

Conservation news supplement

Appendix

Full details of active cases and convictions mentioned in the wildlife crime section of June's Conservation news (*Issue Aug 35.8*) are given below.

BIRDS OF PREY

Appeal for information - shot

Red Kite: The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has issued an appeal for information after a Red Kite was found with gunshot injuries in Newry on 20 April 2024. The kite had to be euthanised due to the extent of its injuries. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3vfjymbf>

Appeal for information – shotgun attack on Goshawk nest: Police Scotland has issued an appeal for information after a shotgun was used to deliberately attack an active Goshawk nest on a sporting estate in the Cairngorms National Park in June 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7rs6e9>

Appeal for information - disturbance of nesting

Peregrine: Derbyshire Constabulary has issued an appeal for information following the disturbance of nesting Peregrines at Belper Mill in May/June 2024. Details are scant but it is believed the Peregrines' breeding attempt failed this year after tree-felling work in the vicinity of the nest site. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/48cfcusj>

Prosecution - shot Tawny Owl and Woodpigeon: A man has been charged with killing two wild birds with an air rifle after police received reports of someone seen dumping a Tawny Owl and a Woodpigeon in a wheelie bin in Colne, Lancashire, in March 2024. Joe Morris, 28, of

White Grove, Colne, Lancashire has been charged with killing a non-Schedule 1 bird, causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal and possessing an air weapon in a public place. He is due to appear before Blackburn Magistrates on 22 August 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yc2dxas7>

Community Resolution - disturbance of nesting

Peregrine: An unnamed man in his 40s has been dealt with by means of a Community Resolution by Norfolk Constabulary after a nesting Peregrine was disturbed by a laser being shone directly into her nest box at Cromer in May 2024. The man apologised and also committed to making a donation to the Cromer Peregrine Project. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4jp5k6vw>

General Licence restriction for raptor persecution offences: Lochindorb Estate, located on the northern boundary of the Cairngorms National Park, has been handed a three-year General Licence restriction following the discovery of a poisoned Red Kite and a shot Red Kite. General Licence restrictions are a light-touch sanction imposed on estates by NatureScot and based on evidence provided by Police Scotland, where raptor persecution has been detected but there is insufficient evidence to prosecute a named

individual. Lochindorb is the fifth grouse shooting estate currently under such restriction. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ykuck2d5>

Conviction - disturbance of Schedule 1 raptors: Wildlife photographer John Paul Haffield, 68, from Neath, appeared before Swansea Magistrates Court on 25 June 2024 where he was sentenced for disturbing nesting raptors without a Schedule 1 licence, including the only known pair of breeding Honey Buzzards in Wales. Haffield received fines and costs totalling £1,620. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5en4rnru>

Conviction - Gamebird breeder and his company fined over £40,000 for pesticide offences after discovery of poisoned

Buzzard: Ashley Game Farm and its sole Director, Christopher Hodgson have been fined over £40,000 for multiple pesticide offences after the discovery of a poisoned Buzzard and two poisoned baits in March 2021. Ashley Game Farm, based in Chulmleigh, Devon, and Director Hodgson were fined £40,000 and £1,500 respectively. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3wx3txn2>

Prosecutors seeking to recover over £164,000 from convicted Peregrine launderer: Prosecutors in Scotland are seeking to recover £164,028.80 under the Proceeds of Crime Act from convicted Peregrine launderer Lewis Hall. Hall was convicted, along with his father

Timothy Hall, in December 2023 of multiple offences relating to the theft and sale of wild Peregrines from across south Scotland which were laundered to buyers in the Middle East. He was sentenced to 150 hours of unpaid work for his role. A subsequent hearing at Jedburgh Sheriff Court in June 2024 was adjourned until 4 September 2024 to allow forensic accountants to complete their work. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3dnb8842>

Launch of new National Hen

Harrier Taskforce: The National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) has launched a new initiative to target the illegal killing of Hen Harriers on grouse moors in England. The National Hen Harrier Taskforce is a police-led effort focusing initially on known Hen Harrier persecution 'hot spots' in North Yorkshire, Derbyshire and the North Pennines and is deploying a wide array of tactics similar to those used for tackling Serious Organised Crime including improved police response times and the use of specialised drones and sniffer detection dogs. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5n72must>

Moorland Association expelled from Raptor Persecution Priority

Delivery Group: The Moorland Association has been expelled from the police-led Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group (RPPDG) after posting an inflammatory blog falsely accusing the police of 'bypassing regulations' in relation to the police's recent attempts to tackle the illegal killing of Hen Harriers on grouse moors in England. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5ehn6tky>

OTHER BIRDS

Police investigation – shot

Jackdaw: Durham Constabulary is investigating the shooting of a Jackdaw that was found in a garden on Arundel Drive, Darlington on 26 May 2024. The Jackdaw was taken to Stanhope Park Veterinary Hospital but was euthanised due to the extent of its injuries, described as 'horrendous' and believed to have been caused by an air rifle. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2jkv6wtc>

Police investigation - shot

Herring Gulls: A West Sussex based charity, Waders Animal Rescue, has reported three separate air gun attacks on Herring Gulls in May 2024. The two most recent casualties were found in Ferring and Worthing town centre and had to be euthanised due to the extent of their injuries. The charity has asked anyone with information to contact West Sussex Police. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/mve8y9sr>

Birds targeted with air rifles and catapults in Berkshire:

A Berkshire based charity, Swan Support, has claimed Thames Valley Police 'isn't doing enough' to protect Swans and other birds from attacks on the River Thames. The charity said the last school half-term break had been 'horrendous' for bird attacks, particularly in Windsor where a number of Pigeons, three geese, two ducks and one Coot had been killed across four evenings. The incidents were all reported to the police. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2jebr9ax>

Shot gulls in North Wales:

North Wales Police has received 'numerous reports' of gulls (species unknown) being shot along the

North Wales coast, including recent reports in Denbighshire and Abergele. Police believe air rifles are being used to target the gulls, which are protected and can only be killed under licence. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4r92t5m6>

Appeal for information – duck targeted by catapult and then killed with a rock:

West Sussex Police is appealing for information after the discovery of a dead duck in King Weald's Park, Burgess Hill on the evening of 3 June 2024. Ball bearings were found next to the duck's body and a witness said she saw two teenagers between the ages of 13-15 kill the duck with a rock before riding off on bikes. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2y2kzkr7>

Arrest – possession of wild birds:

An unnamed 55-year old man was arrested in May 2024 when officers from West Mercia Police and the RSPCA found six wild birds being kept at a house on Meadow Close in Madeley, Telford. Among those found were a Goldfinch, a Redpoll, a Siskin and a Brambling. The man was arrested on suspicion of taking and being in possession of a wild bird. He has been released on bail. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5e4mem4a>

HARES

Prosecution – Hare poaching:

Following an incident at Hurdlow in the Peak District 25 January 2024 (reported in BW April 2024 edition), John Taylor (Snr) and John Taylor (Jnr) from Middlewich, Cheshire have both been charged with trespassing with intent to pursue Hares with dogs and were due to appear at South Derbyshire Magistrates Court on 24 June

2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5hcx3kjp>

Conviction - Hare coursing:

Three men have received lengthy criminal behaviour orders for Hare-coursing offences in Lincolnshire on 30 November 2023. Appearing at Boston Magistrates' Court on 26 June 2024, Peter Roddham, Anthony Basford and Thomas Tyers were all handed Criminal Behaviour Orders which run for the next 15 years. Any breach of the order could mean a custodial sentence of up to five years. Each was guilty of hunting a wild mammal with dogs. Roddham, of Salvin Street, Croxdale, near Durham, was also ordered to pay a total of £533 in fines, surcharge and costs. Tyers, 33, of Pennine Way, Chilton, near Durham; and Basford, 39, of Corneville Road, Stoke-on-Trent, were each ordered to pay kennel fees of £3,685.50 plus fines, surcharge and costs of £1,391. All of the dogs that were seized in the incident will now be re-homed. The Criminal Behaviour Orders prevent them from entering Lincolnshire between 31 July and 30 April – recognised as Hare coursing season – on any private land with sighthounds, greyhounds, long dogs, or lurcher-type dogs. They are also prevented from accompanying anyone who has these breeds of dog. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2kct3ap3>

BADGERS

Appeal for information – snared

Badger: Derbyshire Constabulary is appealing for information after a Badger was found in a garden wrapped in wire. A veterinary examination of the Badger's wounds suggested it had been caught in a snare close to where it was found in Belper on 10 June

2024. The Badger was euthanised due to the extent of its injuries. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/b353jmnh>

Conviction – dogs suffer injuries from Fox and Badger baiting:

A Badger baiter whose dogs were left with 'horrendous' injuries has been handed a ten year ban from keeping or working with any animals. Sean Garland, 38, of Blackfolds Farm, Dufftown, Aberdeenshire also received 200 hours of Community Service when sentenced at Elgin Sheriff Court on 13 June 2024. He pleaded guilty to keeping three dogs for the purpose of repeated animal fighting with Foxes and Badgers and failing to obtain veterinary treatment for facial injuries causing unnecessary suffering to the dogs. His dogs have now been rehomed. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4443vczk>

Sentencing – Badger baiting and animal suffering:

Jason Lee Kennedy (35), from Marble Arch Road, Enniskillen has been jailed for multiple offences relating to Badger baiting and animal fighting, including causing unnecessary suffering to dogs and cats between 28 June and 4 July 2022 (see previous editions of BW for earlier reports). Kennedy appeared before Newry Crown Court on 21 June 2024 and was handed a 27 month sentence – 13.5 months in custody and 13.5 months on supervised licence, as well as a ten year ban on keeping animals. His dogs were all seized and rehomed. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yvtm9xn5>

DEER

Prosecution – Multiple alleged offences to Roe deer: Lennon Gibbinson, 21, of Fifth Avenue,

Stobhill Gate, Morpeth appeared before South East Northumberland Magistrates' Court in Bedlington, Northumberland in July 2024 to face seven charges in relation to offences against Roe deer. These include two counts of causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal when Gibbinson allegedly held a Roe deer by its hind leg and allowed sight hounds to attack it, and restraining a Roe deer with a dog lead allowing it to be attacked by dogs. Gibbinson is also charged with attempting to kill a deer at night, killing a deer at night, taking a deer at night, killing a deer during the close season and inflicting unnecessary suffering to a wild animal. All the offences are alleged to have taken place between 27 November and 21 December 2023. No pleas were entered by Gibbinson and the prosecution requested the case be moved to the Crown Court due to the seriousness of the crimes. The magistrates agreed and Gibbinson was bailed until his next hearing at Newcastle Crown Court on 31 July 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/23pcj2fy>

Conviction - using dogs to hunt deer and Hares:

Two men have been sentenced after being caught using dogs to hunt deer and Hares in Morley, Derbyshire. Raphael Stone and Dominic Parker were spotted illegally hunting in fields around Park Farm and Morley Church with two dogs off leads on 9 April 2024. Police attended and Parker was found sitting inside a car parked nearby while Stone attempted to run away but was stopped shortly after. Both were arrested and subsequently charged with hunting a wild mammal with dogs and trespass with intent to

search for, or to pursue, Hares with dogs. Parker was also charged with possession of a knife after two lock knives were found in the car, which was registered to Parker. Stone, 27, of Hartcliffe Close, Derby, and Parker, 24, of Michigan Close, Derby, admitted the charges when they appeared at Southern Derbyshire Magistrates' Court on 4 July. Stone was given a community order and ordered to complete 40 hours unpaid work. He must also pay £500 costs and a victim surcharge of £114. Parker was given a 17-week suspended prison sentence and ordered to carry out 80 hours unpaid work. He must also pay costs of £585 and a victim surcharge of £154. An order was also made for the forfeiture and destruction of the knives. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4n5hyr3a>

POACHING

Conviction – Pheasant poaching:

Two men have pleaded guilty to night poaching after Surrey Police caught them with an air rifle and a bag of Pheasants on Titsey Hill, Oxted on Christmas Day 2023. Appearing at Guilford Crown Court on 21 May 2024, Anas Abdulla Azizi, 21, of Brighton, and Sirwan Muhammad Salih, 41, of Derby, were ordered to pay compensation. The amount and the recipient of the compensation is unknown. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5ypu6v2b>

Conviction – Salmon poaching:

A Port Talbot man who admitted taking a Salmon he caught using illegal tackle has been ordered to pay a total of £2580 at Llanelli Magistrates Court. Stephen Samuel, of Cwmavon, Port Talbot, was seen killing and taking a Salmon from the Llandysul Angling

Association fishery on the River Teifi. He was apprehended by a Natural Resources Wales (NRW) enforcement officer who caught Samuel with the Salmon hidden in the arm of his coat to avoid detection. He was reported for four offences: three for contravening the Wales Rod and Line (Salmon and Sewin Sea Trout) Byelaws 2017, namely the compulsory catch and release of Salmon, using barbed hooks and using treble hooks, and one for an offence under the Salmon Act 1968 for handling Salmon under suspicious circumstances. Samuel was fined £621, reduced to £414 for an early guilty plea, and was ordered to pay NRW costs of £2,000 and a Victim Surcharge of £166. In addition, the Magistrates authorised a confiscation order for all of his fishing tackle used in the offence. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/56uez8xt>

FISH

According to the Angling Trust, between March and May 2024 there were 118 convictions for fishing licence offences. The total in fines for this period was £44,567.47 and the average fine was £377.69. For full details of the offences see: <https://tinyurl.com/2bzan4wr>

FOXES

Appeal for information – dead

Foxes in pond: Surrey Police is appealing for information after the discovery of five dead terrier dogs and Foxes found floating in a garden pond in Spring Street, Epsom, Surrey on 8 June 2024. The RSPCA believe the animals were killed elsewhere before being dumped in the pond but there were no clear injuries or cause

of death. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4sw4yekm>

Suspected Fox poisoning: Local residents have alerted police after the discovery of three dead Foxes in Littlehampton, West Sussex, believed to have been poisoned. The dead Foxes were found by a local resident on Middle Mead Green in June 2024 with 'blue pellets' discovered close by. The incident has been reported to the Police. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/55jt2dkr>

Captured Foxes rescued from Wirral house: Merseyside Police was called to Hoylake Road in Moreton on 7 July 2024 following a dispute between neighbours about a local resident allegedly capturing Foxes. Two adult foxes were removed from a property and safely released. Police offered words of advice to a resident but no offences were identified. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2fu7xk3p>

Prosecution - Fox hunting: Four men from the Blackmore and Sparkford Vale Hunt were due to appear in court in connection with a report of illegal Fox hunting in North Dorset. It was reported that at around 2pm on 4 December 2023 an illegal Fox hunt allegedly took place in the area of Buckhorn Weston near Gillingham in which a Fox was killed. Following a police investigation four men have been charged with hunting a wild mammal with dogs under Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004. They have been named as Conall James McGrath, 22, of Charlton Horethorne in Sherborne, George Colin Pierce, 32, of Milborne Port in Somerset, Freddie Osborne, 33, of Templecombe in Somerset

and Andrew Osborne, 59, of Templecombe in Somerset. All four were due to appear at Poole Magistrates' Court on 28 June 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/za73v6d4>

Prosecution - Fox hunting:

Neil Burton, of Riseholme Lane, Riseholme, Lincolnshire has been summoned to court for an offence of hunting a wild mammal with dogs, contrary to the Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004. The summons follows an investigation into a report of illegal Fox hunting with a pack of hounds at Riseholme on 27 January 2024. He will appear at Lincoln Magistrates Court on Thursday 1 August 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3sr4u55p>

Prosecution - Fox hunting:

Benjamin Halsall, 23 from Whatcote Road, Shipston-on-Stour, along with Warwickshire Hunt Limited, from Kidlington, Oxfordshire, appeared at Leamington Spa Magistrates Court on 31 May 2024 charged with Hunting a Wild Mammal With Dogs under the Hunting Act 2004 (see BW May 2024 edition for earlier report). The Hunt pleaded not guilty. Halsall has reportedly gone to Australia and won't return until May 2025. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4p96d4uw>

Conviction – Fox hunting: Two members of a hunt have been convicted of illegal Fox hunting following two incidents in Norfolk. Adam Egginton, 23, of Moor Lane, Necton and Edward Bell, 31 also of Moor Lane, Necton appeared at Great Yarmouth Magistrates' Court on 19 July 2024 following a three day trial. They were found guilty of hunting a wild mammal with dogs on 8 February and 20 February 2023 and were handed

finances totalling £1,700 each. One incident related to the well-publicised killing of a Fox in a courtyard garden where the residents' CCTV captured the killing (see BW May 2024 edition for earlier report). Eggington and Bell had denied the charges and were acquitted of two further charges of causing criminal damage and having dogs dangerously out of control, which they had also denied. Two other men joint huntmasters Andrew Kendall, 67, of Hulver Road, Henstead and Robert Gurney, 55, of Bawdeswell were cleared of all charges. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3v3ny27t>

Charity urges new Government to strengthen hunting laws: The League Against Cruel Sports has published a new report documenting evidence of a 'massive increase' in suspected Fox hunting incidents and has urged the Government to strengthen the law. Nearly 1,400 eye witness reports, comprising 526 reports of suspected illegal hunting and 870 reports of 'hunt havoc' in public spaces were recorded in the League's latest end of hunting season report covering November 2023 to March 2024, an increase on the 982 incidents recorded during the same period the season before. The charity is calling for the inclusion of a 'reckless provision' in the Hunting Act, which would enable people to be prosecuted not only if they intended to hunt wild mammals with dogs, but also if they were reckless by not preventing their dogs from doing so. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/jdem52aa>

VIOLENCE, THEFT & OTHER OFFENCES ASSOCIATED WITH HUNT MEETS

Prosecution – Assault, theft and highway offences:

Three men have appeared in court in connection with a hunting incident in North Dorset. Dorset Police received a report during the afternoon of 9 December 2023 that a female hunt monitor had been assaulted and had property stolen while walking along Cannings Court Lane in Pulham. Officers from the Dorset Rural Crime Team attended the incident. Following an investigation, two men – one aged 18 from the Dorchester area and the other aged 28 from the Sherborne area – were charged with highway offences. They appeared at Weymouth Magistrates' Court on 17 July 2024 and they are next due to appear at Weymouth Magistrates' Court on 24 September 2024. A 28-year-old man from the Blandford area was charged with theft and assault offences. He appeared at Weymouth Magistrates' Court on 17 July 2024 and he is next due to appear at Bournemouth Crown Court on 15 August 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3vbdssh>

Conviction – Breaking a Community Protection Notice:

Robert Cundy, a terrierman for the Essex and Suffolk Hunt, appeared in court on 14 June 2024 where he pleaded guilty to breaching the terms of a Community Protection Notice (CPN). A CPN, often imposed by a court for controlling persistent antisocial behaviour, had been issued to Cundy for repeatedly driving a quad bike close to hunt monitors. He was fined £100 plus £85 costs and a £45 victim surcharge. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2p92jpyf>

Conviction - Racial abuse: A

security guard working for the Wynnstay Hunt in Cheshire has pleaded guilty to racially abusing a hunt saboteur. Anthony Williams was caught on a police officer's bodycam during a hunt meet on 6 January 2024. Appearing in court on 15 July 2024, Williams was fined £400, plus £200 for court expenses and another £150 for extra costs. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5x3kca7e>

TRADE IN ENDANGERED SPECIES

Conviction – Trading in Elephant

ivory: A woman who made thousands of pounds selling jewellery on EBay that was made from Elephant ivory has been convicted in the first case of its kind in Scotland. Joyce Bell, 67, of Dundee, appeared at Dundee Sheriff Court in June 2024 and pleaded guilty to 121 sales, mostly to China, made between 2018 and 2022 and that she falsely described as bovine bone but which, on analysis, were revealed to be ivory. Of these, 93 sold for a total value of £6412.12 and appeared to have been re-exported without the legally required export permits. These sales were in breach of the

Ivory Act 2018 and the Customs and Excise Management Act 1979. Bell was fined £1,400. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2j6kctrw>

MISCELLANEOUS

Police appeal – attacks on

Hedgehogs: West Yorkshire Police is appealing for information after a spate of attacks on Hedgehogs in Castleford. Three Hedgehogs were found dead after being 'kicked to death by unknown suspects' and a fourth has been found injured. One dead Hedgehog was found on Thornhill Road on the morning of 23 May 2024 after two others had been found dead on the Asda field earlier that week. The injured fourth Hedgehog was found on 29 May on the Asda field. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/ykkws9ed>

Police appeal - man filmed

harassing Grey Seal: North Wales Police has issued an appeal for information after a man was filmed harassing a Grey Seal pup, including throwing a rock at it, causing distress and disturbance to the seal. The incident took place at Conwy Beach on the Great Orme, Llandudno on 18 June 2024.

Police have released images of the man they'd like to speak to. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5fa4kt97>

Conviction - dumping 10 dead Aldabra Tortoises in woodland:

As previously reported in BW Feb 2024 edition, a total of ten dead Aldabra Tortoises were found dumped in Ashclyst Forest, Devon between December 2023 and January 2024. Gary Priddle, 56, of Grecian Way, Exeter, appeared before Exeter Magistrates' Court on 30 May 2024 where he pleaded guilty to one charge under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and one under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. He was sentenced to a 12 month Community Order and banned from keeping tortoises for ten years. Priddle has surrendered more than 50 other tortoises to Police and these have now been rehomed. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4hfbzmsv>

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