

# Conservation news supplement

## Appendix

Full details of active cases and convictions mentioned in the wildlife crime section of November's Conservation news (BW 35: 229) are given below.

### BIRDS OF PREY

#### **Prosecution – Goshawk shooting:**

Thomas Edward Jones, 38, is due to stand trial at Welshpool Magistrates court on 6 December 2023 after he 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. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/46fbuntc>

#### **Prosecution – Peregrine disturbance & egg theft:**

Christopher Wheeldon, 34, of Lime Grove, Darley Dale, Matlock will appear at Chesterfield Justice Centre on 15 January 2024 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. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/596s8axc>

**Sentencing - Possession of protected species (nine birds, two badgers, two otters):** Kelvin Birtles of Saffron Road, Wigston was sentenced at Leicester Magistrates Court on 15 November 2023 after pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing 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. He was given a 12-month community order requiring him to carry out 120 hours of unpaid work. He was also ordered to pay £85 court costs and a £114 victim surcharge Source: <https://tinyurl.com/9hymdzj>

#### **Charges dropped - killing/**

**taking raptors:** Three charges under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (section 1(1)(a) relating to the taking/killing of wild birds at Overlaggan Estate, Dumfries & Galloway in 2021) were dropped against four defendants at Dumfries Sheriff Court on 26 September 2023. The Crown Office has refused to specify the charges and refused to explain the reason for disposal. It remains to be seen whether a General Licence restriction will be imposed by NatureScot. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3zd9xk6f>

**Hen Harrier shooting:** News emerged in November that a satellite-tagged Hen Harrier named 'Dagda' was found dead with shotgun injuries on a grouse moor owned by Knarsdale Estate in Northumberland in May 2023. He was the breeding male on the neighbouring RSPB Geltsdale Reserve in Cumbria. A post mortem revealed he had recovered from an earlier, unknown shooting incident. The estate has denied any involvement and there are no pending prosecutions. Source:

<https://tinyurl.com/4rbwvufj>

#### **Suspicious disappearance of a satellite-tagged Golden Eagle:**

News emerged in November that a satellite-tagged Golden Eagle disappeared in suspicious circumstances in late July 2023 on a grouse moor in the Monadhliath Mountains where previously eight other satellite-tagged Golden Eagles have disappeared. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3fa3fmut>

### OTHER BIRDS

#### **Conviction – Pigeon killing:**

Richard Harry Musgrove, 43, appeared at Chesterfield Magistrates Court on 27th October 2023 charged with killing a non-schedule 1 wild bird (a Pigeon) after CCTV showed him catching and violently killing the bird in Chesterfield town centre on 23 April 2023. Musgrove was sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ykjkcbna>

### HARES

#### **Police investigation – Hare coursing:**

Essex Police Rural Crime Team received reports of Hare coursing in Uttlesford on 15 October 2023. One vehicle was seized after being abandoned in a field and three suspects with five dogs were caught. Community Protection orders were issued and

the suspects were interviewed. Investigation ongoing. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ycycr9js>

**Police investigation – Hare coursing:** Essex Police Rural Crime Team reported a large number of further Hare coursing incidents in Uttlesford on 19 October 2023. Three males were questioned, one vehicle seized and one dog recovered. Investigations continue. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3yd8w4r2>

**Arrest - Hare coursing:** Humberside Police Rural Task Force seized one vehicle and arrested three males on suspicion of Hare coursing and railway line trespass on 5 November 2023. Investigation ongoing. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2yxz9bwn>

**Conviction - Hare coursing:** Fred Holmes, 60, of Thorney Road, Eye, Peterborough appeared at Boston Magistrates Court on 10 November 2023 where he pleaded guilty to two counts of trespass in pursuit of game and two counts of being equipped to trespass in pursuit of hares. A deprivation order was made against Holmes which saw him forfeit three dogs, which will now be rehomed, the Citroen car he used during the offences and also a thermal imaging device found in his vehicle. He was also ordered to pay £16,783.50 for the kennel costs of keeping the three dogs since their seizure, and fines for the two trespass offences and two victim surcharges, making a total of £18,557.50. He was also banned from keeping dogs for 10 years and made subject to a three-year criminal behaviour order which prevents him from entering any private land in

Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire or Cambridgeshire with a sighthound, greyhound, long dog or lurcher type dog or cross breed, or being in the company of anyone with this kind of dog on private land, during the recognised Hare coursing season (July 31 – April 30). Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yv5b95kj>

**Conviction – Hare coursing:** Brian Fury from Luton has pleaded guilty to trespassing in Bedfordshire in pursuit of game (Brown Hares) and in November 2023 he was fined £1818. Bedfordshire Police also seized his three dogs. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2ds7tfk4>

**Sentencing - Hare coursing:** Two men appeared at Ballymena Magistrates Court in County Antrim, Northern Ireland on 26 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 pleaded guilty to Hare coursing and aggravated trespass. They were sentenced to two months in prison, suspended for three years. A third man, Patrick Robert Shannon, 51, from Annesley Street, Belfast admitted aggravated trespass. His case was adjourned until 7 December 2023 for a pre-sentence report. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/vspb6n4b>

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## BADGERS

**Appeal for information – Badger sett interference:** North Yorkshire Police have published a photograph of three men they'd like to talk to in relation to a 'serious case of Badger sett interference' which took place at Nunnington between Malton and Helmsley on 25 October 2023

at approx. 1.15pm. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yrmn7h7e>

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## POACHING

**Arrest – game poaching:** Thames Valley Police Rural Crime Taskforce arrested two males on suspicion of game poaching near Little Marlow on 22 November 2023. An air rifle was seized. Investigation ongoing. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2z4ytz5m>

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## DEER

**Arrest – deer coursing:** Derbyshire Police Rural Crime Team arrested a male on 13 October 2023 on suspicion of hunting a wild mammal with a dog. This was in relation to a number of reports of deer coursing in recent weeks. The suspect has been released on bail and enquiries are ongoing. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3nmsyw8n>

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## FOXES

**Conviction – fox hunting:** Stuart Radbourne, 39, of The Common in Bromham, near Chippenham, appeared at Swindon Magistrates Court on 27 October 2023 where he pleaded guilty to being jointly concerned with others in causing unnecessary suffering to a fox by causing it to be thrown to and savaged by hounds in Melksham on December 24, 2020. Due to the seriousness of the offence, where a child was present, harm was caused to a protected animal, and the incident was filmed and shared with others, he received an 18-week prison sentence suspended for 12 months. During those 12 months he must carry out 200 hours of unpaid work as well as pay £750 in court costs and £128 to fund victim

services. In July this year Radbourne had pleaded guilty to a separate offence of fox hunting whilst he was huntmaster with the Avon Vale Hunt. He was fined £384 and told to pay £42.50 costs and a £154 surcharge for that offence. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/56ufwryr>

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