

BRITISH WILDLIFE: WILDLIFE CRIME NEWS (Issue 38.1 Oct 2026)

43 Ring-necked Parakeets killed with catapults in London park. Groups of youths using catapults are "lamping" and killing sleeping Ring-necked Parakeets in a south-east London park, according to a director of the Greenwich Wildlife Network., 43 birds have been recovered dead from Priory Gardens in Orpington over a three-week period, including five found in early September. The birds roost together in trees at night, making them easy targets for the culprits who shine bright lights at them to stun them before shooting them with catapults. Catapult attacks at the park date back to 2020, with target species ranging from squirrels, pigeons, coots and ducks. Local residents have witnessed attacks in broad daylight, with some attackers filming the incidents and uploading clips to social media platform TikTok. Bromley Council said the killing of the birds "continues to be a concern" that it is assisting the police in its investigation. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/4bryejnk>

Man convicted for trapping wild Goldfinches, Pembrokeshire. Colwyn Probert, 38, of Kingsmoor Caravan Park in Kilgetty, Pembrokeshire, appeared at Llanelli Magistrates' Court for sentencing on 2 July 2026 after pleading guilty to three offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and one offence under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 in relation to the trapping and caging of wild Goldfinches in his garden. Probert was banned from keeping birds for 15 years and was sentenced to eight weeks in prison, suspended for two years. He was also given 20 rehabilitation activity requirement days and a six-month curfew, and ordered to pay £400 in costs and a victim surcharge of £154. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/33yewenj>

Man jailed for causing unnecessary suffering to a rabbit in Poole, Dorset. A man who filmed himself causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal in Poole and uploaded it onto social media has been jailed. In October 2025, Billy Banks, 33, of Poole, Dorset posted a video showing him pulling a live rabbit from a bag at Broadstone recreation ground before setting a lurcher-type dog on it. Banks could be seen kicking the rabbit several times to make it run so that the dog could continue pursuing it. Banks was identified from the footage and subsequently arrested and charged with causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal. Banks pleaded guilty at Poole Magistrates' Court on 28 May 2026 and appeared at Bournemouth Crown Court on 7 August 2026 for sentencing. He was given a six month custodial sentence and was also banned from owning or keeping dogs, rabbits or Hares for a period of ten years. Banks was further sentenced for unrelated charges of being concerned in the supply of class A drugs and acquiring, using or possessing criminal property linked to an investigation in Poole in 2023. He was sentenced to a total of six years and one month in prison. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/yc5wjz3r>

Four men convicted for Hare coursing in Humberside. Four men appeared at Grimsby Magistrates' Court in July 2026 following a Hare coursing incident at Kilpin, East Yorkshire in September 2025. Robert Doig, 27, of Dalwhamie Street, Kinross, was found guilty of careless driving, driving whilst disqualified, and illegally hunting a wild mammal with dogs under Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004. He received a 12-week prison sentence suspended for 12 months, a 21-month driving ban, and was ordered to pay a £550 fine, £160 in court costs and a £154 victim surcharge. Joseph Smith, 41, of Golden Hind Drive, Worcestershire and Tony Taylor, 24, of Hodfar Road, Worcestershire were found guilty of illegally hunting a

wild mammal with dogs under Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004. They both received a £750 fine, collection orders, and were ordered to pay £160 in court cost and a £300 victim surcharge. Walter Varey, 31, of Paradise Farm in Bedfordshire was also found guilty of illegally hunting a wild mammal with dogs under Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004. He received a £550 fine, a collection order, and was ordered to pay £160 in court costs and a £220 victim surcharge. In addition, both Doig and Smith received five-year Criminal Behaviour Orders, with conditions including that they must not be present on any private or agricultural land within Humberside without written permission of the landowner and must not be present in any vehicle with a sighthound, greyhound, lurcher type dog or crossbreed which is not registered and/or microchipped whilst outside a 5-mile radius of their home.

Source: <https://tinyurl.com/38vf57r6>

Construction firm fined over deaths of 150 bats in Scotland. A construction firm which admitted the reckless destruction of a colony of 150 bats has been fined £17,000. Dumfries Sheriff Court heard in July that the Soprano Pipistrelle bats died when holes they were using to enter and exit their roost were blocked. City Building (Glasgow) LLP carried out the building works at 1 Blacklocks Vennel in Lochmaben, Dumfries and Galloway, during the summer of 2023. The court was told that it was the biggest case of its kind in Scotland, and one of the biggest in the UK. The Sheriff reduced the fine from £25,000 to account for the company's early plea. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/yjd2ruck>

Stourbridge man jailed for Badger baiting offences. A man from Stourbridge has been sentenced to 20 months' imprisonment and handed a 10-year ban on keeping animals after pleading guilty to two animal welfare offences and 16 Badger Act offences. Daniel Lea, 35, of Belbroughton Road, Stourbridge, appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court on 3 July 2026 following an investigation and prosecution by the RSPCA. In February 2025, Inspectors from the RSPCA's Special Operations Unit, alongside officers from West Midlands Police, attended Lea's premises after receiving reports that his dog had been used in activities involving the hunting of wildlife, including Badgers. Video footage from Lea's phone showed Lea "giving encouragement" to his dog to attack a Badger on several different occasions, and the defendant digging to find Badgers and damaging a Badger sett. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/3rawynmh>

Trial date for man accused of alleged Hare coursing offences in Lincolnshire. A trial date has been set for a man who denies a Hare coursing charge in Lincolnshire. Tommy Lee, 29, of Westwood Road, Stockbury, Kent appeared at Boston Magistrates' Court on 22 July 2026 where he pleaded not guilty to trespassing on land at South Drove, Lutton Marsh, Lincolnshire on 15 January 2026 with the intention of using a dog to search for Hares. His trial is due to be heard on 30 October 2026. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/35678ze5>

Five men accused of alleged Hare coursing in Gloucestershire. Five men appeared at Cheltenham Magistrates' Court on 18 August 2026 accused of going equipped for Hare coursing in the Cheltenham area on 27 January 2026. Billy Smith, 21, of Starcroft Lane, Minsterworth, is alleged to have been equipped with a car, dogs, lamps and slingshot to search or pursue Hares. The other four defendants are accused of offences under the Police, Crime, Sentencing & Courts Act 2023. They are Jayden Lewis, 21, of Pantyffn Road, Penyard, Merthyr; Thomas Hearne, 20, of Blaenant Road, Nantyglo; William Bridges, 18, of Stone Houses, Blaina, Abertillery; and Tom Regan, 24, of Gwalia Terrace, Blaina. Their case

was adjourned until 30 September 2026 for a plea hearing. *Source:*

<https://tinyurl.com/wupdethd>

Man sentenced for hitting and stamping on ducks. Owen Raynor, 20, of Greenside Avenue, Staincross, South Yorkshire appeared at Barnsley Magistrates' Court on 7 September 2026 where he pleaded guilty to one offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 of intentionally killing or causing injury to three ducks/ducklings. The incident took place at Cawthorne Woods, Barnsley, where Raynor had been filmed chasing a flock of ducks before striking three of them with large sticks and then repeatedly stamping on them. The video had been posted on social media. Raynor was handed an 18 week custodial sentence suspended for two years. He was also ordered to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work, pay £400 in costs and a £154 victim surcharge. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/4pk3amyr>

Trial moves to Crown Court for two men charged with animal cruelty and pornography offences. Two men appeared at Poole Magistrates' Court on 2 September 2026 charged with various offences including extreme animal pornography and cruelty. Christopher Mills, 37, of Loop Farm Road, Lytchett Matravers, Dorset is charged with possessing extreme pornography showing sex or oral sex with a live or dead animal (a live chicken and a Trout) in February 2024. Mark Cooper, 30, of no fixed abode, also appeared in court charged with causing unnecessary suffering to a protected animal. It is alleged that Cooper left a Fox trapped on 15 November 2023. He allegedly let a dog attack the Fox before he stabbed it. The magistrates considered the charges serious enough to be upgraded to a higher court and the two men will appear at Bournemouth Crown Court on 1 October 2026. *Source:*

<https://tinyurl.com/m58pc9bu>

New Operation Seabird website. Operation Seabird is a UK wide movement built on collaboration, care and shared responsibility, bringing together communities, conservation organisations, enforcement agencies and partners to protect marine, coastal and estuarine wildlife. A new website has been launched providing a range of resources and educational material aimed at helping to prevent disturbance to marine species and habitats. *Source:*

<https://tinyurl.com/pju22dn6>

Red Kite found poisoned in Cairngorms National Park. Police Scotland has appealed for information after walkers found a dead Red Kite at Morven Hill, near Dinnet, in the Cairngorms National Park on 30 June 2026. Toxicology tests revealed it had been poisoned with a banned substance. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/5n8ahj6u>

Red Kite caught in illegal trap in Cairngorms National Park. Police Scotland has issued an appeal for information after the discovery of a Red Kite caught in an illegal trap in the Strathdon area of the Cairngorms National Park. The kite was found in May 2026 in a 'Duke' coil spring trap, which is similar to a gin trap. The trap is not authorised for use in the UK. Enquiries are ongoing. *Source:* <https://tinyurl.com/y3cz7cuy>

Trial collapses against two gamekeepers accused of shooting Red Kites in Cairngorms National Park. The trial has collapsed against two gamekeepers accused of various offences relating to the shooting of Red Kites in the Strathdon area of the Cairngorms National Park (see BW 37.8). All charges were dropped at Aberdeen Sheriff Court on 20 July 2026 after the Sheriff accepted the defence's motion that there was no case to answer. This centred around the poor quality of the video evidence produced in court. Multiple witnesses had viewed the

raw footage at a police station and had identified the two suspects, but the footage had been adapted to be played on substandard recording equipment in the court and the witnesses were unable to identify the suspects during their evidence sessions in the court. *Source:*

<https://tinyurl.com/54fzbe8z>

Three-year General Licence restrictions imposed on two shooting estates in Scotland.

NatureScot has imposed two General Licence restrictions on two gamebird shooting estates in Scotland based on evidence of raptor persecution crimes. The three-year restrictions were imposed on the Milton of Drimmie Estate in Perthshire, following the recent conviction of gamekeeper Russell Mason who was caught on camera battering to death a trapped Goshawk on the estate (see BW37.6), and on Invermark Estate in the Angus Glens after the discovery of a shot Peregrine (see BW 36.2). Invermark Estate has lodged an appeal against the General Licence restriction and this is currently under consideration by NatureScot. *Source:*

<https://tinyurl.com/2v284va8>

Raeshaw Estate receives permission to pursue Judicial Review of general Licence restriction relating to shot Golden Eagle. Raeshaw Estate in the Scottish Borders has received permission from the court to pursue a judicial review of the three-year General Licence restriction imposed on the estate by NatureScot in February 2026. This was an unprecedented second General Licence restriction imposed on this estate (the first one was issued in 2015). It was given in response to the alleged shooting and killing of a Golden Eagle called Merrick, close to the estate's boundary, in October 2023 (see BW 35.7). The grounds for Raeshaw Estate's judicial review are not yet public but the case is due to be heard on 29 September 2026 at the Court of Session in Edinburgh. *Source:*

<https://tinyurl.com/adha3ksy>

Dr Ruth Tingay is a co-director of Wild Justice and writes the Raptor Persecution UK blog. @ruthtingay.bsky.social