

Conservation news supplement

Appendix

Full details of active cases and convictions mentioned in the wildlife crime section of November's Conservation news (BW 35: 152) are given below.

BIRDS OF PREY

Prosecution – Goshawk shooting:

Thomas Edward Jones, 38, appeared at Welshpool Magistrates court on 19 September 2023 and pleaded not guilty to the shooting and killing of a Schedule 1 wild bird (a Goshawk) in July 2022 at Pentre Farm, a commercial pheasant-rearing facility in north Powys. A trial will begin on 6 November 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/23u7tj3x>

Prosecution – Peregrine disturbance & egg theft:

Christopher Wheeldon, 34, of Lime Grove, Darley Dale, Matlock failed to attend Chesterfield Justice Centre on 16 October 2023 to face charges of taking the eggs of a Schedule 1 wild bird and disturbing the nesting site of a Schedule 1 wild bird following an incident at a Peregrine nesting site in Bolsover, Derbyshire in April 2023. A warrant has been issued for his arrest. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5cy2d82z>

Conviction - Possession of protected species (nine birds, two badgers, two otters): Kelvin Birtles of Saffron Road, Wigston appeared at Leicester Magistrates Court on 4 October 2023 and pleaded guilty to the possession of three Buzzards, four Tawny Owls, one Barn Owl, one Swan, two Badgers and two Otters which were found

in his freezer during a joint Police & Trading Standards raid in April 2023. Sentencing was deferred for a probation report and will be heard on 15 November 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yc538wrf>

Charges dropped – Goshawk trapping:

Two gamekeepers from the Hilborough Estate, Norfolk appeared at Norwich Magistrates Court on 17 October 2023 to face charges which included possession of an offensive weapon, illegally taking a Schedule 1 wild bird (a Goshawk) in a trap and the illegal use of pigeons as decoy baits inside a trap on the estate in April 2022. For reasons that are not yet known, the wildlife crime charges were 'withdrawn'. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2kpr4pwc>

Appeal for info – Suspicious disappearances of nine satellite-tagged Hen Harriers:

Nine more satellite-tagged Hen Harriers 'disappeared' in suspicious circumstances between May and September 2023, according to data released by Natural England and the RSPB. This includes seven birds from DEFRA's controversial Hen Harrier brood management trial. This brings the total number of Hen Harriers known to have 'disappeared' or been killed, mostly on or close to grouse moors since 2018, to 110 birds. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3a392sb3>

Appeal for info - Shot Buzzard:

North Yorkshire Police issued an appeal for information on 8 October 2023 after the discovery of a critically-injured shot Buzzard in the Rosedale area of the North York Moors National Park. It didn't survive its injuries. Police say this is the third Buzzard found shot or in suspicious circumstances in this area in the last four months. Two shot Red Kites were also found there in June 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4js7w2n>

BADGERS

Conviction – Badger baiting:

Brandon Lawlor, 23, of Lowerhouse Lane, Burnley, pleaded guilty to one offence contrary to the Protection of Badgers Act 1991 when he appeared at Blackpool Magistrates' Court on 21 September 2023 in a prosecution brought by the RSPCA. Graphic footage on his phone, recorded in Burnley in June 2021, showed two dogs attacking a badger and being encouraged by a male voice. Lawlor, a former jockey, was sentenced to eight weeks in prison. Another man, Carl Harwood, 28, of Padiham, who admitted to owning one of the injured dogs, was given a 16-week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months, and disqualified from keeping animals for five years in February 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yeac226a>

Conviction – Badger baiting:

Daniel Taylor, 31, of Shrewsbury Road, Worksop appeared at Mansfield Magistrates Court on 5 October 2023 where he pleaded guilty to four counts of causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal (Badgers) after police found graphic phone videos which showed him attacking, decapitating and encouraging his dogs to fight and kill wildlife. It's reported that he tortured, killed and mutilated more than 100 deer, foxes, badgers and pigeons. The court ordered a probation report and given the severity of the offences, magistrates sent the case to Nottingham Crown Court for sentencing on 12 December 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5drh4ce7>

HARES

Arrest – Poaching: Lincolnshire Police arrested four men on 1 October 2023 on suspicion of poaching offences in Apley, near Langworth. All four men – aged 18, 19, 21 and 22, from the Doncaster area – were arrested on suspicion of entering land as a trespasser at night with poaching equipment. Their vehicle was seized along with four dogs. The men were interviewed and have all been released on police bail. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/mktktjdj>

Arrest - Hare coursing: Norfolk Police arrested four men on suspicion of Hare coursing and criminal damage in west Norfolk on 12 October 2023. Officers were called to reports of suspicious activity at Walpole Highway near Kings Lynn and arrested three men in their twenties and one man in his thirties. Their vehicle and four dogs were seized. The men were bailed until 12 December

2023 with conditions not to enter Norfolk. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/y8ddrzu>

Arrest - Hare coursing:

Lincolnshire Police arrested two men in Spalding on 13 October 2023 on suspicion of Hare coursing. The men, from Lancashire, had their vehicle seized along with two thermal imagers, two 'coursing' dogs and mobile phones. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3ejku22p>

Arrest - Hare coursing:

Lincolnshire Police arrested a man in the Wragby area on 14 October 2023 on suspicion of Hare coursing. The man, from Lancashire, had his vehicle seized along with a thermal imager, two 'coursing' dogs and mobile phones. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yc3jfrb5>

Prosecution - Hare coursing:

Three men appeared at Ballymena Magistrates Court in County Antrim, Northern Ireland on 5 October 2023 to face charges of Hare coursing in January 2023 on Glenwherry Moor. Darren Prenter, 27, of Velsheda Court, Belfast, Patrick McGourty, 28, of Cranbrook Court, Belfast and Patrick Robert Shannon, 51, from Annesley Street, Belfast pleaded not guilty. The case was adjourned until 19 October 2023 when a date for trial would be set. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/nmmr2wnh>

Conviction - Hare coursing:

Liam Doherty, 33, of Ince Road, Liverpool, has been convicted of hare coursing after an incident on the Lancashire/Mersey border in February 2023. Doherty was ordered to pay £537 in fines and costs and the vehicle used in the offence was also seized. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4ykxk6vy>

Conviction – Hare coursing:

Three men appeared at Beverley Magistrates Court on 9 October 2023 and pleaded guilty to hare coursing offences after being caught on private farmland in Yorkshire in December 2022. John Langan, 37, of The Hawthorns, Great Ayton, North Yorkshire was sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment, suspended for 12 months. He was also given a ten-year Criminal Behaviour Order covering England and Wales with conditions around the control of dogs, not being on private farmland without permission and a complete ban on entering Humberside. He was also fined £85 costs, £154 victim surcharge, disqualified from driving for 56 days and ordered to complete 80 hours of unpaid supervised work within the next 12 months. Shane Hooton, 31, of Thistle Hill, Knaresborough, was fined £500, £85 costs and £200 victim surcharge and given a three-year Criminal Behaviour Order covering the same conditions as Langan. Joseph Foster, 35, of Manton Crescent, Worksop was fined £500, £85 costs and £200 victim surcharge. A fourth man, Dean Adams, 27, of Hebron Drive, Stokesley failed to appear in court and a warrant has been issued for his arrest. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2m5m6w2v>

Conviction – Hare coursing:

Five men have been sentenced for hare coursing offences that took place on farmland at Itchen Abbas, Hampshire, on 18 January 2023. Appearing at Basingstoke Magistrates Court on 25 September 2023, Lloyd Jefferies, 35, of Tanhouse Lane, Botley and Martin Eli Buckland, 40, of Hound Road, Netley were ordered to pay £550 compensation each to the landowner, covering the full £1,100 worth of damage

caused to the crops. Jefferies was also handed a 12 month driving ban with a requirement to complete an extended retest, a two year ban on owning dogs, a 12 month community order with a requirement to complete 200 hours unpaid work, and was ordered to pay £100 kennelling costs for the seized dogs, £85 court costs and a £114 victim surcharge. Buckland was subject to the same costs and surcharge, as well as the same driving disqualification and dog ban. He was also handed a 12 month community order with a requirement to complete 50 hours unpaid work. Martin Tony Buckland, 19, of Hound Road, Netley was handed a 12 month community order with a requirement to complete 40 hours unpaid work, a £40 fine, £100 kennelling costs, £85 court costs, £114 victim surcharge, and banned from owning dogs for two years. Shane Jefferies, 27, of Hornbeam Close, Hedge End was handed a 12 week curfew, a 12 month community order with a requirement to complete 40 hours unpaid work, a £40 fine, £100 kennelling costs, £85 court costs, £114 victim surcharge, and banned from owning dogs for two years. Leonard Pinnick, 36, of Montgomery Road, Southampton was handed an 18 month community order with a requirement to complete 60 hours unpaid work and attend a 'Thinking & Skills Programme'. He was also ordered to pay a £40 fine, £100 kennelling costs, £85 court costs, £114 victim surcharge, and banned from owning dogs for two years. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4x7ue62m>

Acquittal - Hare coursing:

Three men appeared at Blackpool Magistrates Court on 18 September 2023 on trial for alleged Hare

coursing at Westby in November 2022, which they denied. The trial collapsed after a lack of evidence. The court awarded costs to Andrew Boswell, 38, of Denton Street, Carlisle, Shane Boswell, 40, of Whalley Lane, Blackpool and Tommy Boswell, 45, of Midgeland Road, Blackpool. Lancashire Police have to pay the kennelling charges estimated at £20,000. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/293de846>

FOXES

Police investigation – alleged

Fox hunting: Warwickshire Police is investigating allegations of illegal Fox hunting after graphic video evidence from the West Midlands Hunt Saboteurs was shared showing a Fox being torn apart by hounds at Idlicote Hill near Shipston on 9 October 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4awwem4j>

Conviction - Fox poisoning:

A man appeared at Highbury Corner Magistrates Court in London on 22 September 2023 where he was found guilty of causing unnecessary suffering and administering a poisonous substance to a Fox cub he'd trapped in his garden in Twyford Avenue, Muswell Hill in May 2021. Richard Rosen, 65, put the trapped Fox inside a wheelie bin with a bag of rubble on top of it and a bowl of dichloromethane (DCM) - a banned poison. Rosen was given a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £12,000 in costs to the RSPCA. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/82nt846m>

Acquittal - Fox hunting:

A huntsman has been cleared of illegally hunting a dog with a fox in the Scottish Borders. Myles

O'Connor, 30, of the Buccleuch Hunt, appeared at Selkirk Sheriff Court for a two-day trial in October 2023 and was found not guilty of hunting a Fox with dogs at Hume, near Kelso, on 22 December 2021 after his defence lawyer argued that Mr O'Connor had not seen his dog chasing the Fox and was therefore not deliberately involved in encouraging the hunting. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2pf8pzp6>

Charges dropped – Animal

fighting: David Scott, 34, a head gamekeeper from Cabrach Estate in Morayshire appeared at Elgin Sheriff Court on 15 September to answer multiple charges of animal abuse including the neglect of 14 working dogs, animal fighting and letting his dog attack a Fox that had been caught in a snare. However, for reasons that are not yet known, the charges involving the abuse of wild animals were withdrawn. Scott's dogs were seized and he was fined £1,275 and banned from owning more than two dogs for a period of three years. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/7emx5tzz>

No further police action – Fox

hunting: Gloucestershire Police has determined it will take no further action after an investigation into the discovery of a live Fox buried alive inside a bag on the Miserden Estate in March 2023. Suspects were interviewed and DNA samples taken but police were unable to identify the individual responsible. Following a disciplinary hearing in April the British Hound Sports Association fined the Cotswold Hunt £5,000, suspended the Chairman and Joint Masters for two years and imposed a number of sanctions and restrictions on the Hunt's activities. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2p86ac9k>

BATS

Conviction – Breach of Bat mitigation Licence: A Derby-based property developer has been ordered to pay a total of £14,435.17 in a prosecution brought by Natural England for breaching the conditions of a European Protected Species Bat Mitigation Licence. On 4 September 2023 at Southern Derbyshire Magistrates' Court, Patrick Weekes, 55, of Radbourne Construction Limited, Vernongate, Derby, pleaded guilty to four offences relating to a housing development in Harehill, near Ashbourne, Derbyshire. The breaches left Brown Long-eared Bats with no suitable maternity roosting provision within the site and significantly reduced the suitability of roosting opportunities for Common Pipistrelle Bats, as well as endangering the welfare of both species. Weekes was fined £3,200

plus a victim surcharge of £1,280 and ordered to pay full prosecution costs of £9,955.17. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/mrxry2hz>

PINE MARTEN

Conviction – Trapping and killing: David Excell, 54, appeared at Dumfries Sheriff Court on 26 September 2023 where he pleaded guilty to trapping and killing a Pine Marten on Overlaggan Estate in Stewartry in 2021. He also admitted failing to comply with the conditions of his firearms licence and was issued with a combined fine of £9,700. His firearms licence has been revoked. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3jnuwny4>

RED GROUSE

Conviction – Poaching: Three men appeared at Teesside Magistrates

Court on 7 August 2023 and pleaded guilty to a string of poaching offences after they were caught killing Red Grouse on moorland near Guisborough, North Yorkshire in January 2023. Mohammed Salek, 40, of Highfield Road, Middlesbrough was fined £150 and was ordered to pay £520 in compensation, Sirous Alizadeh, 37, of Belle Vue Grove, Middlesbrough, was fined £333 and was ordered to pay £520 in compensation and Corey Mount, 25, of Marton Burn Road, Middlesbrough, was fined £100 and was ordered to pay £540 in compensation. All three were also ordered to pay court costs and a victim surcharge. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2yx439fh>

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