last year that greyhounds were being treated appallingly, as if they were "disposable gambling chips".

The Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs committee criticised tracks for declining to publish information on the fate of greyhounds. It said that the absence of information made it harder to introduce measures to improve their welfare.

The Society of Greyhound Veterinarians told the committee: “By far the greatest single welfare issue of concern in the UK greyhound industry is the euthanasia of healthy greyhounds no longer required for racing.”

Legislation in 2010 required tracks to keep records of greyhounds injured during races but did not stipulate that they should be published. The committee called for rules forcing the industry to publish data on injuries, euthanasia and the rehoming of retired greyhounds.

It said: “The industry’s reluctance to go beyond the letter of what was required by the regulations . . . does not inspire confidence in its ability to self-regulate.”

The MPs said that after “prolonged conversations” with the industry they received aggregated figures from 22 out of 29 tracks showing that more than 2,000 dogs were injured and 1,000 put down from 2012 to 2014. Jim Fitzpatrick, a Labour member of the committee, said: “We simply do not know what is happening to all greyhounds after they finish racing. If the destruction of healthy dogs is on a large scale it is clear the industry should bear a greater financial responsibility for funding rehomed greyhounds.”

The report said that there had been a “marked increase” in the cost to charities of rehoming greyhounds because many arrived with health problems that required treatment. Dental disease was a major problem, it said.

The Greyhound Board of Great Britain, the industry’s governing body, said that the committee’s proposals on welfare were sensible and that it would do everything possible to respond to them. It added: “We are currently building a new database that will improve the quality and clarity of information relating to track injuries and euthanasia.”

A spokesman for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs said: “We are a nation of dog lovers and care deeply about their welfare, which is why all tracks in England must be run in line with the welfare of racing greyhounds regulations which include the compulsory attendance of a vet and the microchipping of all greyhounds.

“Enforcement is the responsibility of the Greyhound Board of Great Britain or relevant local authority. However, we recently undertook a consultation as part of a review of these regulations.”

Eduardo Goncalves, chief executive of the League Against Cruel Sports, said: “There are huge concerns about greyhound welfare that need to be addressed. Many of the dogs suffer a hard and lonely life, forced to train on treadmills and kept apart from other dogs.

“Do the report’s recommendations go far enough to solve these problems? We think

there's some way to go.”

Comments are subject to our community guidelines, which can be viewed [here](#).

© Times Newspapers Limited 2016 | Version 5.15.0.0(175087)

Registered in England No. 894646 Registered office:

1 London Bridge Street, SE1 9GF

[My Account](#) | [Editorial Complaints](#) | [RSS](#) | [Classified advertising](#) | [Display advertising](#) | [International print subscriptions](#) | [Encounters Dating](#) | [Sunday Times Wine Club](#) | [Privacy & Cookie Policy](#) | [Syndication](#) | [Site Map](#) | [FAQ](#) | [Terms & Conditions](#) | [Contact us](#) | [iPhone](#) | [Android smartphone](#) | [Android tablet](#) | [Kindle](#) | [Kindle Fire](#) | [Place an announcement in The Times](#) | [Sunday Times Driving](#) | [The Times Bookshop](#) | [Times Tutorials](#) | [Times Currency Services](#) | [Times Print Gallery](#) | [Handpicked Collection](#)
