

Project Trespass

BULLETIN 1 - DECEMBER 2014

Welcome to the first bulletin update on Project Trespass.

Poaching is one of the UK's six wildlife crime priorities. Each priority is taken forward by a priority delivery group with a dedicated plan owner assisted by prevention, intelligence and enforcement leads. For poaching in England and Wales the plan owner is Glynn Evans of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) with PC Tony Owens (Cheshire police) leading on prevention, The National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) on intelligence with the enforcement lead being PC Nick Willey (Lincolnshire police).

On 1st October 2013 the Poaching Priority Delivery group (PPDG) launched Project Trespass, an initiative to provide a coordinated response to poaching. See

www.nwcu.police.uk/what-are-priorities-and-intelligence-requirements/purpose-process-and-responsibilities-of-a-priority-delivery-group/

Introduction from Martin Sims, new Head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit:

"I am a Chief Inspector seconded from Sussex police and I feel honoured and privileged to be the new Head of the NWCU. Prior to this I was Head of Profession for Wildlife Crime within Sussex for the last 5 years. During that time I had experience of tackling hare coursing, theft from fisheries and deer poaching. This included Operation Hartwell, which was deer poaching on an almost industrial scale in East Sussex and led to three people receiving convictions for firearms offences.

"I know that poaching can blight the countryside and the lives of those earning their living from the land, both in terms of damage, theft and the threats of violence. That is why I am determined to play my part in dealing with these offences whilst at the National Wildlife Crime Unit."

NWCU report

A review of intelligence received by the NWCU in the first six months since the launch of project trespass saw an increase of 10.5% related to poaching. By 31st of August 2014 intelligence submissions for poaching totalled 1,375 and 37.79% of all intelligence submitted to the NWCU was related to poaching.

Through the increase in intelligence submissions three individual organised crime groups have been identified that are involved in poaching and the details are now with the National Crime Agency.

To date in 2014 the unit is aware of 56 poaching cases. These have led to a number of custodial sentences in relation to poaching and the confiscation of property worth almost £50K; See www.nwcu.police.uk/news/nwcu-police-press-releases/putting-poachers-in-their-place-launch-of-project-trespass/

Operation Traverse

The Angling Trust is increasingly working in close partnership with the police on a national basis, raising awareness and training officers, encouraging intelligence-sharing and joint operations. Confidence among, and intelligence from, anglers is increasing. Operation Traverse, on which Lincolnshire police are leading and which involves Cambridgeshire police, the Environment Agency and Fish Health Inspectorate, targets illegal fishing and fish theft in Fenland – and promotes Project Trespass. Crucially, Project Traverse includes intelligence-sharing with and participation by the Polish government fisheries enforcement department - which is assisting with problems caused by certain migrant anglers from Eastern Europe due to cultural and legal differences. See www.anglingtrust.net/news.asp?section=29&itemid=2362

National Anti-Poaching Conference

On 11 September 2014 the National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO), supported by the all the members of the Poaching Priority Delivery Group (PPDG), organised the first national anti-poaching conference which saw around 200 specialists from across the UK come together in Staffordshire to discuss the issues around poaching.

Exmoor Rural Crime Forum

Avon & Somerset and Devon & Cornwall police joined with other agencies to form a new group aimed at combating the rise in rural crime.

The three main objectives of the group are: prevention of deer and fish poaching; prevention of illegal off-road driving and raising the awareness and education within the communities on all aspects of crime and crime reduction. See

www.avonandsomerset.police.uk/newsroom/new-exmoor-rural-crime-initiative/

Operation Galileo

For the past two years Lincolnshire police have targeted hare coursing and other poaching issues with a dedicated team of officers under the banner of Operation Galileo. Last hare coursing season Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Norfolk also joined Operation Galileo.

A number of joint operations with the Galileo team and Humberside police have taken place with major successes. See

Error! Hyperlink reference not valid.www.lincs.police.uk/Advice/Wildlife-and-Rural-Crime/Hare-Coursing-Offences-Operation-Galileo.html

Police Training

On 6 November at Kenfig Nature Reserve, officers and staff from Dyfed Powys, Gwent and South Wales attended an enforcement training day focusing on fish poaching, techniques and the law, under the mantle of Project Trespass.

Importance of reporting poaching

Tony Owens, the PPDG prevention lead, advises;

“One of the issues surrounding poaching is that while it is a crime, it is not classed as a recordable offence for Home Office statistics, which means it is difficult to obtain accurate figures. Another concern is the amount of under-reporting of poaching and indeed other rural crime.

“If you see or are aware of poachers, call the police. Only you can decide whether this is a 999 or a 101 call (101 is the non-emergency number to report incidents). If you are being threatened or damage is being caused, then that is urgent and 999 should be used. Provide as much information as you have, such as vehicles used, how many offenders and whether firearms are being used. Also you will need to describe the location as accurately as you can, especially at night. Ask for an incident or log number and ask for the report to be forwarded to the Wildlife Crime Officer and the local beat officer.”

To report crimes anonymously contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111

Congratulations to PC Nick Willey, enforcement lead for the PPDG, for being awarded Wildlife Crime Enforcer of the year at the Wildlife Crime Enforcers Conference in November.

The England and Wales Poaching Priority Delivery Group comprises members of the NWCUC, serving police officers and representatives of the following organisations: The Angling Trust, The British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC), British Deer Society (BDS), Countryside Alliance (CA), Country Land and Business Association Ltd (CLA), Deer Initiative (DI), Environment Agency (EA), Food Standards Agency (FSA), NGO, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and National Farmers Union (NFU).

For more information on Project Trespass, the work of the PPDG or to submit a news item please contact:

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