



## Annual Report 2010





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## Chief Constable's Foreword



*Richard P D Crompton*

During the past 12 months I have had the privilege of holding national responsibility for wildlife crime on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). It has been a steep learning curve for me and much of that learning has been informed by my colleagues in the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU). Although few in number, their contributions to national and international wildlife crime enforcement issues has been very significant and they enjoy the rare distinction of knowing that they have made a real difference to the natural world that so many of us enjoy. In the following pages you will read about some of that groundbreaking work. It ranges from localised issues relating to welfare and conservation, through to criminality of a serious and organised nature and ultimately, to a huge international operation concerning the illegal trade in endangered species. The staff at the unit deserve great praise for their work which is more often than not done in direct support of individual forces. It is also frequently done in the full glare of the media spotlight as this type of criminality is of huge interest to the general public.

They do not, however, do the work alone. We can only tackle wildlife crime if we work together and during this year I have witnessed some truly fantastic partnership working. This has been displayed at a national level through the support of the UK and Scottish Governments; through the professional commitment of a range of agencies, and most importantly, through the support and expert advice of many nongovernmental and voluntary organisations.

As co-chair of PAW, the UK Partnership for Action against Wildlife crime, I commend this report and the work of the unit to you. It amply demonstrates that the very modest funds put to this purpose make a very significant difference in this important area of work.

**Richard P D Crompton**  
BA (Hons); MA (Econ)  
Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police

## Executive Summary

The NWCU are involved in a multi-agency approach for the investigation of wildlife crime in the UK. As the conduit for information sharing, the NWCU plays a vital role - offering a one-stop shop for agencies involved in the fight against wildlife crime. The NWCU is the only unit in the UK that fulfils this role and it has allowed the UK to gain an enviable worldwide reputation for the coordinated and cohesive manner in which it combats wildlife crime.

In the last year, the NWCU have been involved in investigations which have resulted in the seizure/forfeit of more than £400,000 worth of criminal gains. A number of serious and organised crime groups have also come to the notice of the NWCU via pro-active intelligence gathering. This work has generated significant enquiries across the UK, linking to active investigations abroad. All this

work has highlighted the vast scale and significance of wildlife operations across the UK and further afield. Some of the successful results have included:

- ◆ The first ever Serious Crime Prevention Order for wildlife crime and eight months imprisonment for offences contrary to Control of trade in Endangered Species (COTES) Enforcement Regulations 1997
- ◆ 10 months imprisonment for offences under the Customs and Excise Management Act (CEMA) and COTES regulations
- ◆ Eight weeks imprisonment for possessing a wild goshawk, making false representation to register the bird and making false statements to obtain new paperwork
- ◆ 44 weeks imprisonment (suspended for 18 months) and 200 hours of unpaid work for offences relating to the trade in skulls and taxidermy of species protected by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES)
- ◆ 16 week suspended sentence, increased to an immediate eight week custodial sentence at appeal for offences contrary to the Wildlife & Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (relating to the sale and possession of wild birds)
- ◆ 12 months community order, 16 week curfew, forfeiture of sparrowhawks, £80 costs and £50 fine for breaching bail for possession of wild taken birds under WCA 1981 and prohibited purchase contrary to COTES 1997
- ◆ 12 month conditional discharge, £85 costs and forfeiture of the bird for charges of keeping an unregistered goshawk
- ◆ Seizure of traditional medicines worth an estimated £9 million



- ◆ £10,760 costs, 18 month conditional discharge and banned from keeping birds for 12 months for possessing wild birds and causing unnecessary suffering
- ◆ £2,107 confiscation order and £1,500 costs for offences under COTES regulations and smuggling charges relating to the unlawful importation of birds' eggs
- ◆ £1,000 fine and £115 costs for prohibited keeping Annex A<sup>1</sup> species for sale
- ◆ £600 fine and forfeiture of a barn owl for two offences of prohibited sale of Annex A species
- ◆ £400 and loss of job for shooting a buzzard
- ◆ £350 fine, £95 costs and destruction of caviar for offences under the COTES Regulations 1997, relating to the sale of illegally imported caviar

There have been 3477 intelligence logs processed at the NWCUC this year alone - almost the same amount that were processed in the two previous years added together. The unit also processed nearly 10,000 incidents, compared to just 3832 in 2008/09. The unit also doubled the amount of intelligence collections it made; conducted 14 times more database checks and was asked for five times more analytical products. In addition, the unit has more than doubled the amount of actions it processed this year and seven more agencies have signed up to formally share data with NWCUC.

The last year has also seen the unit use prudent financial planning and partnership funding to increase its staffing levels. Joint funding from the Association of Chief Police Officers in Scotland (ACPOS) and PAW Scotland was awarded for the first ever Scottish Investigative Support Officer

(ISO). Partnership funding<sup>2</sup> also allowed the unit to appoint the first ever poaching project officer for England & Wales and finally, the NWCUC was able to enhance its provision of services via the development of a researcher.

If the NWCUC can secure funding for the next three years it will be able to embark upon a number of international enquiries of significance which will invoke the proceeds of crime act. In this way, the NWCUC will seek to target the enormous monetary gain that offenders are making from their involvements in the illegal trade in wildlife.

### Purpose of the NWCUC

The primary role of the NWCUC is to assist in the prevention and detection of wildlife crime. It does this by obtaining and disseminating intelligence from a wide range of organisations, by undertaking analysis which highlights local or national threats and by directly assisting law enforcement agencies in wildlife crime investigations. The NWCUC reports to a high-level UK tasking and coordinating group and is the gateway between all of the agencies, domestically and internationally, that:

- ◆ have a legal obligation to deal with wildlife crime
- ◆ have an interest in dealing with wildlife crime, or
- ◆ hold information/intelligence relating to wildlife crime



*The cohesive alliance between the RSPCA and the NWCUC as policing partners, provides a foundation for improved intervention in tackling animal related crime.*

Mark Martin, RSPCA



### UK Wildlife Crime Priorities

This report documents the fact that crimes against wildlife are widespread, numerous and varied. However, the NWCUC has limited resources and, accordingly, has to rigorously focus its efforts to gain maximum impact. The NWCUC is therefore informed by an annual liaison meeting (the Wildlife Law Enforcement Working Group) with the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations (SNCOs<sup>3</sup>), other agencies<sup>4</sup> and relevant Non Government Organisations (NGOs<sup>5</sup>) as to those offences which have greatest impact on UK and global wildlife. Together with reports from police forces as to concerns over volumes of wildlife crime, these enable the selection of priority areas for the NWCUC to focus on. The six current priority areas (as shown below<sup>6</sup>) are reviewed every second year.

1. Badger Persecution
2. Bat Persecution
3. CITES issues (specifically trade in caviar, ivory, rosin, tortoises and traditional medicines)
4. Freshwater Pearl Mussels
5. Poaching (including deer and fish poaching and hare coursing)
6. Raptor Persecution (especially golden eagle, white-tailed eagle, red kite, hen harrier and goshawk)

All the priority areas have implementation plans with plan owners and leads identified for the prevention and enforcement of crimes. Other areas may also be identified as priorities for the gathering of intelligence. In 2009/10 these include: orchids, eels, finch trapping and egg collecting.

<sup>1</sup>Listed on Annex A of the European Community (EC) CITES Regulations.

<sup>2</sup>Funded by the Environment Agency, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and the Deer Initiative through the PAW coalition.

<sup>3</sup>Countryside Council for Wales, Environment Agency Northern Ireland, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Natural England, Scottish Natural Heritage.

<sup>4</sup>Environment Agency, Marine Fisheries Agency, Royal Botanic Gardens (Kew). <sup>5</sup>Bat Conservation Trust, Plantlife, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, TRAFFIC.

<sup>6</sup>Listed in alphabetical order, not by measurement of importance.



## Making a difference

### Value of assets seized in criminal cases<sup>7</sup>

In the last year, the NWCUC have been directly involved in many investigations which have collectively resulted in the seizure or forfeit of more than £400,000 worth of criminal gains, as shown in the table below:

It is evident from the value of assets seized in those criminal cases the NWCUC were directly involved in during 2009/10 (over £400,000) that wildlife is a highly valuable natural asset which is being profoundly exploited by the criminal fraternity. A selection of recent cases are described in the following pages.

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*Devon and Cornwall Police have utilised the services of the NWCUC ISO's and intelligence unit during the investigation of wildlife offences and execution of warrants. The assistance of the NWCUC has been invaluable and has been readily provided lending a greater degree of professionalism in this sphere of criminality.*

Dave Knight  
Devon & Cornwall Police

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Result	Date	Issue/Species	Value Seized
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Cross compliance investigations with RPA	£160,000
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Going equipped for theft	£106,000
Forfeited by retail owners	February, 2010	Traditional medicines	£50,000
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Birds of prey	£18,000
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Birds eggs	£15,000
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Primates and mammals	£12,000
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Birds of prey	£10,000
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Birds eggs	£7,000
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Lemurs	£6,900
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Goshawks	£6,000
Seized and forfeited	July, 2009	Traditional medicines	£5,000
Forfeited	April, 2010	Skulls and taxidermy species	£3,500
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Taxidermy species	£2,155
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Tortoises	£1,500
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Taxidermy species	£1,500
Seized and forfeited	July, 2009	Lemur	£1,400
Forfeited	September, 2009	Goshawk	£1,000
Forfeited	July, 2009	Red-backed shrikes	£1,000
Forfeited	November, 2009	Goshawk	£800
Forfeited	February, 2010	Caviar	£500
Seized and forfeited	September, 2009	Birds of prey	£500
Seized and forfeited	November, 2009	Finches	£250
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Peregrine falcon	£200
Seized and forfeited	July, 2009	Barn owls	£200
Seized (Case ongoing)	Ongoing	Owls	£200
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£410,605</b>

<sup>7</sup>Only includes items actually uplifted/seized subject of PACE (where court proceedings are on going).

Does not include seizures in cases that resulted in cautions or where specimens were retained by the offender at the conclusion of proceedings.





“The NWCU is proving effective in assisting police forces tackle crimes against wildlife here in the UK and overseas. It is essential that the NWCU is adequately resourced if we are to see progress made against the UK wildlife crime priorities, and securing the NWCU's future must be a priority for Defra and the Home Office. We look forward to working closely with NWCU colleagues to achieve a meaningful reduction in crimes against birds of prey through the raptor persecution priority.”

David Hoccom, Acting Head of Investigations, RSPB

## Raptor Persecution

### Wild Taken Goshawks

In November 2008 officers from NWCU, Cheshire police and Animal Health visited John Simcox's home address to conduct an unannounced examination of a number of suspected wild taken goshawks. This inspection followed on from suspicions raised when Simcox reported that a microchip he had fitted in a female goshawk had failed. Enquiries later revealed that the likelihood of a microchip failing are one in 600,000. Samples were taken from the female goshawk and its claimed offspring which he had previously sold to another keeper. DNA analysis proved that the birds could not be related.



Wild Taken Goshawks

Additionally there was evidence to suggest that Simcox had switched his aging bird with a younger one and that he misled authorities to register the new goshawk. Simcox was charged with possessing a wild goshawk, making false representation to register the bird<sup>8</sup> and making false statements to obtain new paperwork. On

9th September 2009 John Simcox was sentenced to eight weeks imprisonment for possession of a wild goshawk and was banned from keeping Schedule 4 birds for five years. The NWCU ISO and Cheshire's wildlife crime coordinator, who were heavily involved in the case appeared on BBC TV's 'The One Show' on 2nd November 2009.

### Unregistered Goshawk



Goshawk

On 12 November 2009, Joseph Fitzpatrick of Liverpool appeared in court charged with keeping an unregistered goshawk. Prior to this, in October 2009, Merseyside police and the NWCU executed a search warrant at Fitzpatrick's home. They found an unregistered goshawk, which he admitted he had owned for several months. Fitzpatrick also admitted that he had previously received a warning letter from Animal Health for failing to register a goshawk, which he had ignored. He was arrested and charged. On his first appearance he pleaded guilty to the offence and was given a 12 month conditional discharge and ordered to pay £85 costs. The goshawk (pictured) was forfeited.

## Annex A Species - Barn Owls

Derek Shaylor of Kidderminster appeared in court on 7th August 2009 charged with two offences of prohibited sale of Annex A species (barn owls). Intelligence had suggested that Shaylor was offering owls and other raptors for sale on the internet without the appropriate paperwork. He promised prospective buyers that the birds were legal and that article 10 certificates (A10s) would follow. Checks with Animal Health confirmed that neither Shaylor nor any of the birds had been issued with valid permits. On 15th June 2009, the NWCU, the RSPB<sup>9</sup> and West Mercia police executed a search warrant at Shaylor's home address. Shaylor was arrested and interviewed. He admitted selling the two barn owls without the necessary A10 certificates. An NWCU ISO was intensely involved in the case, through the development of intelligence, assisting with operational planning, execution of search warrants, interviewing the offender, conducting follow-up enquiries, taking statements, preparing files and providing guidance to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Shaylor pleaded guilty to all charges and was fined £200 for each offence (total £600). Magistrates also ordered the forfeit of a female barn owl (pictured) that was still in his possession.



Barn Owl

<sup>8</sup>Goshawk is listed on Schedule 4 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and therefore birds must be ringed and registered with Animal Health if kept in captivity.

<sup>9</sup>Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.



## UK National Wildlife Crime Unit - Annual Report 2010

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*I was grateful for the support and presence of the NWCUC while interviewing a number of company directors during a large environmental crime enquiry. Their contribution, expertise and reassurance were invaluable.*

PC Samantha Briggs  
Strathclyde Police

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### Poisoned Buzzard

Following the recovery of a poisoned buzzard in August 2009, the Scottish ISO was dispatched by the Tayside police wildlife crime coordinator to check a pheasant pen from where he recovered the poisoned bait that had killed the buzzard (a pheasant poult). The resulting operation in Tayside, where the gamekeeper (Graham Kerr from Longforgan) was questioned, led to the recovery of illegal pesticide on his possession, and a shot buzzard in the rear of his vehicle. Kerr also admitted to killing and burying a buzzard 12 months previously. He pleaded guilty in court and was fined £400 for shooting the buzzard and admonished for possession of pesticide. Following the conviction his employment was also terminated.

### Wild Taken Birds

In July 2008 NWCUC, South Yorkshire police and the RSPCA<sup>10</sup> executed a search warrant on an address in Rotherham. A number of rare red-backed shrikes and stonechats were seized. Protracted enquiries were made and a man was summoned for offences relating to the sale and possession of wild birds. The birds are believed to have been trapped in France and brought into the UK on false papers. An NWCUC ISO assisted with operational planning, executing search warrants, interviewing the offender, preparing files, undertaking various enquiries around the

UK, tracing the issues of bird rings and giving evidence in court. Sean Fitzpatrick was convicted in July 2009 of offences contrary to the WCA 1981. He was given a 16 week suspended sentence, although this was increased to an immediate eight week custodial sentence at his appeal hearing.

### Sparrowhawk Conviction

In September 2009, as a result of intelligence developed by the NWCUC, Staffordshire police (supported by NWCUC officers) executed a search warrant at the home address of Paul

Wilkinson. Officers seized four young sparrowhawks, in circumstances which strongly suggested these were wild-taken birds. Wilkinson claimed he purchased the birds without the required A10's. NWCUC assisted in Wilkinson's arrest and interview and he was charged with possession of the birds under WCA 1981 and prohibited purchase of an Annex A specimen (contrary to COTES 1997). He pleaded guilty to all the offences and was given a 12 month community order and a 16 week curfew. The birds were all forfeited. He was also ordered to pay £80 costs and £50 for breaching bail.



Photo by Andy McWilliam

Sparrowhawk

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*The fact is the NWCUC has matured into a pro-active organisation which is managing intelligence and identifying intelligence requirements both regionally and nationally in support of identified priorities. As time has progressed the unit is delivering more and more in respect of 'taskable' material being presented for action, and this is ultimately reflected in an increasing number of successful operations. In particular, credit is due in respect of those producing intelligence products; to the ISO's for the additional expertise, energy and capacity they provide, and not least to the improvements in structure and product which have cemented NWCUC's relationship with forces and the Scottish TCG.*

Superintendent Alan Smailes  
Wildlife Crime Co-ordinator for Grampian Police  
and Chair of the Scottish Tactical Tasking and  
Coordinating Group (TCG) for Wildlife Crime

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<sup>10</sup>Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.





### Wild Taken Finches

Acting on intelligence, in February 2009, NWCU and RSPB assisted Northumbria police to execute a search warrant at the home address of John McGough. Officers seized finches, including two bramblings and a siskin, which were found to be wild taken birds fitted with tampered leg rings. McGough was arrested and charged with possessing wild birds and causing unnecessary suffering. A trial date was fixed for 16th February 2010; however McGough pleaded guilty at the last minute. NWCU assisted with operational support during the search, provided witness evidence and attended court proceedings. McGough was given an 18 month conditional discharge, was banned from keeping birds for 12 months and was ordered to pay £10,760 costs.

### Poaching

#### Operation Hallend

NWCU assisted with warrants in Sussex in December 2009 that were served on the addresses of a suspected deer poaching gang. Over 30 weapons were seized (including air weapons, crossbows, shotguns and rifles). A number of deer carcasses were seized and four men were arrested. Three of the suspects have now been charged with offences in relation to the Deer Act; shooting during hours of darkness; hunting with a crossbow; possession of section 1 ammunition and offences regarding the storage of weapons. The Detective Inspector in charge of the enforcement action said *"in the immediate aftermath of the operation we learnt that other rural based criminal enterprises shut down for a period through fear of being next on the list. We also had overwhelming support and positive feedback from the rural community."*



*Operation Hallend enhanced our flow of intelligence regarding rural crime; I can only assume that people trusted that we would act. As a result we have conducted similar operations resulting in the seizure of stolen vehicles and other unlawfully held firearms. Since the operation we did get a few reports of poaching but that has tailed off to negligible.*

DI Ian Williams, Sussex police



### CITES cases

#### Skulls and Taxidermy



Monkey skulls

Graham and Norah Pitchforth of Wakefield, West Yorkshire were arrested in December 2006 by West Yorkshire police. This was initiated through NWCU and UK Border Agency (UKBA) intelligence. Property recovered from the address included numerous skulls, dried bats/insects and taxidermy items. It became apparent that they had been importing CITES items (from Indonesia and South Africa) without permits and there was clear evidence of large scale trade on the internet (particularly eBay). The Pitchforth's were quite prepared to trade anywhere in the world and did not comply with the CITES requirements for trade in and out of the EU. Species involved included valuable specimens of Indonesian and African animals and birds (e.g. monkeys, flying foxes, African lion, hornbills and birds of prey). European species, including otter, birds of prey and

owls, were also included in the charges. NWCU prepared two reports in reference to the offences and were involved in the decision making process, leading the direction of the case and advising counsel. NWCU officers also provided support during the interview of the suspects. The Pitchforth's were charged with 51 offences relating to the trade in skulls and taxidermy of species protected by CITES. They appeared at Leeds Crown Court on 1st March 2010 and pleaded guilty to 24 offences each. Both were sentenced to 44 weeks imprisonment (suspended for 18 months) and 200 hours of unpaid work.

#### Operation Carapace

An extremely significant prosecution took place this year resulting in the issuing of the first ever Serious Crime Prevention Order for wildlife crime. On 14th May 2009, David Johnson, a reptile dealer from Shropshire, was sentenced to eight months imprisonment for eight offences contrary



*As the recently appointed wildlife and environmental crime co-ordinator for Fife it was hugely beneficial to have a resource whose knowledge and experience was only matched by its enthusiasm and willingness to help. The requirement to contact them does not seem to diminish with the passage of time and the standard of the assistance offered is always first class.*

Ian Laing  
Wildlife and Environmental  
Crime Co-ordinator, Fife







## UK National Wildlife Crime Unit - Annual Report 2010

to COTES (Enforcement) Regulations 1997. The charges related to the prohibited sale of 197 Annex A tortoises, the prohibited purchase of 200 Hermann's tortoises and making false statements to obtain A10 certificates. Whilst on police bail Johnson purchased a further 200 Hermann's on invalid Slovenian permits and then sold them on without A10s. The Judge later stated that this deliberate offending whilst on bail sealed his sentence. The Judge has also ordered an inquiry under the Proceeds of Crime Act. In interviews Johnson said that 'conservation was not his concern and that he was in it for the money'. On 23rd March 2009 Johnson pleaded guilty to all charges. Sentencing Johnson, His Honour Judge Onions said "this is serious crime and they are matters of worldwide concern." He told Johnson that as a professional trader "conservation was his concern" and that "he had a duty to know the law." The Serious Crime Prevention Order, which is the first for a wildlife offence, prohibits Johnson from possessing any Annex A specimens for three years. The purpose of the order is to prevent reoffending and any breach could result in an immediate prison sentence. NWCUC officers played a significant role in this case, through the development of the intelligence, planning the operation, producing the business case, executing the search warrant, interviewing the offender, conducting all follow-up enquiries and taking statements, examining documentary evidence and computer records, undertaking file preparation and giving guidance to CPS. The Judge praised the manner in which the case was presented.

### Leopard Bone Case

On 22nd July 2009 officers from NWCUC, UKBA, Animal Health, Greater Manchester police and North Wales police executed a search warrant at the Chinese Medical Centre, Manchester. Officers seized a large quantity of CITES protected species both in the raw form and as part of manufactured remedies. Products seized included 112 packs, each containing four plasters, which had leopard bone listed in the ingredients. The sale of anything containing derivatives of leopard is prohibited<sup>11</sup>, unless there is a valid exemption certificate (A10) in place. No such certificates have been issued for leopard bone plasters. Mr Liu, a Chinese herbalist, was arrested and interviewed by police and NWCUC officers. Liu admitted he had bought the plasters in China. He claimed it was only when he returned to the UK that he realised that leopard bone was included in the ingredients. He was charged with 'prohibited keeping Annex A species for sale' and on 22nd November 2009, Liu pleaded guilty. He was fined £1,000 and ordered to pay £115 costs. Magistrates said they took offences involving the trade in endangered species extremely seriously, but they took into account his early guilty plea and the fact that he had shown remorse for the offences.

### Tortoise Enquiry

After the development of intelligence at the NWCUC, in September 2009 NWCUC assisted Cumbria police execute a search warrant at Carlisle Tortoises. The owner was arrested and charged with eight offences relating to the prohibited sale of

Annex A tortoises and another offence of fraud. NWCUC assisted in the execution of the search warrant, the interview of the suspect, follow-up enquiries, file preparation and CPS guidance and the suspect has now been committed to Carlisle Crown Court.

### Caviar Offences

After the development of intelligence at the NWCUC, on 17th February 2010, Nataljia Grinova appeared before magistrates charged with offences under the COTES Regulations 1997, relating to the sale of illegally imported sturgeon caviar.



Caviar

After the development of intelligence at the NWCUC, on 17th February 2010, Nataljia Grinova appeared before magistrates charged with offences under the COTES Regulations 1997, relating to the sale of illegally imported sturgeon caviar. In December 2009 a joint investigation by NWCUC, UKBA and Merseyside police identified a person in Liverpool offering jars of 'Genuine Russian Sturgeon Caviar' for sale on eBay. Enquiries with eBay identified the seller as Grinova yet Animal Health had no record of her applying for import permits. With NWCUC assistance, Grinova was arrested and interviewed. She freely admitted importing the caviar from Ukraine without import permits and then selling it on eBay.

“Hertfordshire Police remains one of those forces without a full time wildlife and environmental crime officer and finding the time to work on wildlife matters can often be difficult, usually the time allocated is goodwill in our own time. However, our links with NWCUC remain strong. The ISO's have assisted us with the investigation of several matters, attended case conferences and provided support and training.

Jamie Bartlett, Wildlife Crime Co-ordinator, Hertfordshire

<sup>11</sup>Listed on Annex A of the EC CITES Regulations.



Grinova pleaded guilty to the prohibited sale of illegally import sturgeon caviar. Magistrates said that the illegal trade in caviar was a matter of global concern, but that they had taken into account Grinova's previous good character, her compliance with the officers and her early guilty plea. She was fined £350 and £95 costs and 22 jars of caviar were ordered to be destroyed. The CPS prosecutor praised the quality of the report provided by NWCU.

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*Since being appointed Dumfries and Galloway Constabulary wildlife crime co-ordinator in January 2009 the continual assistance and co-operation that has been offered to myself from the NWCU in our efforts to combat wildlife crime has been invaluable.*

John Jamieson  
Wildlife Crime Co-ordinator  
Dumfries and Galloway

”

### Illegal Ivory Trade

Following intelligence received from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and developed by the Metropolitan police, NWCU and HMRC<sup>12</sup>, a warrant was executed by HMRC and Bedfordshire police in June 2007 for offences relating to the international trade in ivory. In October 2009, Nicholas Noonan was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment for offences under CEMA and COTES Regulations. Upon appeal (against the sentence) the Court judgment made it quite clear that not only was the custodial sentence entirely appropriate but that previous sentencing may not have been severe enough for the seriousness of the crime by saying “*we regard these sentences as failing properly to reflect the gravity of these offences. Perhaps, unlike many offences, a serious deterrent sentence might stop the trade and prevent those who otherwise live law-abiding lives from committing these serious crimes. They*

*are serious because they contribute to the illegal market. Without an illegal market there would be no opportunity or need for the capture of these endangered species from the wild. It is the market which feeds the destruction of these species. It is for that reason that significant and serious sentences ought to be passed for this type of offence.”*

### Rhino Horn

Rhino horns are currently in great demand (especially for use in traditional medicines) and their market value has soared. Items expected to raise £8,000 at auction are selling for over £30,000. During 2009 there have been several different incidents where illegal rhino horn trade has come to light. An antique dealer charged with theft of a rhino horn from a client in Gloucestershire was convicted and sentenced to 27 weeks imprisonment (suspended) and ordered to do 150 hours of unpaid work. The horn in this case is understood to have been sold onto south east Asia. NWCU advised on this case and assisted in obtaining an impact statement. Shortly after, another man was arrested by UKBA officers as he was about to leave for China carrying two concealed horns. NWCU assisted in the arrest of a further man in relation to the supply of those horns and NWCU have also led on a Norfolk case where a man is charged with selling two rhino horns to the USA.

## International cases

### International Illegal Bird Trading

In December 2009, the NWCU and Animal Health identified suspicious trading in birds of prey with links to birds being illegally imported from South Africa, being offered for sale in UK and Europe. In January 2010, the NWCU, UKBA, Animal Health and West Midlands police executed search warrants and seized seven birds of prey. A man was arrested for making a fraudulent application to obtain import

permits and for the illegal import and prohibited sale of birds (which were valued at around £25,000). The suspect is currently on bail. NWCU officer developed intelligence, assisted operation planning, helped to execute the search warrant, assisted with interviews, conducted followup enquiries, contributed to press releases and prepared a full prosecution file. This case is currently ongoing.

### Operation Burley

In August 2008, Andrew Seed from Durham was identified as a collector of birds' eggs taken illegally from the wild. The resultant multi-agency operation led to the recovery of 2,500 eggs taken illegally from across the UK and abroad. In May 2010, Seed pleaded guilty to four smuggling charges relating to the unlawful import of birds' eggs from the USA and Australia. He also pleaded guilty to 11 offences under COTES Regulations. Seed received a nine-month suspended jail sentence; was made subject to an order preventing him collecting eggs for five years; was ordered to pay £2,107 confiscation order and £1,500 costs. During the investigation, the NWCU identified another individual in Scotland who was also suspected of illegally trading in wild birds' eggs. Along with the work of other UK police forces and the RSPB, a further UK individual was identified who was suspected of illegally trading eggs. Between them, more than 11,000 illegal eggs have been recovered and all three suspects are linked to the illegal trade across Scandinavia, Africa, North America, and Australia, where enquiries are still ongoing. NWCU ISOs have been actively involved in all of these enquiries and the NWCU have facilitated intelligence disseminations from the outset. As a result of intelligence sent to Scandinavian enforcement officials, a further seizure of 3,000 illegal eggs occurred.

<sup>12</sup>HM Revenue and Customs.





## Operation Tram

The UK's contribution to Operation Tram, which ran throughout February 2010, saw a multi-agency group (NWCUC, Animal Health, UKBA and police forces across England and Scotland) seize large quantities of traditional medicines. The UK was one of at least 19 countries taking part in Operation Tram, which is the first ever globally coordinated effort against the illegal wildlife trade. World-wide, the initiative resulted in a number of arrests and the seizure of traditional medicines



*I am pleased that the amount of Hare Coursing and poaching in Humberside can now be properly recognised and assessed due to us submitting data - brilliant work folks.*

Christopher Hine  
Wildlife Crime Officer  
Humberside Police



*As Chair of PAW Scotland I would like to take the opportunity this report affords to state my support for the work of NWCUC. The sheer volume of intelligence that is gathered analysed and redistributed for use operationally alone would be impressive enough. However, the dedication and commitment by the team to go that extra mile - in contributing to PAW, in supporting non police partners, in engaging with enforcement across the world and in looking for best practice and innovation - is vital in pushing forward the fight against wildlife crime. Without them the picture would be much less clear - for police and for all other PAW partners - and their energy is an example to us all.*

Roseanna Cunningham MSP, Minister for Environment



worth an estimated £9 million. Operation Tram was the successful first example of many planned global initiatives targeting wildlife crime enforcement and the NWCUC will continue to lead in this developing business area.

## Highlighting the threat from wildlife crime

### Convictions

As cases progress, reviews are conducted by NWCUC staff via the two national criminal history systems (PNC<sup>13</sup> and SCHS<sup>14</sup>) to ensure that the data remains current and

actionable. The NWCUC are working tirelessly to review every single case they hold, therefore allowing instant access to numbers of successful prosecutions for wildlife crime.

In comparison to 2008/09, where the unit had 51 convictions recorded, the last year has seen 115<sup>15</sup> convictions recorded at the NWCUC. This rise is partly attributable to better recording practices at the NWCUC and, over the coming years, the unit will continue to refine their recording processes to ensure accurate reporting of criminal histories as they relate to wildlife crime.

Outcomes	2008/09		2009/10	
	No.	%	No.	%
Intelligence recorded	74	4.8%	2449	70.4%
Ongoing	493	31.7%	523	15.0%
UKBA Seizure	33	2.1%	138	4.0%
Convicted	51	3.3%	106	3.0%
No Further Action	512	33.0%	76	2.2%
Pending (Court Case)	59	3.8%	72	2.1%
Insufficient Evidence/No Court Proceedings	40	2.6%	48	1.4%
Caution/Warning/Fine/Conditional Discharge*	29	1.9%	40	1.2%
Unknown	243	15.6%	10	0.3%
No Criminality	18	1.2%	10	0.3%
Not Guilty/Admonished*	1	0.1%	5	0.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1553</b>		<b>3477</b>	

\*Figures slightly different than seen in last NWCUC annual report as one case from 2008/09 removed from 'Caution/Warning/Admonish' category and included in a new 'Not Guilty/Admonished' category.

<sup>13</sup>Police National Computer. <sup>14</sup>Scottish Criminal History System. <sup>15</sup>The table shows 106 convictions but this is made from 76 intelligence logs relating to specific person(s) of which there are 115 individual convictions (some logs refer to convictions of more than one offender).



## Partnership working

In 2009/10 the NWCUC has continued to increase its partnership working, resulting in significantly more intelligence being submitted to us. The amount of intelligence the NWCUC receive from its partner agencies has vastly increased from last year. This highlights the willingness and effort that all the NWCUC's partners have shown in the sharing of information.

Intelligence shared with NWCUC Police Forces and Partner Agencies	April 2007 - March 2008	April 2008 - March 2009	April 2009 - March 2010	Grand Total
Police Forces	947	1459	2728	5134
NWCUC <sup>a</sup>	400	384	180	964
UKBA	45	107	147	299
Defra/ Animal Health	6	46	138	190
Non-govt organisations	37	27	110	174
RSPCA/ SSPCA	1	26	74	101
Science agencies <sup>b</sup>	8	27	43	78
Statutory nature conservation organisations <sup>c</sup>	0	32	9	41
Other	3	1	20	24
Other Enforcement Agency	n/a	n/a	22	22
International Enforcement Agency	n/a	n/a	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>1447</b>	<b>2109</b>	<b>3477</b>	<b>7033</b>

<sup>a</sup>Information received into the NWCUC which has been internally processed into intelligence

<sup>b</sup>Scientific Agencies include Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) and Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture (SASA)

<sup>c</sup>Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations include Natural England and Scottish Natural Heritage

## Intelligence

There have been 3477 intelligence logs processed at the NWCUC this year alone - almost the same amount that were processed in the two previous years added together. Each intelligence log is assessed, researched and input onto the NWCUC wildlife database by the Intelligence Officers.

## Information sharing protocols

The NWCUC are involved in a multi-agency approach to investigate wildlife crime within the UK. As the conduit for information sharing, the NWCUC plays a vital role - offering a one-stop shop for partner agencies. The NWCUC is the only

unit in the UK that fulfils this role. Via the creation of information sharing protocols drawn up under MOPI<sup>16</sup> principles, the following organisations signed up to formally share appropriate data with the NWCUC in 2009/10:

1. Countryside Council for Wales
2. International Fund for Animal Welfare
3. RSPB
4. Rural Payments Agency
5. North Western & North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee
6. Animal Health
7. British Association for Shooting & Conservation

“

*I'd say that to date Derbyshire Constabulary have had very positive experiences with NWCUC. I consider them to be the real driving force behind the national response to wildlife crime. Without NWCUC's co-ordination the picture would be very localised and disjointed. The staff are also great and always really helpful.*

Darren Belfield  
Wildlife Crime Officer  
Derbyshire

”

<sup>16</sup>Management of Police Information.





## UK National Wildlife Crime Unit - Annual Report 2010

Information sharing protocols are also ongoing or being considered with a number of other organisations. As contacts are made with organisations where data can be exchanged for policing purposes, protocols for information sharing will be considered and adopted by the NWCUC, furthering the amount of intelligence it can act upon in future.



*On behalf of Hertfordshire Constabulary, I'd like to thank the NWCUC ISO for his help. He changed his commitments at very short notice which should be commended. He has also offered his assistance with the ongoing investigation and any interview(s) which may follow - an offer which is very much appreciated! Trying to coordinate an enforcement job from a distance proved difficult, but I was reassured to know that we had the support and backing of the NWCUC.*

Jamie Bartlett  
Wildlife Crime Co-ordinator  
Hertfordshire



### Incidents

In the 2009/10 year, the NWCUC processed 9999 incidents (compared to just 3832 in 2008/09). Every incident received at the unit is categorised and imported into the wildlife database by the analyst or the researcher. In the last year, the NWCUC have begun to process incident data from several partner organisations. These include:

- ◆ Bat Conservation Trust
- ◆ League against Cruel Sports
- ◆ RSPB
- ◆ Scottish Badgers

In total the NWCUC have processed 581 incidents from the above partners in 2009/10 (compared to 0 last year).



*The Northern Ireland Environment Agency enjoys a positive working relationship with NWCUC who have provided advice, support and the availability of the ISO's to assist with investigations in relation to wildlife crime. In particular they have provided significant support and assisted with joint investigations between the PSNI and NIEA in relation to COTES and dangerous wild animals. NWCUC also provide support to PAWNI. With the help from NWCUC, NIEA are taking a coordinated approach to dealing with wildlife crime that falls under the remit of more than one department or agency.*

Donna Cassidy, Northern Ireland Environment Agency



### Analytical reports

The NWCUC continue to produce the full range of National Intelligence Model products, although it was agreed in early 2009 that the NWCUC would only produce a strategic assessment every second year. In 2009/10, the NWCUC also started producing regular newsletters for the police wildlife crime officer network.

Analytical Report	April 2007 - March 2008	April 2008 - March 2009	April 2009 - March 2010
Analysis for Priority Delivery Groups	0	0	10
Tactical Assessment	5	5	7
Problem Profile	1	7	6
Sanitised Product	1	7	6
Newsletters	0	0	5
Intelligence Chart	0	2	4
Pen Picture	6	1	4
Briefing Paper	4	5	3
Subject Profile	0	0	1
Strategic Assessment	1	1	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>46</b>

The NWCUC continued to increase the number of intelligence charts they provided for police forces and they have vastly increased the amount of analysis they do for the groups which are responsible for the delivery of the UK wildlife crime priorities.



*The Society recently signed up to an information sharing protocol with the NWCUC and is delighted to report that such sharing of information is already proving fruitful in the detection of crime, with several individuals already detected and reported for prosecution in relation to welfare and wildlife crime. It is felt by the society that this is the right way forward in the prevention and detection of both animal welfare and wildlife crime.*

Mike Flynn, SSPCA





### Serious and organised crime groups

Over the last year a number of crime groups have come to the notice of the NWCU through proactive intelligence gathering. This work has generated significant enquiries across the UK, linking to active investigations abroad. Working with their partners in Animal Health, the NWCU have added value locally, nationally and internationally, which over the course of the following months will come to fruition. This pro-active approach is showing crucial in-roads in the investigation of wildlife crime, which is all contributing to the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.



*Animal Health's Wildlife Licensing and Registration Service has a strong working relationship with the NWCU that is based on shared goals and mutual support. The partnership has realised a number of significant achievements in the past 12 months, and we are looking forward to further developing and enhancing the way we work together so that we can maintain this record of success in the future.*

Catherine Brown  
Chief Executive  
Animal Health



Many of the cases that have been reported in this annual report have shown that wildlife crime is of a very serious nature and can be extremely well organised. The Judge in the Johnson case stated "this is serious crime and they are matters of worldwide concern" which led to Johnson being given the first ever Serious Crime Prevention Order for wildlife crime. For Operation Tram the UK was one of 19 countries across the world who worked in partnership to seize illegal products worth

an estimated £9 million. In the Pitchforth case there was clear evidence of large scale trade on the internet and the Pitchforth's were quite prepared to trade anywhere in the world. The sheer scale of their offending was evident when they were charged with a total of 51 offences. In addition, evidence that NWCU officers looked at in the Pitchforth case resulted in several other offenders being identified. In the Simcox case, the organised nature of his crime was evident in the way he misled authorities to register the new goshawk by claiming the microchip had failed. During Operation Burley, the UK suspects had been organising the illegal trade of birds' eggs across Europe, the United States, South Africa and Australia. In addition, during an ongoing case in Scotland (which the Scottish NWCU ISO was involved in) a large quantity of illegal firearms and ammunition were seized, showing the wider implications and risks involved in the investigation of wildlife crime.

The NWCU have also been involved in the major case below which has shown criminality throughout Europe:

### Operation Birch<sup>17</sup>

An operation in South Wales took place to support a major European enquiry to investigate allegations of laundering wild-taken birds of prey. In May 2009, a number of premises were raided in South Wales. This followed the earlier arrest of two men in Belgium by police targeting people alleged to have taken bird eggs of a number of European raptors to launder them into the legitimate captive market. The joint operation involved the Belgian federal police, the South Wales police, the NWCU and Animal Health. Assistance was provided by the RSPCA and the RSPB. One man was arrested and bailed pending police enquiries.

### Conservation and prevention work

Reports from Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC); Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH); Countryside Council for Wales (CCW); Natural England and the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) inform us of the current conservation status of UK priority species and the importance of enforcement intervention. These are summarised below.

#### Bats

Bats are highly dependent on man-made structures and this makes them particularly vulnerable to building works (accounting for <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>s of all reported bat crime). The conservation status of all bat species also continues to concern. Research demonstrates that criminal behaviour has a significant effect on bats. The preventative, analytical and partnership work that was previously done as part of Operation Bat (overseen by NWCU) must be built on further with a continued focus on prevention. This has to be complemented by securing convictions via effective professional investigation and the imposition of dissuasive penalties.

#### CITES species<sup>18</sup>

Unless trade regulations are properly enforced and the illegal trade curtailed, the population of some species face severe decline in the wild. Coordinated action by enforcement agencies, through prevention, intelligence gathering, detection and prosecution, is essential to overall conservation efforts to maintain the species at (or enable them to recover to) favourable conservation status.

<sup>17</sup>Section taken from 'Legal Eagle' Issue # 59, with kind permission of the RSPB.

<sup>18</sup>Key species are caviar, ivory, rosin, tortoiseshell, traditional medicines.





## UK National Wildlife Crime Unit - Annual Report 2010

### Freshwater pearl mussels

Scotland holds c50% of the world's functioning populations of this globally threatened species and it has been estimated that Scottish populations of pearl mussels could be wiped out in less than 20 years and the cause for this is primarily illegal pearl fishing. The number of offences recorded is relatively low when compared to other UK wildlife crime priorities, but the impact is disproportionately large and has significant conservation implications for UK, Europe and the world.

### Raptor Persecution

- ◆ The key constraint preventing favourable conservation condition being met in over 80% of the occupied range of the golden eagle was persecution, predominantly in some areas managed for grouse shooting.
- ◆ The hen harrier is one of the few species whose very existence as a breeding bird in England is threatened as a direct result of wildlife crime. A coordinated approach by enforcement authorities and conservation bodies will need to remain with efforts stepped up to ensure that convictions are secured.
- ◆ Illegal persecution of red kites has resulted in the north Scotland

population struggling to exceed 50 pairs; by contrast, the Chilterns population stands at around 600 pairs, despite the fact that the same numbers of birds were released in both areas at the same time.

### Prevention work

The NWCU are directly involved in each of the delivery groups<sup>19</sup> for the UK wildlife crime priorities. Each group specifically deals with prevention work in order to turn the focus from enforcement to prevention and awareness-raising. Successful outcomes have included the following:

#### CITES Priority Delivery Group

- ◆ Progression of wildlife inspectorate visits to prevent the illegal caviar trade
- ◆ Amending and re-distributing the EU wildlife trade fact file for training purposes

#### Freshwater Pearl Mussel (FWPM) Priority Delivery Group

- ◆ Prevention strategy devised
- ◆ Local press releases produced, for the affected areas, outlining the threats to FWPM
- ◆ Specialist publications utilised, targeting river users to raise awareness and ask for assistance

#### Poaching Priority Delivery Group

- ◆ Poaching and hare coursing prevention plans publicised in partner publications
- ◆ Media strategy and campaign produced
- ◆ Guidance produced for fishermen, water bailiffs and other river/loch users, r.e. reporting a crime or intelligence

### Raptor Persecution

#### Priority Delivery Group

- ◆ Maps produced to highlight the key areas where raptor persecution occurs
- ◆ Completed maps publicised in the media

## Developments over the last year

### New ACPO lead for wildlife crime

The NWCU are very grateful to Chief Constable Richard Brunstrom for the commitment and support that he provided to the unit since October 2006. However, upon Mr. Brunstrom's retirement, the NWCU welcomed Chief Constable Richard Crompton of Lincolnshire police as the new ACPO lead for Wildlife Crime in May 2009. Mr. Crompton said of his new position *"I know that in many forces there are many dedicated wildlife crime officers that do an outstanding job and I would like to see that replicated in every corner of the country. I also see groundbreaking work being done by the NWCU and I think that their work would be even more effective if we could find the wherewithal to create more investigative support officer posts."*

### ISO receives award

NWCU ISO Andy McWilliam was awarded the prestigious 2010 Clark R. Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Award. Honouring Mr. McWilliam for his endeavours, the UN CITES Secretariat said, *"Mr. McWilliam has shown tremendous commitment, gaining considerable success in apprehending wildlife criminals making effective use of innovative techniques, compilation of educational materials, whilst conducting enforcement training to improve efforts within and outside the UK to stop wildlife crime."*



*North Wales police have had some great successes in the past 12 months in regards to wildlife investigation, the contribution of the NWCU has been a significant part of this, in particular the advice, guidance and assistance given by the ISO's.*

Rob Taylor  
Wildlife Crime Co-ordinator  
North Wales



<sup>19</sup>1) Badger Persecution priority delivery group, 2) Bat Persecution priority delivery group, 3) CITES priority delivery group, 4) Freshwater pearl mussel priority delivery group, 5) Poaching priority delivery group (Scotland), 6) Poaching priority delivery group (England & Wales), 7) Raptor Persecution priority delivery group (Scotland) and 8) Raptor Persecution priority delivery group (England & Wales).



## Staff changes:

The unit faced a significant reduction in staff in 2008/09 as permanent funding was not available to maintain the number of staff with which it originally started. However, the 2009/10 year has seen the unit use prudent financial planning and partnership funding to increase its staffing levels. The table below shows the staffing levels at the inception of the NWCUC, and what it has now.



Charlie Everitt

## New NWCUC Scottish Investigative Support Officer

Joint funding from ACPOS and PAW Scotland was awarded for the first ever Scottish ISO. In May 2009, the post was filled by wildlife crime officer PC Charles Everitt. PC Everitt assists the network of wildlife crime officers in Scotland to gather evidence/intelligence on suspects leading to robust enforcement and prosecution. In welcoming the post, Minister for Environment, Roseanna Cunningham said *"Crimes against nature are crimes against Scotland itself and it is vital we make the specialist skills and resources needed to tackle such crimes as accessible as possible to our police forces. Now that all police forces in Scotland have access to [PC Everitt's] skills, the fight against wildlife crime has gained valuable strength."*

## New Poaching Project Officer for England & Wales

In 2009, partnership funding allowed the NWCUC to appoint the UK's first ever poaching project officer for England &

Wales. The position is funded by the Environment Agency, the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and the Deer Initiative through the PAW coalition. The role of the poaching priority officer comes under the poaching priority delivery group in England & Wales. This group has created Operation Rural Net - a partnership of organisations working together to tackle poaching under the NWCUC.

## Researcher

Through sound financial prudence, the NWCUC was able to enhance its provision of services via the development of a researcher position. This post plugs a significant gap within the NWCUC, providing support to the other staff and allowing the unit to deliver more effective internal communications. The researcher assists with the preparation of all analysis and has developed a professional data management capability within the unit to ensure database accuracy.

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
1 x Head of Unit	1 x Head of Unit	1 x Head of Unit
1 x Senior Analyst	1 x Senior Analyst	1 x Senior Analyst
1 x Senior Intelligence Officer	1 x Senior Intelligence Officer	1 x Senior Intelligence Officer
2 x Analysts	1 x Analyst (vacant)	1 x Analyst
3 x Intelligence Officers	2 x Intelligence Officers	2 x Intelligence Officers
2 x Investigative Support Officers	2 x Investigative Support Officers	3 x Investigative Support Officers
1 x Admin Clerk	1 x Admin Clerk	1 x Indexer/Admin
2 x Attachments	0 x Attachments	1 x Attachment (Poaching Officer)
1 x Operations Co-ordinator	0 x Operations Co-ordinator	1 x Researcher
<b>Total: 14</b>	<b>Total: 9</b>	<b>Total: 12</b>





## UK National Wildlife Crime Unit - Annual Report 2010

Action Type	Apr 2008 - March 2009	April 2009 - March 2010	Total
Intelligence Collection	1463	2849	4312
Administration	97	169	266
Database Check	17	245	262
Email request	192	54	246
Request for Assistance	19	184	203
Analytical Product/Assessment	17	87	104
Media Enquiry/Request	1	46	47
Intelligence Product	28	14	42
Presentation Requested	n/a	37	37
Research	1	27	28
Court Attendance/Court Warning	n/a	23	23
Information Sharing Protocol	9	14	23
Meeting/Conference/Training	n/a	19	19
Alert	2	8	10
Request for Statistics	0	9	9
CPS/COPFS* Case Management	n/a	8	8
Freedom of Information Request	1	2	3
International Liaison	1	1	2
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1848</b>	<b>3796</b>	<b>5644</b>

\*Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service

Person Allocated	Apr 2008 - March 2009	April 2009 - March 2010	Total
Intelligence Officers (x2)	1156	2920	4076
Investigative Support Officers (x3)	225	374	599
Senior Intelligence Officer	384	147*	531
Senior Analyst	35	102	137
Analyst	18	96	114
Head of Unit	22	39	61
Project Officer	7	58	65
Admin Assistant	1	13	14
Researcher	n/a	47	47
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1848</b>	<b>3796</b>	<b>5644</b>

\*Due to long term sickness

### Additional Demand

The demand for NWCUC assistance was higher than ever in 2009/10. The unit doubled the amount of intelligence collections it made, conducted 14 times more database checks, was asked for five times more analytical products and was asked to produce a further five information sharing protocols.

The NWCUC also processed 46 media requests in the last year (compared to just one the year before), highlighting the significant media interest there is for wildlife crime. There were also significantly more requests for assistance in 2009/10 (primarily from police forces requesting operational assistance from the ISOs). There were 37 requests for the NWCUC to give presentations in 2009/10 and NWCUC staff also helped with (or presented to) 19 training courses across the UK.

The demand on all the NWCUC staff was higher than ever in 2009/10. Almost every role has had significantly more actions allocated to them in the last year.

### International Partnership

The last year has also seen a significant upturn in relation to international enquiries. The NWCUC is developing seven international operations transgressing national boundaries. In addition the unit contributes to the following groups:

#### Interpol Environmental Working Group

The last year has seen the NWCUC build on the solid foundations of international cooperation, through its substantial involvement as a member of the Interpol Environmental Working Group. As a member of this influential organisation the voice of the UK has sought to increase the global capacity in relation to enforcement of wildlife crime.



*During the past year the partnership between Cumbria police and NWCUC has been greatly improved with a number of cases dealt with jointly, including the first endangered species offence investigation ever to take place in the county. This has raised the profile of wildlife crime within the organisation and I hope that this partnership will continue now that the decision has been made to create a full time coordinators role within Cumbria Constabulary.*

John Shaw  
Wildlife Crime Co-ordinator  
Cumbria



### European Union Enforcement Working Group

The NWCUC also contributes to the European Union Enforcement Working Group (EU EWG). As head of the NWCUC, DI Stuart performs the role of UK police lead within this group. The EU EWG collaborates across the EU, providing training, guidance and support, plus the sharing of intelligence. It is continually seeking to improve preventative measures and, where necessary, will initiate cross border enforcement.

### Sustainable Development Dialogue

The Sustainable Development Dialogue, run by Defra, has seen the NWCUC play host to a delegation of Chinese wildlife enforcement officials. This collaboration facilitated the sharing of experience in relation to the handling and dissemination of intelligence.

### CITES Enforcement Group

The NWCUC played a significant role at the CITES Enforcement Group meeting in Oregon at the US Fish and Wildlife Service forensic laboratory in June 2009. This led to outcomes and

recommendations that would better inform the Conference of the Parties (COP 15) in Qatar in March 2010 on preventative measures and the sharing of intelligence and enforcement techniques.

### Ministerial visits

The NWCUC relies heavily on government funding and is always keen to spread the wildlife crime message amongst politicians at Westminster or within devolved administrations. In 2009/10 several Ministers met with the unit:

#### Andrew Rosindell

On 17th May 2009, the former shadow Minister for animal welfare visited the unit. Minister Rosindell said *"The NWCUC have been instrumental in bringing prosecution against dozens of criminals and I know how determined they are to this most important of tasks in the future."*

#### Huw Irranca-Davies

On 6th October 2009, Huw Irranca-Davies, the former Defra Minister for Marine and Natural Environment, visited Lincolnshire police headquarters where he met the force's wildlife crime officers and staff from the NWCUC. He took part in the launch of Operation Galileo aimed at tackling hare-coursing in the county.

#### Alan Campbell

On 10th September 2009, the former Home Office minister Alan Campbell visited the NWCUC. He was met and hosted there by Chief Constable Richard

Crompton. During his tour, the Minister was given an understanding of current crime trends threatening the UK's wildlife and how the NWCUC goes about tackling them.

### The future

#### E-crime researcher

As reported in the last annual report, the true scale of the internet in the facilitation of wildlife crime is currently unknown, although it is believed to be very prolific. Whilst the NWCUC will act on any information or intelligence it receives, lack of appropriate staff meant it struggled to conduct indepth investigations into e-crime activity. It is hoped that Defra funding is going to be available for the NWCUC to employ an e-crime researcher for a one year project to proactively gather and develop intelligence from the internet. It is anticipated that this long sought after position will allow the NWCUC to make in-roads in quantifying the extent to which the internet is being used to facilitate wildlife crime offences.

#### Proceeds of crime

If the NWCUC can secure funding for the next three years it will be able to embark upon a number of international enquiries of significance which will invoke the Proceeds of Crime Act. In this way, the NWCUC will be able to target the enormous monetary gain that offenders are making from their involvements in the illegal trade in wildlife.



*I am very impressed with the work of the staff at the NWCUC. Their enormous dedication and enthusiasm, combined with their professionalism and determination, is really making a difference to our work to tackle and disrupt wildlife crime. Most importantly, the unit is forging ever stronger links with all the agencies and organisations involved in fighting wildlife crime. This partnership approach is the only way forward, and I'm convinced that it will continue to pay dividends.*

Huw Irranca-Davies, former Minister for Marine and Natural Environment, Defra







## UK National Wildlife Crime Unit in Partnership with



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