

# Conservation news supplement

## Appendix

Full details of active cases and convictions mentioned in the wildlife crime section of February's Conservation news (BW 303.308) are given below.

### BIRDS OF PREY

#### Appeal for information -

**Peregrine in pole trap:** CPolice Scotland has issued an appeal for information after a dead Peregrine was found hanging in an illegal pole trap on the Bavelaw Estate near Balnerno, Edinburgh on 23 November 2023. Source: <https://shorturl.at/mtxY1>

#### Appeal for information - missing satellite-tagged Golden Eagle:

Police Scotland has issued an appeal for information after the suspicious disappearance of a satellite-tagged Golden Eagle in the Scottish Borders. The eagle ('Merrick') was from the South Scotland Golden Eagle Project and vanished on 18 October 2023 in a notorious wildlife crime hotspot in the Moorfoot Hills. Police Scotland said: "A full search of this area was carried out and officers believe the bird has come to harm and are treating its disappearance as suspicious". Source: <https://shorturl.at/zQRV2>

#### Appeal for information -

**poisoned Red Kite:** Norfolk Constabulary has issued an appeal for information about the poisoning of a Red Kite. The bird was found dead in a field in North Creake in August 2023 and subsequent toxicology tests have now revealed a number of pesticides including

high levels of Bendiocarb. Source: <https://shorturl.at/cAGUX>

#### Appeal for information - shot

**Buzzard:** Essex Police has issued an appeal for information after an injured Buzzard was found in a field near to Layer Wood, Layer Marney on 29 December 2023. An x-ray revealed the Buzzard had been shot and a shotgun pellet had broken its wing, suggesting it had been shot close to where it was found. Source: <https://shorturl.at/tBEP7>

#### Appeal for information - shot

**Peregrine:** Essex Police are appealing for information following the discovery of an injured Peregrine in the Highwood area of Chelmsford on 15 January 2024. The bird was admitted to South Essex Wildlife Hospital and after examination is believed to have been shot. Source: <https://shorturl.at/aitJ>

#### Trial discontinued - Goshawk

**shooting:** A prosecution against Thomas Edward Jones, 38, for the alleged shooting of a Goshawk at a commercial pheasant-rearing facility in north Powys in July 2022 was discontinued at Welshpool Magistrates court on 6 December 2023. The court refused an application from the CPS for an adjournment which left the CPS unable to continue. Source: <https://shorturl.at/CMSZ7>

#### Conviction - Peregrine

**laundering:** Sentencing has been deferred for part-time gamekeeper Timothy Hall, 48, and his son Lewis Hall, 23, of Lamberton Holdings, Berwickshire after they pleaded guilty in December 2023 to multiple offences relating to the illegal laundering of Peregrines in Scotland. Appearing at Jedburgh Sheriff Court on 15 January 2024, Sheriff Peter Paterson deferred sentencing for four weeks to allow HMRC to investigate their accounts. Sentencing is now expected on 12 February 2024. Source: <https://shorturl.at/ffj15>

#### Conviction - Peregrine disturbance & egg theft:

Christopher Wheeldon, 34, of Darley Dale, Matlock appeared at Southern Derbyshire Magistrates Court on 15 January 2024 where he pleaded guilty to the disturbance of a Peregrine nest and theft of Peregrine eggs at Bolsover, Derbyshire in April 2023. He was given an 8 week custodial sentence for these offences, and a further 10 weeks for unrelated offences. Source: <https://shorturl.at/orxKX>

#### Hen Harrier persecution -

2023 was the worst year for the persecution of Hen Harriers since DEFRA's controversial brood meddling scheme began in 2018. From January to September 2023, 24 Hen Harriers were killed

or disappeared in suspicious circumstances. The period between October – December 2023 has yet to be reported. Source: <https://shorturl.at/rxzQY>

## OTHER BIRDS

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### **Appeal for information – ducks attacked with catapult:**

The RSPCA has issued an appeal for information after two ducks were found heavily bleeding after a catapult attack near Gun Pond, Lingfield in Surrey. The ducks were found on 26 November 2023 and had to be euthanised. The National Wildlife Crime Unit has reported a growing trend of youths targeting ducks and swans with catapults and has set up a working group to tackle these offences. Source: <https://shorturl.at/bdrFP>

### **Arrest – causing unnecessary suffering to a Swan:**

Gwent Police has arrested a 35-year old man after a video of someone dragging a Swan by the neck in a park near Caerphilly Castle went viral. The footage was captured on 3 December 2023 and Gwent Police confirmed the man had been arrested and was being held in custody on suspicion of causing unnecessary suffering. Source: <https://shorturl.at/fszY3>

### **Conviction – intentionally killing wild birds:**

A driver who drove through a gaggle of Greylag Geese killing seven of them has been convicted of intentionally killing wild birds. Abraham Andemariam, 31, of Asbridge Street, Toxteth, Liverpool was found guilty in his absence in September 2023 of seven counts of killing the geese on July 15 2023 on Omega Boulevard in Great Sankey, Warrington. He was also found

guilty of driving without due care and attention and driving without an MOT certificate. At Liverpool Magistrates Court in November 2023 Andemariam was jailed for 12 weeks, suspended for 12 months. He was also banned from driving for six months, ordered to complete 50 hours of unpaid work in the community and pay costs totalling £234 at £20 a month. The court heard he was sacked as a result of the incident. Source: <https://shorturl.at/chiHV>

### **Conviction – disturbance & destruction of gull's nest:**

A pest controller in Northern Ireland has been convicted for disturbing and destroying a gull's (species unknown) nest without a licence in May 2023. Terence Turkington, 64, of Seven Mile Straight, Co. Antrim had pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing to two breaches of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985, claiming he didn't know the licensing regulations had changed. He was fined £150 for each offence, with time to pay. Source: <https://shorturl.at/dCHS8>

## HARES

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### **Arrest – Hare coursing:**

Lincolnshire Police arrested three men aged 33, 37 and 47, all from the Durham area, on suspicion of Hare coursing at Sea Lane, Wainfleet on 30 November 2023. Their vehicle and dogs were seized. The men were released on bail pending further enquiries. Source: <https://shorturl.at/ag369>

**Arrest – Hare coursing:** A man was arrested on suspicion of Hare coursing in the Barlborough area of Derbyshire on 11 December 2023. The police also seized his

dog. Investigation ongoing. Source: <https://shorturl.at/nACEP>

**Arrest - Hare coursing:** Two men were arrested on suspicion of Hare coursing in the Pinchbeck area of Lincolnshire on 17 December 2023. Lincolnshire Police seized the vehicle, two dogs, one thermal imager and two mobile phones. Investigation ongoing. Source: <https://shorturl.at/mQSU2>

### **Arrest - Hare coursing:**

Lincolnshire Police arrested three males from Leicestershire and Nottinghamshire on 3 January 2024 on suspicion of Hare coursing. Their vehicle and dog were seized. Investigation ongoing. Source: <https://shorturl.at/ESV04>

### **Prosecution – Hare coursing:**

Two men have been charged in relation to an incident of Hare coursing in Maidenhead, Berkshire, following an investigation by Thames Valley Police's Rural Crime Unit. Tommy Cole, 19, of The Paddock, Lyne Road in Surrey and Danny Mitchell, 21, of Hazelwood Lane, Binfield, Berkshire were charged on Friday, December 1 with one count of being equipped for searching for or pursuing Hares with dogs. The charges relate to an incident in Howe Lane, Paley Street in Maidenhead on 30 November 2023. Both men were bailed to appear at Slough Magistrates' Court on Tuesday, 2 January 2024. Source: <https://shorturl.at/dhiYZ>

### **Conviction – animal cruelty/**

**fighting:** Brothers Kristen Cooper, 24, of Bransgore in Hampshire and Todd Cooper, 29, of Sway in Hampshire were convicted at Southampton Crown Court in January 2024 of committing multiple animal cruelty offences in Dorset and Hampshire, including mutilating

deer and hares and encouraging dogs to attack them, and holding down a deer whilst striking it with a blunt object. The offences were found on the defendants' phones. A vet called to court as an expert witness described the offences as some of the worst cases of animal abuse he had seen in his 24 year career. Other offences included causing criminal damage, handling stolen goods, driving offences, assault, actual bodily harm and threatening a person with an offensive weapon. Kristen Cooper received a prison sentence of five years and was made the subject of a ten-year Criminal Behaviour Order which includes conditions preventing him from being in possession of a catapult and from being on agricultural or farmland between the hours of 12am and 6am. He was also banned from owning a dog for a period of ten years. Todd Cooper received a prison sentence of three years and eight months. Source: <https://shorturl.at/bFHQW>

#### **Conviction - Hare coursing:**

Patrick Robert Shannon, 51, from Annesley Street, Belfast appeared at Ballymena Magistrates Court in Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland in December 2023 for sentencing after previously admitting aggravated trespass on Glenwherry Moor in January 2022 when he and two others were caught Hare coursing. Shannon received a 3-month custodial sentence, suspended for three years. His co-defendants, Darren Prenter and Patrick McGourty had also received suspended custodial sentences at a previous hearing. Judge Broderick told Shannon that when deciding his sentence, he had to take into account his criminal record of 156

previous convictions. These include having served concurrent jail sentences of eight years and seven years for armed robberies in 2008. At the time of the Hare coursing, Shannon was on bail for smuggling a controlled drug into Maghaberry Prison during a visit to his brother. Source: <https://shorturl.at/dntV8>

#### **Conviction - Hare coursing:**

Michael Chaulk, 25, of Bittams Lane Chertsey, Surrey and William Smith, 21, of Ecton Lane, Northampton appeared at Lincoln Magistrates Court on 11 December 2023 charged with hunting a wild mammal with dogs and trespass with intent to pursue Hares with dogs at Common Drove, Peterborough on 12 March 2023. Chaulk was also charged with failing to comply with a community protection order. Smith was ordered to carry out 100 hours unpaid work and Chaulk 120 hours. They were given a deprivation order for all four dogs, leads, lamp and collars and they were ordered to pay £4,929.83 kennel costs each. They were disqualified from driving for 56 days and were each ordered to pay costs of £450 and a victim surcharge of £114. Chaulk was also handed a Criminal Behaviour Order for four years and Smith was given a three-year CBO. Source: <https://shorturl.at/xzSXZ>

## **BADGERS**

#### **Prosecution – Badger baiting:**

Jason Lee Kennedy (35), from Marble Arch Road, Enniskillen appeared for a committal hearing at Enniskillen Magistrates Court in December 2023 facing 18 charges relating to allegedly causing suffering to Badgers and Cats through baiting and fighting, which he recorded and

supplied to others on 28 June and 4 July 2022. He was also charged with being in possession of three dead Badgers and one live Badger. Kennedy's case has been upgraded from the Magistrates Court to the Crown Court where more severe penalties are available. Kennedy was granted continuing bail to appear for arraignment at Dungannon Crown Court on 16 January 2024. He has been ordered to sign in with police four times per week and has been banned from being in possession of any animal, or from attending any hunting-related activities, prior to his case being heard at Crown Court. Source: <https://shorturl.at/DFUZ0>

#### **Conviction – Badger baiting:**

23-year old gamekeeper Ryan Martin pleaded guilty at Aberdeen Sheriff Court on 6 December 2023 to causing dogs to fight with Badgers and Foxes on various occasions during 2021 and 2022. Martin, of Balmanno Cottages, Marykirk, had uploaded videos of the animal fighting to social media platforms. He was ordered to carry out 175 hours of unpaid work and was banned from keeping or working with dogs for five years. His dogs were signed over to the Scottish SPCA and have since been rehomed. Source: <https://shorturl.at/nBDGL>

#### **Conviction - Badger baiting:**

Liam Talbot from Weaverham, Cheshire appeared at Chester Crown Court on Monday 8 January 2024 where he pleaded guilty to causing unnecessary suffering in relation to a dog called Sid, animal fighting between dogs and Badgers or Foxes, causing three dogs to fight with wild animals and taking and killing a Badger. Talbot was

sentenced to 16-weeks in prison, suspended for 18 months, and disqualified from keeping all animals for three years. He was also given a community order with 25 hours rehabilitation activity requirement, and ordered to pay £500 in costs and £154 victim surcharge. Source: <https://shorturl.at/quDJZ>

### **Increase in Badger sett disturbance** – Lincolnshire

Police's Wildlife Crime Officer has warned of an increase in the illegal disturbance (filling in) of Badger setts across the county and has advised that all reports will be investigated with the intention of prosecuting offenders. Source: <https://shorturl.at/nps78>

## **BATS**

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### **Conviction – bat roost**

**destruction:** A building design and construction company has been fined £2,605 for illegally destroying a building in Lliswerry, Newport where protected Pipistrelle Bats were known to be roosting. Christopher Davey, the Director of Your Space Projects Limited, pleaded guilty to breaching the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) at Newport Magistrates Court on Tuesday 9th January 2024. Source: <https://shorturl.at/aeB58>

## **POACHING**

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### **Conviction – poaching:** An

unnamed man has been convicting for poaching under the Game Act 1831 after being found by British Transport Police hunting wildlife with dogs and trespassing on the railway in Doncaster, South Yorkshire. He was summonsed to court in December 2023 and was

fined approx. £500. Source: <https://shorturl.at/bjnHK>

### **Conviction – fishing without a**

**licence:** Tony Simpson, 40, from Orpington, South East London, was caught fishing without a licence at a fishing club near Witney, Oxfordshire over the May Bank Holiday in 2023. Appearing at Hastings Magistrates Court on 6 November 2023 he was ordered to pay £443. Source: <https://shorturl.at/ekZ12>

### **Conviction - fishing without**

**a licence:** Eleven men were sentenced at Swindon Magistrates Court on 8 January 2024 for illegal fishing practices including fishing without a licence and fishing during the closed season. Joshua Cooper, 19, of Warren Avenue, Southampton, was found guilty in his absence of fishing without a licence at Highbridge, River Itchen, Eastleigh. He entered no plea and was fined £220 and ordered to pay costs of £135 and a victim surcharge of £88. Hajri Karoshi, 53, of Yeftly Drive, Littlemore in Oxford, pleaded guilty to two offences. He was fined £51 for fishing without a licence and £54 for fishing during the annual close season at Hockley, River Itchen, Winchester. He was also ordered to pay costs of £135 and a victim surcharge of £43. William Manning, 27, of Sleaford Road, Beckingham in Lincolnshire, pleaded guilty to fishing without a licence at River Test, Southampton, and was ordered to pay a total of £268, consisting of a £95 fine, £135 in costs and a £38 victim surcharge fee. Oakley Bedford, 23, of Beaufort Road, Havant, in Hampshire, was ordered to pay a £128 fine after he pleaded guilty to fishing without a licence at Sinah Warren, Havant. Bedford was also made to pay £135 in costs and a

victim surcharge of £51. Neculai Mocanu, 53, of Hounslow Road, Feltham, Middlesex, pleaded guilty after he was found fishing at The Malms at the River Itchen, Winchester, in the close season. He was made to pay a total of £191, including a £40 fine, £135 in costs and a victim surcharge of £16. Petro Petrascu, 47, of New Chapel Square, Feltham, pleaded guilty to fishing at The Malms at the River Itchen, Winchester, during the close season. He was fined £330 plus £135 in costs as well as a £132 victim surcharge fee. Patrick Taylor, 25, of Harlaxton Road, Grantham, in Lincolnshire, did not enter a plea when he was found to be fishing without a licence at River Test, Totton. In his absence, he was ordered to pay a fine of £220, plus an £88 victim surcharge and costs of £135. Adam Taylor, 27, of London Road, Ashford, Middlesex, was found guilty in his absence of fishing without a licence at River Farm, Fareham. He was ordered to pay £433 in total, including a fine of £220, an £88 victim surcharge and costs of £135. Astrit Veshi, 49, of Rivermead Road, Oxford, was found guilty in his absence of two offences at Hockley, River Itchen, Winchester. These offences were fishing without a licence and fishing during the annual close season for freshwater fish. He was fined £440 for the two offences and ordered to pay £135 in costs and a £176 victim surcharge. Andon Xhika, 36, of Cranmer Road, Oxford, pleaded guilty to fishing without a licence and fishing during the annual close season at Hockley, River Itchen, Winchester. He was ordered to pay a total of £387, including £90 fine for each offence, £72 victim surcharge and £135 in costs. Harry Burston, 30, of Hazelmere, Otterford, Chard,

was found guilty in his absence of fishing without a licence at the Chard Reservoir. He was fined £220 and ordered to pay £135 in costs and an £88 victim surcharge fee. Source: <https://shorturl.at/nqrAX>

### **Appeal for information - suspected poaching:**

Gloucestershire Constabulary is urging the public to report suspected incidents of poaching in the Forest of Dean over the winter months following increased reports from Forestry England which manages part of the land. Any firearm discharges after dark or at weekends on land managed by Forestry England is likely to be poachers. Source: <https://shorturl.at/jkAJV>

## **FOXES**

**Arrests – Fox hunting:** Suffolk Police have arrested two men on suspicion of hunting offences after a Fox was chased by hounds on 16 December 2023 at Hintlesham, near Ipswich and another Fox was chased and subsequently killed by hounds in Crowfield on 23 December 2023. A 32-year old man and a 33-year old man were arrested on 17 January 2024 and were taken to Bury St Edmunds Police Station for questioning. They have been released under investigation pending further enquiries. Source: <https://shorturl.at/bCRW1>

**Prosecution – six animal welfare offences in relation to Fox and Badger fighting:** Huntsman Sam Staniland appeared at Ipswich Magistrates Court on 18 December 2023 where he denied six offences including failing to prevent injuries and suffering to multiple terriers, a foxhound, and two lurchers by

causing, and failing to prevent, dogs from fighting with Foxes and Badgers. The court also heard that Staniland failed to provide appropriate veterinary care for his injured dogs. Staniland, who has a previous conviction under the Hunting Act during his time working with the Meynall and South Staffordshire Hunt, will return to court in the New Year as the case continues. Source: <https://shorturl.at/eklKW>

**Conviction – Fox hunting:** A huntsman has been convicted of deliberately allowing dogs to chase a Fox. Christopher Woodward, 39, of Burford, Oxfordshire was at the time of the offence in January 2023 the huntsman of the Wynnstay Hunt in Wrexham, Wales. He was found guilty at Wrexham Magistrates Court on 21 October 2023 and was fined £525 plus costs and a victim surcharge, amounting to a total of £1375. Woodward has a previous conviction for interfering with a Badger sett in February 2023 and another conviction for causing intentional harassment, alarm or distress after he rode his horse at hunt saboteurs in January 2023. Source: <https://shorturl.at/dnOVZ>

**Conviction - Fox hunting:** A former huntsman has been convicted of throwing a live Fox to a pack of hounds to be savaged and another conviction for encouraging a Patterdale terrier to terrorize a Fox. Oliver Thompson, 33, formerly of Old Berkshire Hunt Kennels, Farringdon, Oxfordshire was employed by the Avon Vale Hunt when the offences occurred in the Melksham area of Wiltshire in 2020. At Swindon Magistrates Court on 11 December 2023 Thompson was handed two suspended prison

sentences to run concurrently: 20 weeks custody for causing unnecessary suffering to a Fox (by causing the animal to be thrown to a pack of hounds) and six weeks suspended custody for causing unnecessary suffering to a Fox (by deliberately putting it in close proximity to a dog). In addition, one of his dogs was handed to the RSPCA. Thompson was also ordered to pay costs of £2,500, a victim surcharge of £128 and undertake 300 hours of unpaid work. Source: <https://shorturl.at/fgT89>

**Conviction - Fox baiting:** A father and son who acted as terrier men for the Kent Hunt have been found guilty of causing unnecessary suffering after two dogs were found with substantial injuries sustained from animal fighting. One dog had extensive facial scarring and part of its tongue was missing, while the jaw wounds on another dog had been superglued in a botched attempt at a DIY repair. Incriminating messages and photographs were found on mobile phones during a Kent Police/RSPCA raid in January 2023 in relation to animal fighting. At Folkestone Magistrates Court on 20 December 2023, Robert Mills (66) and Jack Mills (22) of Elham near Canterbury were each sentenced to 23 weeks custody, suspended for two years. They were also both ordered to undertake 150 hours of unpaid work and to each pay £654 in costs and victim surcharges. Both were disqualified from keeping, owning or participating in controlling or transporting any animals for five years; no application may be made to appeal this for two years. Five dogs were seized by the RSPCA and will be rehomed. Source: <https://shorturl.at/krCIX>

**Acquittal – Fox hunting:** The former whipper-in of the Middleton Hunt has been cleared of an offence under the 2004 Hunting Act. Mark Baldwin was found not guilty following a trial at Scarborough Magistrates Court on 13 November 2023. Baldwin had been charged with hunting a wild mammal with a dog, contrary to Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004. The charge was in relation to a Fox that was killed by Foxhounds at a Middleton Hunt meet on the 25th January 2023. Source: <https://shorturl.at/xFNOW>

**Charges dropped – Fox hunting and assault:** A charge of illegally hunting a wild mammal with a dog has been dropped against Sam Jones, 34, of Cottsesmore Road, Ashwell. The charge related to an alleged incident in Loddington in February 2023. Mr Jones was separately acquitted of assaulting a hunt saboteur which was alleged to have happened during the Cottsemore Hunt. Mr Jones was found not guilty at Leicester Magistrates Court on 21 November 2023. Source: <https://shorturl.at/etMZZ>

**Case discontinued – Fox hunting:** A prosecution has been discontinued against huntsman Alex Warden, 25, of North Bradley, Wiltshire, who was due to stand trial in December 2023 accused of illegally hunting a wild mammal (a Fox) with dogs and causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal after video footage emerged in February 2023 showing members of the Avon Vale Hunt throwing a Fox to a pack of hounds. Two other men (Aaron Fookes and Stuart Radborne) were earlier convicted in relation to the incident but Warden opted

for a trial by jury. Prior to the trial beginning at Salisbury Crown Court, the CPS decided to discontinue its case. Source: <https://shorturl.at/muQY1>

## **VIOLENCE AND THEFT ASSOCIATED WITH FOX HUNTING**

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**Conviction - wounding during Fox hunt:** A senior police officer has welcomed the 18 month custodial sentence handed down to huntsman Christopher Mardles, 27, who deliberately rode his horse at a hunt saboteur during a meet of the Pytchley Hunt, Northamptonshire in September 2020. The victim had to be airlifted to hospital with broken ribs, a broken collarbone, a split shoulder blade and nerve damage. Mardles pleaded guilty to Section 20 – wounding at Nottingham Crown Court in March 2023 and was sentenced at the same court on 9 November 2023. Source: <https://shorturl.at/akmov>

**Conviction – assault by beating during Fox hunt:** Steve Pinn appeared in court in December 2023 and pleaded guilty to assault by beating on 28 January 2023 when he had attacked a hunt saboteur at a meeting of the Weston and Banwell Harriers Hunt. He was fined £757, ordered to pay costs of £150 and £303 victim surcharge. Source: <https://shorturl.at/cenGZ>

**Prosecution - alleged assault & theft during Fox hunt:** Two men have been charged following alleged assaults and thefts at the Blackmore and Sparkford Vale Hunt in Dorset in September and October 2023. A 33-year old male from the Colehill area and a 34-year

old male from the Poole area are due to appear at Weymouth magistrates Court on 16 February 2024. Source: <https://shorturl.at/pqrZ1>

## **WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING**

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**Appeal for information:** Devon & Cornwall Police, along with the RSPCA, is appealing for information following the discovery of seven dead Aldabra Giant Tortoises in Ashclyst Forest near Cullompton, Devon on 8th and 12th January 2024. This species is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Source: <https://shorturl.at/fhVY6>

**CITES products seized:** Thousands of products containing endangered plant and animal species have been seized by UK Border Force as part of a month-long international operation in October 2023. Officers made 145 seizures containing thousands of wildlife products which are banned by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). UK seizures included 53 live CITES listed birds, 5.5kgs of ivory, 434 live plants, over 1,000 health supplements containing illegal plant and animal products, 1 ceremonial headdress made with big cat fur, vulture and falcon eggs, a Lesser Flamingo feather bracelet, 5 seizures of controlled wood products and 26 reptile skin products including Crocodile and Python. Source: <https://shorturl.at/tKM12>

**Ruth Tingay,  
Wild Justice and Raptor  
Persecution UK; @RuthTingay**