

Conservation news supplement

Appendix

Full details of active cases and convictions mentioned in the wildlife crime section of May's Conservation news (*Issue May 35.6*) are given below.

BIRDS OF PREY

Appeal for information - suspicious disappearance of satellite-tagged Hen Harrier:

The RSPB has issued an appeal for information following the suspicious disappearance of a young female Hen Harrier named 'Shalimar' on a grouse moor in Glen Esk, Angus on 15 February 2024. Police Scotland led a multi-agency search of the area but failed to find either the satellite tag or the body. This is the fourth Hen Harrier to disappear in suspicious circumstances in this area in recent years. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2k9e5d2w>

Appeal for information - shot Sparrowhawk: North Yorkshire Police have issued an appeal for information following the shooting of a Sparrowhawk at Nosterfield Nature Reserve, near Ripon. The Sparrowhawk is thought to have been shot dead with a pellet gun on either Wednesday 20 or Thursday 21 March 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/bdes8zvc>

Appeal for information - shot

Goshawk: Gloucestershire Constabulary has issued an appeal for information following the discovery of a dead Goshawk in the Forest of Dean on 27 February 2024. An x-ray revealed it had been shot. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2erzc7md>

Prosecution - Attempting to trap

Goshawks: The prosecution of 47-year old gamekeeper Stuart Hart, who has been charged in relation to the alleged attempted trapping of Goshawks on Ruabon Moor, near Wrexham, North Wales, has been continued until 30 April 2024. Hart has not yet entered a plea and his defence solicitor is challenging legal procedural issues at Wrexham Magistrates Court. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2385mdch>
Police raid - Hen Harrier persecution: North Yorkshire Police and the National Wildlife Crime Unit executed a search warrant on an unnamed grouse moor in the Yorkshire Dales National Park on 17 April 2024 that is suspected of being linked to the illegal killing of Hen Harriers and the theft of satellite tags. Since 2018, at least 24 Hen Harriers are either known, or suspected to have been killed in this area. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3w8zxdjc>

OTHER BIRDS

Shot Raven: A Raven with at least five shotgun pellets lodged in its body was admitted to the RSPCA's Stapeley Grange Wildlife Centre in Cheshire in March 2024 where it is receiving veterinary treatment. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4rwwkbr2u>

Investigation - shot birds: Suffolk Police are investigating the discovery of 13 birds, including four gulls,

found shot dead in woodland in Butley, near Woodbridge on 2 April 2024. X-rays showed that one of the gulls was shot in the head and neck consistent with being targeted with a shotgun. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yc6tdayu>

Shot duck: A duck is undergoing treatment at the RSPCA's Stapeley Grange Wildlife Centre after witnesses saw it being shot in the face with an air gun at Caldon Canal in Hanley Park, Stoke-on-Trent, on 2 April 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4fcd2fc2>

Plea to report catapult attacks:

Hampshire Constabulary have issued a plea to residents to report incidences of wildlife crime following a spate of catapult attacks on Swans and other wildlife. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/r5wvdtz2>

HARES

Arrest: Hampshire Police have arrested a man in connection with the discovery of almost 50 dead Brown Hares that were found dumped outside a community-run village shop in Broughton on 15 March 2024. A dead Barn Owl and Kestrel were also found impaled on the shop door handles and blood had been smeared over the windows. Both had been shot. On 28 March police arrested a 37-year-old man from Totton on suspicion

of criminal damage, night poaching, an offence under the Public Order Act, killing of a Schedule 1 bird, an offence under the Animal Welfare Act, killing of Brown Hares in the closed season and an offence under the Firearms Act. He was released on conditional bail until 28 June 2024 pending additional enquiries. A second man aged 27 years old from Hythe was interviewed under caution on 9 April 2024. He remains under investigation. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5n8yfzrd>

Conviction – Hare coursing:

James Ramshaw, 39, of Hambleton Court, Ashington, Northumberland and Rhyan Cunningham, 20, of Shadfen Crescent, Pegswood, Northumberland appeared at Humber Magistrates Court on 2 April 2024 where they were found guilty of trespass with intent to search for, or pursue, hares with dogs and being equipped for searching or pursuing hares with dogs on 4 December 2022 at Eastoft in North Lincolnshire. Cunningham received a conditional discharge for 9 months and was ordered to pay £200 costs and a £26 victim surcharge. Ramshaw was sentenced to one day's detention to be served at the court house. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yz67nc6z>

BATS

Conviction – destruction of bat

roosts: A property developer has received a 12-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay costs of £111 for illegally removing a roof at a property and destroying 3 separate bat roosts where protected Common, Soprano Pipistrelles and Whiskered bats were known to be roosting. Robert Roberts from Caerphilly pleaded guilty to breaching the Conservation of

Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) at Newport Magistrates Court on 25 March 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/49k5a78a>

BADGERS

Arrest – Badger sett interference:

A man has been arrested following interference with a Badger sett. North Wales Police, in partnership with the RSPCA, executed warrants in the Caernarfon and Llanllyfni areas on 6 March 2024. A number of items were seized during the searches including a firearm, medication, a phone and a laptop. Two dogs were also surrendered to the RSPCA. The man was interviewed and has since been released under investigation. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4yvjjwjy>

Conviction overturned & replaced with 'donations' – Badger sett disturbance:

An appeal judge has overturned an earlier conviction and fine of a property developer who had been found guilty of 'entombing' Badgers in a sett in 2022 when he deliberately dumped 'many tonnes of clay' on it after being told of the active sett by an ecologist. Con McCarthy 61, of Greenogue Business Park, Rathcoole, Co Dublin, whose firm is building warehouse units in Browns Barn, appealed his conviction and fine of €5,000 for offences under the Wildlife Act when he appeared at Dublin Circuit Criminal Court on 7 March 2024. Judge Jonathan Dunphy varied the earlier order of the District Court, applying the Probation Act and ordering McCarthy to make a donation of €15,000 to be split equally among the Irish Wildlife Trust, Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland and Badger Watch. Effectively this quashed his criminal conviction. The

Irish Wildlife Trust has refused to accept the 'donation' on principle. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3sf4tc9y>
Breaching bail – Badger baiting: Jason Lee Kennedy (35), from Marble Arch Road, Enniskillen has appeared at Enniskillen Magistrates Court accused of breaching bail conditions whilst awaiting trial at Dungannon Crown Court for 18 charges including causing unnecessary suffering to animals including Badgers and cats, causing or attempting to cause an animal fight and being present at an animal fight. Continued bail was not opposed but Kennedy was warned bail would be refused if further bail breaches occurred. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3pmx5cmf>

DEER

Conviction – animal fighting:

Three men from Lancaster have received custodial sentences for a range of wildlife offences committed in 2022, including cutting a deer's throat and enabling dogs to attack it. They had filmed their offences on a mobile phone. Thomas Graham Michael Lloyd, 37, of Slaidburn Drive, Lancaster, Jay Jones, 37, of Barley Cop Lane, Lancaster; and Stephen Dixon, 41, of Keswick Road, Lancaster, appeared at Preston Crown Court on March 15 for sentencing. Lloyd had previously pleaded guilty to four offences of causing unnecessary suffering to deer and a Badger, with videos showing the deer's neck being stood on to enable dogs to attack the animal, and the deer's throat being cut repeatedly. He was sentenced to 33 months in prison and was disqualified from keeping dogs for life. Jones pleaded guilty to one offence of causing unnecessary suffering to a deer by restraining the animal to allow dogs to attack

it. He was sentenced to 12 months in prison and was disqualified from keeping dogs for six years. Dixon pleaded guilty to one offence of causing unnecessary suffering to a deer by repeatedly cutting its throat. He was sentenced to 17 months in prison which was suspended for 12 months. He was also ordered to complete 20 rehabilitation days, a six-month mental health programme and 100 hours of unpaid work. The dogs were seized by the RSPCA for re-homing. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/2d3ejd5u>

Conviction - deer coursing: A man who encouraged his dog to chase and attack a deer as he filmed it has been sentenced following an investigation and prosecution by the RSPCA. Sampson Richards, 28, of Lestraynes Lane, Penryn, Cornwall pleaded guilty to an offence under the Deer Act 1991. Appearing before Bodmin Magistrates on March 21, it was heard that on 21 November 2022 in the vicinity of Liberty Barn, Lestraynes Lane, Penryn, he attempted to take, kill or injure a deer without the consent of the owner or occupier of the land or other lawful authority, contrary to Section 1 (2)(a) of the Deer Act 1991. Richards was sentenced to a 12 month community order to carry out 180 hours unpaid work and was ordered to pay £400 costs and £114 surcharge. The court also ordered the forfeiture and confiscation of a lamping device. The dog was signed over into the care of the RSPCA for rehoming. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/4usfdm5p>

POACHING

Conviction – fishing without a licence: Rolands Bartkevics of Meifod in Powys was found guilty of an offence under the Salmon

Act 1986 and an offence under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975 at Welshpool Magistrates Court on 6 March 2024. Bartkevics had been catching Salmon without a licence on the River Banwy. He failed to attend the court hearing and the case was proven in his absence. Bartkevics was ordered to pay £300 in fines, £650 of NRW's costs of bringing the prosecution and a victim surcharge of £34, totalling £984 altogether. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/52wkupfn>

FOXES

Prosecution – Fox hunting: Police Scotland have arrested and charged a 29 year old man from the Jed Forest Hunt with three alleged Fox hunting offences after receiving video footage from the League Against Cruel Sports. Another man, aged 55 and from a different hunt in Scotland, has been arrested following allegations of a further three illegal hunting offences. He has been released pending further enquiries. These arrests (and charges in the case of the 29 year old man) are the first under the new Hunting with Dogs (Scotland) Act which came into force in October 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5n6kakbw>

Prosecution – Fox hunting: Benjamin Halsall, 23 from Whatcote Road, Shipston-on-Stour, has been charged with hunting a wild mammal with dogs under the Hunting Act 2004, along with Warwickshire Hunt Limited, from Kidlington, Oxfordshire. This follows an investigation by the Warwickshire Police Rural Crime Team into an alleged incident in the Idlicote area of Warwickshire on 9 October 2023, where dogs were allegedly involved in the death of a Fox. Halsall and

Warwickshire Hunt Ltd will appear at Leamington Spa Magistrates Court on 31 May 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/5eew47vh>

Prosecution - Fox hunting: Four men face trial for alleged hunting offences after hounds killed a Fox on a family's patio in Norfolk in February 2023. Edward Bell, 29, and Adam Egginton, 22, both of Moor Lane in Necton in Norfolk, and Andrew Kendall, 66, of Hulver Road in Henstead, near Beccles in Suffolk, all deny three counts of criminal damage to a property in Hingham; two counts of owning or being in charge of a dog dangerously out of control in Hingham on 20 February 2023 and Tittleshall in Norfolk on 8 February 2023; Two counts of hunting a wild mammal with dogs in Hingham on 20 February 2023 and Tittleshall on 8 February 2023. Adam Egginton and Andrew Kendall have also denied intentionally encouraging/assisting the commission of a summary offence. Not guilty pleas were also entered for a fourth man, Robert Gurney, 53, of West Norfolk Foxhounds. Mr Gurney, of Bawdeswell in Norfolk, was charged with hunting a wild mammal with dogs, and being the owner or person in charge of a dog dangerously out of control at Tittleshall on 8 February. All four will attend trial at Norwich Crown Court, sitting in Great Yarmouth, in July 2024. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/yc8hjaad>

Conviction – Fox hunting: Thomas Ledbury, 38, from Corsham, in Wiltshire appeared at Swindon Magistrates Court on 18 March 2024 for sentencing for his role in throwing a live Fox to a pack of hounds near Melksham, Wiltshire on 24 December 2020. Ledbury had

been captured on video supervising another hunter drag the Fox from its den before throwing it to the hounds. Ledbury pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting another to commit an offence, namely causing unnecessary suffering to a Fox. He was sentenced to a 12-month community order to complete 240 hours unpaid work and ordered to pay costs of £660, along with a victim surcharge of £95. Ledbury's co-accused, Oliver Thompson, was sentenced to a 20-week suspended prison sentence in December 2023 and Ex-Avon Vale Hunt master, Stuart Radbourne, also received a suspended 18-week custodial sentence in November 2023. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/mr2eevnt>

VIOLENCE AND THEFT ASSOCIATED WITH HUNT MEETS

Conviction – causing actual bodily harm (ABH): Charlie Mayo, a member of the Blackmore and Sparkford Vale Hunt in Dorset was convicted by a jury at Bournemouth Crown Court on 4 April 2024 for causing actual bodily harm (ABH) to a hunt saboteur in December 2021. Mayo had struck the back of the victim's head with the bone end of his whip causing a 3cm laceration that required glue and stitches at hospital. Mayo was ordered to pay 'substantial court costs and compensation'. Source: <https://tinyurl.com/3cstbdk9>

MISCELLANEOUS

Police appeal – headless

Porpoise: North Wales Police are appealing for information after a Porpoise's head was removed on 11 February 2024 after the carcass had washed-up at Aberffraw Bay, Anglesey a week earlier. PC Amy Bennett of the North Wales Police Rural Crime Team said: "This is a disturbing incident and an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017". Source: <https://tinyurl.com/55d3xnnz>

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