

**National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU)**  
**Strategic Assessment**  
**May 2016**  
**Public version**



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## Introduction

### Aim

The main objectives of the Strategic Assessment are to:

- Analyse all intelligence submitted to the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) since the last Strategic Assessment was written. The period analysed was from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016.
  - Provide an assessment of the current control strategy (encompassing the UK wildlife crime priorities) and identify current, emerging and future threats.
  - Plan owners to provide an overview of activity in their priority area.
  - NWCU, in collaboration with UKTCG members, to recommend objectives for each priority area. These will focus on prevention, intelligence and enforcement.
- Report on the Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal and Organisational (PESTELO) factors that could have a bearing on wildlife crime. Where identified, PESTELO factors are included in each specific section – highlighted in blue boxes.

### Purpose

The Strategic Assessment is a National Intelligence Model product aimed at providing a strategic overview of the threats faced by the UK since the last Strategic Assessment was produced. It seeks to describe and explore the threats and harm caused by wildlife crime. It will review all six priority areas to understand whether the threat is still present, where this applies to and ultimately to recommend if each needs to continue to be a priority area of business. It will also take into consideration the priorities which are highlighted by the Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) which are based on conservation status/concerns. It will also review all other non-priority intelligence to identify any emerging threats.

### Methodology

The following data sources were used:

- Data held by NWCU in the Wildlife Intelligence Database (WID). WID contains intelligence from a number of law enforcement and partner agencies.
- Data held on the Scottish Intelligence Database (SID).
- Other information or data received from UK Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA's).
- Other information received from partner agencies.
- Open source information.

### Dissemination

This version of the Strategic Assessment is **not protectively marked** and will be published on the NWCU website.

### Glossary

A glossary of terms is available at Appendix A.

## UK Wildlife Crime Strategic Overview

### Illegal Wildlife Trade

The UK Government is committed to maintaining a global leadership role in combating the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT). UK Government activity has been amplified by the strong engagement of members of the royal family, and is reflected in a wide array of bilateral and multilateral agreements now focusing on combating the global threat of illegal killing and trafficking of wildlife, including at the UN level. Under the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT) Challenge fund up to £13 million in UK funding has been made available to support global initiatives to tackle the trade in rhino horn, elephant ivory and other illegally traded species. Two projects in Malawi have so far been supported by UK law enforcement resources – focusing on education, capacity building, intelligence and operational activity. A United for Wildlife Transport Taskforce signed the Buckingham Palace Declaration in March 2016 which made a range of commitments to disrupt transport routes from being exploited by organised criminals to carry illicitly acquired wildlife products.

### Conference of the Parties 2016

The 17th meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP) took place in Johannesburg, South Africa from 24<sup>th</sup> September to 5<sup>th</sup> October 2016. There were a number of proposals of interest including a proposal to list lion on Appendix I (currently on II), a proposal by Zimbabwe and Namibia to allow commercial trade in raw ivory and a proposal from Swaziland to allow commercial trade in rhino horn<sup>1</sup>.

### EU and CITES

The EU became the 181<sup>st</sup> signatory to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

### Registration, Ringing and Marking of Certain Captive Birds (England) Regulations 2015

Defra consolidated the Wildlife and Countryside (Registration and Ringing of Certain Captive Birds) Regulations 1982 as amended (the "Ringing Regulations"). Consolidation has brought the rules, in respect of registration, ringing and marking of Schedule 4 birds into one place - there is no material change to the law. The consolidating Statutory Instrument, which applies in England only, came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015.

### Anglers' Lead Weights Regulations

Defra consolidated the Anglers' Lead Weight Regulations in England. The consolidation has not resulted in any change in respect of the prohibition on the use of lead weights that presently apply in England which prohibit, subject to certain exceptions; the supply of lead weights for the purpose of weighting angler's fishing lines. The purpose of the Regulations is to protect animals, particularly swans, from accidental poisoning and death through ingestion of discarded anglers' lead weights. The consolidating Statutory Instrument, which applies in England only, came into force on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015<sup>2</sup>.

### Amendment to Possession of Wild Bird Egg Regulations

From the 6<sup>th</sup> April 2015 there was an amendment to the regulations relating to the possession of wild bird eggs in England & Wales (Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). Previously the regulation stated that it was an offence for a person to be in possession of a wild bird egg, without a relevant licence, if they could not show the egg in their possession was taken from the wild before the Protection of Birds Act 1954 came into force. The regulation has now reverted back to the original offence as set out in the Wildlife and Countryside Act i.e. it will be an offence to possess a wild bird egg without a licence if the egg was taken from the wild after the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 came into force.

<sup>1</sup> <https://cites.org/eng/cop/index.php>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/815/made>

### Land Reform Act - Scotland

In March 2016, Scottish Government announced legal changes to land ownership in Scotland. Through the Land Reform (Scotland) Bill, a publicly accessible register of land owners is to be introduced. It is expected that the regulations will be approved in the next Parliament and it is hoped the removal of land owner anonymity will not only allow local communities to contact the true owner if there are issues with the land but also will assist law enforcement agencies to investigate crime<sup>3</sup>.

### Law Commission Review

The Law Commission report on wildlife law was published on 10th November 2015. The recommendations do not alter the levels of protection currently offered to wildlife but are designed to help people understand what their obligations and duties are in respect of wildlife, what they can and cannot do, and what to expect should they break the rules. The Bill is now complete in draft:

- It is, in essence, 12 Acts of Parliament rolled into one statute.
- Poaching offences have been simplified.
- It does not include fox hunting or levels of protection for species.
- There would be a single licensing regime as opposed to the current five and reasons must be given if a licence is not to be granted for an activity.
- 'Close' season dates are viewed as too rigid and the Bill seeks to look for more flexibility.
- JNCC (Joint Nature Conservation Committee) would have a limit of five years on species reviews.
- Consultation should take place with conservation authorities and interest groups prior to any changes in wildlife schedules.
- Wildlife offences could be tried in the Crown Court as opposed to only Magistrate Court.
- Sentencing for wildlife offences will go up to two years imprisonment from the six months option.
- Regulators will be allowed to impose civil sanctions.
- Knowingly allowing a person to commit/permit a wildlife offence will become a crime.

A formal response from Defra was expected by the 28th May 2016 and a full response is then required within 12 months.

### Recoveries from Convictions

In 2014 and 2015, known criminal convictions for wildlife crime have equated to recoveries of over £350,000. Conviction information for wildlife crime is not recorded by the courts - these totals are only what NWCU are alerted to and therefore the actual figures are likely to be significantly higher:

	Fines	Costs	Victim Surcharge
<b>Totals</b>	£284,480	£63,156	£2,754
<b>Overall total</b>			<b>£350,390</b>

The highest fines in 2015 (£195,000 and £6,740 respectively) were secured from convictions by Partner Agencies (Scottish Environmental Protection Agency (SEPA) and Natural Resources Wales (NRW) respectively). The highest recorded fine in 2015 from a prosecution brought by a *police force* (Metropolitan Police) was a £4,500 fine imposed on a development company who had destroyed a bat roost. The next highest fine was for Vicarious Liability in Scotland where the defendant was fined £3,200 for intentionally trapping and injuring a buzzard using an illegal gin trap contrary to the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981.

### Proceeds of Crime Act

By May 2016 there had been two significant POCA confiscations for wildlife crime - the Metropolitan Police secured a POCA order for almost £5,000 for COTES offences and Derbyshire Police secured just over £5,000 against a company who destroyed a bat roost. POCA considerations have been

<sup>3</sup> Global Witness

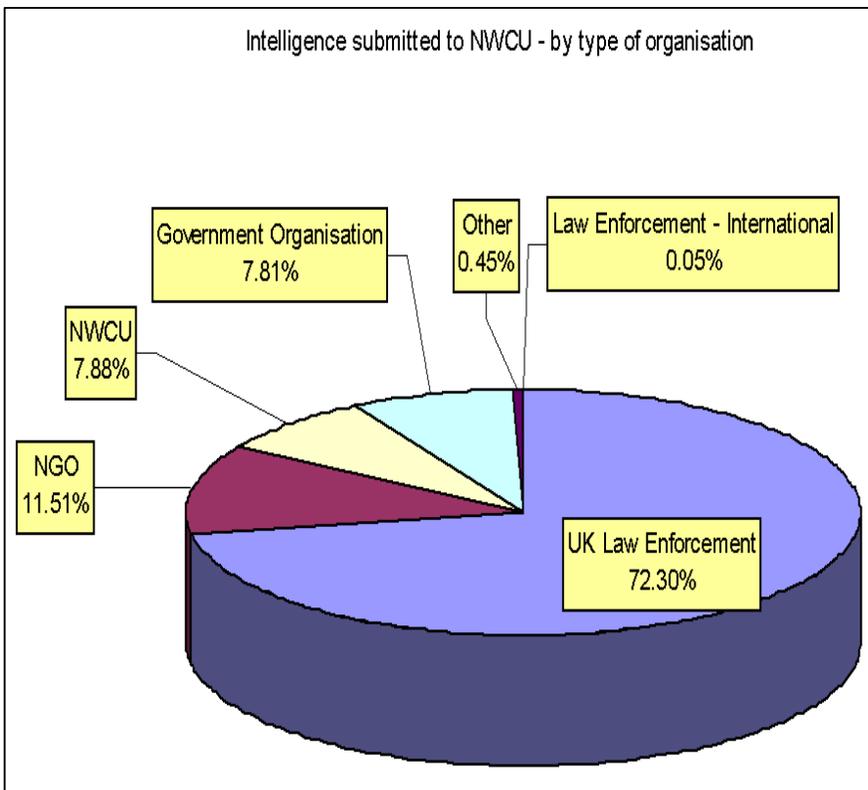
written into the police investigations guidance for wildlife crime (under Authorised Professional Practice) and will hopefully lead to more cases where this is considered.

### Intelligence Overview

All submitted intelligence within the strategic period 1st October 2013 – 31st March 2016 was analysed. Total intelligence received is shown in Appendix B. A further breakdown of each priority area, showing which agency/region the intelligence came from, is included within the relevant sections. Where regions are shown – these relate to all English & Welsh police forces and the Regional Enforcement Groups (REG's) for wildlife crime that they are a part of. Full details of each REG are shown in Appendix C.

NWCU collect intelligence from a vast number of different organisations. The distribution of submissions by type of organisation across the full strategic period is shown in chart 1:

Chart 1 – intelligence submitted to NWCU: 01/10/2013 – 31/03/2016



In relation to the 72.3% provided by UK law enforcement agencies, this encompasses police forces, UKBF and NCA.

7.81% of all intelligence submissions came from Government Organisations. This includes Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA), Defra, Environment Agency, SASA (Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture, FERA (Food and Environment Research Agency), Marine Management Organisation and Natural England (NE).

## Cross Cutting Issues

There are several issues that continue to cut across all types of wildlife crime:

1. Significant criminal profit is being made from wildlife crime activity.
2. Wildlife crime issues create community tension.
3. Offenders are using social media to publically boast about their wildlife crime activities - wildlife crime increasingly seems to be seen as a 'socially acceptable' pastime.

NWCU will continue to progress the recommendations made at the last UKTCG in relation to the cross cutting issues above.

## WCCAG Review of UK Wildlife Crime Conservation Priorities

The Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) has reviewed the matrix of FOCI (Features of Conservation Interest) using the criteria previously developed to identify those species and habitats most affected by illegal activities and most in need of enforcement intervention. FOCI were scored, taking into account the most recent information available on seizures and prosecutions, conservation status and complementary activities (e.g. species action plans, public awareness campaigns, research, legislation, etc). Whilst a number of the scores have been amended, all of the current (conservation) priorities remain at the top of the table. In this regard we (WCCAG) are all in agreement that **there is sufficient evidence to demonstrate that: bats, freshwater pearl mussel and raptor persecution (hen harrier, goshawk, golden eagle, peregrine, red kite, white-tailed eagle) should remain as the UK's wildlife crime conservation priorities.**

Introduction of Non Native Species and Protected Habitats (affected by heavy plant contractual works) also emerge as high scorers worthy of further attention.

### Review of CITES priorities by WCCAG CITES sub-group (met 6<sup>th</sup> May 2016)

Criteria used by WCCAG for identifying CITES priorities have been revised to reflect shift in illegal trade patterns which show shipments of CITES listed specimens being exported from the UK (e.g. European eel, birds of prey, ivory, rhino horn) and found in transit via UK (e.g. ivory) in addition to illegal imports.

Using the new criteria, species and taxon groups were scored taking into account latest seizure records and prosecutions and new information relating to conservation status and complementary actions.

New scores indicate the current **UK's wildlife crime CITES conservation priorities** should remain:

- ***Anguilla anguilla* (European eel)**
- **Traditional Medicines & Health Supplements:** Notably tiger, leopard, bear, lion and rhino
- ***Rhinocerotidae* spp. (rhino)**
- **Ivory**
- **Diurnal birds of prey:** Notably: Goshawk and Peregrine
- **Reptiles:** Main areas of conservation concern relate to rare and high value tortoises (specialist live trade from third countries rather than high volume intracommunity trade in more common species). Madagascan chameleons/gecko's traded via specialist reptile forums. Remains a taxon group worthy of enforcement attention
- **Timber**

New high scores for:

- **Big Cat Parts & Derivatives:** Notably: leopard, lion, tiger parts & derivatives (not including Traditional Medicines)
- **Stony Corals (live)**

WCCAG general comments on Plan Owner Updates

Where provided, WCCAG comments on PDG updates are included within their relevant sections throughout this document. In addition, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) commented that:

- In terms of European species listed under Birds and Habitats Directives, there was limited reference to the use of the Environmental Damage Regulations. In our view this legislation has the potential to address compliance issues.
- There were a limited number of both Welsh references and specific actions within the plan owner updates. NRW have identified key individuals who could represent NRW on the relevant PDG's.

## UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Badger Persecution

### Summary of Intelligence

Badger Persecution accounts for 9% (707) of all intelligence submitted to NWCU. In addition, there were 120 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Badger Persecution, with suggestions that farmers/landowners have been threatened when they challenge persons thought to be committing crime on their land.

The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the table below:

<b>Badgers</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
North Region	148	20.9%
LACS	117	16.5%
Wales Region	93	13.2%
South West Region	57	8.1%
RSPCA	55	7.8%
East Region	43	6.1%
NWCU	41	5.8%
Natural England	37	5.2%
Crimestoppers	35	5.0%
Midlands Region	31	4.4%
South East Region	28	4.0%
Scottish Badgers	11	1.6%
Police Service of Northern Ireland	4	0.6%
Animal Health	1	0.1%
BCT	1	0.1%
Environment Agency	1	0.1%
FERA/CSL	1	0.1%
Other Government Agency	1	0.1%
RSPB	1	0.1%
SASA	1	0.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>707</b>	

- The highest volume of intelligence reports have come from the North Region.
- This is closely followed by submissions from the League against Cruel Sports (LACS) and then the Welsh region.
- Badger baiting using dogs is the most prevalent method of Badger Persecution. Dogs suffer severe injuries which are often left untreated or given sub-standard treatment by their owners.
- The blocking or filling of sett entrances accounts for more than half of the persecutions reported.
- The poisoning of badgers continues.

In April 2016 two brothers were convicted of badger baiting despite no badger carcass being found. Within the rear of their vehicle were two badly injured dogs, which needed urgent treatment. The men had blood stained clothing and a substantial amount of blood was found within their 4x4 vehicle. The blood and hair found in the jaws of the dog were sent for forensic examination and found to be badger.

**Plan Owner Update**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Badger Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Barry Fryer, Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)</b>

**Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:**

Objective	Evidence
<p>Improve and increase the recording of incidents, crimes and intelligence for Badger Persecution.</p> <p>Improve the investigation process and increase awareness of Badger Persecution across the UK.</p>	<p>Recording of incidents undertaken by Scottish Badgers and "Crime Master Sheet" updated with all available Non Government Organisations (NGO's) and police current data. Regular updates of master sheet sent out to all appropriate parties.</p> <p>* Investigation process to be formalised with the introduction of the specific Authorised Professional Practice document, when this becomes available from NWCUC/College of Policing.</p> <p>* Former "Operation Meles" rebranded as "Operation Badger" for all future awareness and operational publicity.</p> <p>* Results of cases and lessons learnt discussed at PDG meetings.</p>

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
All PDG's to consider a Twitter week of action to raise the public's awareness of their particular wildlife crime area.	"Operation Badger" Twitter week of action carried out end of October 2015.
All PDG's to consider doing more work across social media to get the message across that wildlife crime is socially unacceptable.	Some police forces engaging with public through social media, North Wales Police being the primary exponents giving regular Twitter feed on investigations and cases.
All PDG's who have not yet set three year targets to ensure they do so.	Not yet accomplished.

**Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting:**

Action	Update
The PDG had requested an update regarding the appealed LACS case at York Crown Court and the implications relating to expert witness attendance.	Update given to the PDG meeting by LACS. Advisory note circulated to all PDG members by Scottish Badgers regarding the collection of evidence at the crime scene.
Specific need identified with problems relating to alleged offences committed by hunts in the Dorset area.	NWCUC undertook to seek an update on the action point from Dorset Police.
The need for general advice to be sought from Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as to the use of covert cameras in crime investigations.	Scottish Badgers has circulated an advisory note to group members, together with online publication.

**How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last two years?**

All objectives met to some extent.

**Outline new three year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in three years time:**

- Three year targets not yet set by PDG. Targets unlikely to be discussed and set until next face to face PDG meeting in September.
- The PDG experiences a lack of overall buy in from police forces, possibly as a result of the Plan Owner and Enforcement Lead being from an NGO. Target would be to have a police Plan Owner and Enforcement Lead with the intention of furthering police cooperation.
- The group has lost the secretariat support from Scottish Badgers, due to retirement of a key member. The Badger PDG members thank the previous secretary for his tremendous support and hard work and wish him a long and happy retirement. An immediate target is to find and recruit a replacement.

**Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:**

No comments from WCCAG.

**Recommendations to UKTCG**

**General**

- Badger Persecution to be retained as a UK wildlife crime priority.
- A representative from each of the six Regional Enforcement Groups to sit on the Badger PDG.

**Prevention**

PDG to run an Operation Badger 'Twitter week' again.

**UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Bat Persecution**

**Summary of Intelligence**

Bat Persecution accounts for 5.1% (401) of all intelligence at NWCUC. In addition, there were 11 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Bat Persecution. The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the table below:

<b>Bats</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
BCT	319	79.6%
Natural England	31	7.7%
South East Region	17	4.2%
Crimestoppers	9	2.2%
NWCUC	8	2.0%
South West Region	8	2.0%
East Region	6	1.5%
British Transport Police	1	0.2%
Wales Region	1	0.2%
Midlands Region	1	0.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>401</b>	

- Bat Persecution is not a high volume intelligence contributor in the UK; however there are significant conservation implications for any crime against bats.
- Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) are the biggest single contributor of intelligence received.
- Development work is the main cause of concern in relation to Bat Persecution.
- Tree felling is also a great risk to bats.
- Where the species is identified the two most affected are the Common Pipistrelle and Brown Long Eared bat.

In March 2016 at Derby Crown Court the first Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) order for bat offences was secured. A company was fined £3,000 and ordered to pay £2,000 costs *plus* pay £5,737 under the POCA confiscation.

**Plan Owner Update**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Bat Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Andy Long, Wildlife Crime Officer, Essex Police</b>

**Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:**

Overarching Objective: To reduce bat crime by working with key stakeholders to raise awareness of responsibilities and criminal offences against bats, promoting a preventative approach and improving the submission of intelligence and standards of investigation relating to bats across the UK. To identify and bring to the attention of the UKTCG any obstacles preventing delivery of our objective.

<b>Prevention (BCT lead)</b>	
Should contain at a minimum representatives of the police, each Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation, Local Government planners and ecologists and appropriate NGO's. Stand in's should be arranged if lead contact is not available.	Generally speaking, the crime prevention working group is represented as envisaged.
To report to the PDG lead on initiatives undertaken to prevent bat crime and other work undertaken in support of our initiative.	A number of initiatives have been undertaken during the past year aimed at raising awareness of bat crime. Plan owner ran a "Twitter" week, we have spoken to a number of conferences and seminars, guidance has been produced at national and regional level and as much publicity as can be generated has been given to convictions. We are working with planners and local authorities to raise awareness of the general duty to prevent crime and how this might be applied to bat crime.
To identify how many incidents of crimes being prevented were	It is, of course, impossible to state with certainty how many crimes have been prevented. Analysis of bat crime files held by BCT does

recorded in 2014 providing a base line against which future performance will be measured.	however reveal that in 2014, 26% of all police investigations included "preventative action" as key words. This provides us with the base line envisaged. Analysis of 2015 data is not yet available.
To identify and report on good crime prevention practice.	Since adoption of this target in September 2015 there has been nothing to report.
Produce at least two newsletters a year to be widely circulated containing information that can be used to prevent bat crime.	Two bat PDG newsletters were produced and widely circulated in 2015.
<b>Intelligence (NWCUC lead)</b>	
Should contain at a minimum representatives of NWCUC, regional enforcement groups and SNCO's.	Police representation on this working group has yet to reach the levels anticipated. We have extended invitations to participate to a number of groups and forces. Whilst the eastern enforcement group is represented, others have either failed to provide representation or the nominated representative has not engaged. It is disappointing that one officer who showed interest in joining the group has not been permitted to do so by force management.
To report to the PDG lead, on levels of bat crime recorded since the last meeting and what work has been undertaken in support of our objective.	Since this target was adopted in September 2015 resource levels within NWCUC have prevented progress. It is anticipated that, with the resolution of funding and resource difficulties, there will be progress in the coming months.
To identify groups, individuals and companies suspected of being involved in organised bat crime. To produce and disseminate intelligence packages relating to identified suspects, to develop intelligence and undertake investigations into each package.	Since this target was adopted in September 2015 resource levels within NWCUC have prevented progress. It is anticipated that, with the resolution of funding and resource difficulties, there will be progress in the coming months.
To identify forces who are not submitting intelligence relating to bat crime and to engage with them to address the situation.	Since this target was adopted in September 2015 resource levels within NWCUC have prevented progress. It is anticipated that, with the resolution of funding and resource difficulties, there will be progress in the coming months.
That 50% of all reports of bat crime made known to NWCUC should be confirmed by formal intelligence submissions.	Since this target was adopted in September 2015 resource levels within NWCUC have prevented progress. It is anticipated that, with the resolution of funding and resource difficulties, there will be progress in the coming months.
<b>Enforcement (police lead)</b>	
Should contain at a minimum representatives of NWCUC, regional enforcement groups, CPS, Natural England, Local Government and Bat Conservation Trust.	Police representation on this working group has yet to reach the levels anticipated. We have extended invitations to participate to a number of groups and forces. Whilst the eastern enforcement group is represented others have either failed to provide representation or the nominated representative has not engaged. It is disappointing that one officer who showed interest in joining the work of the group has not been permitted to do so by force management.
To identify best practice and deficiencies in the investigation and prosecution of bat offences across the UK. To undertake, on request, reviews of investigations.	In March 2016 a long running prosecution for bat crime was concluded at Derby Crown Court. To our knowledge this is the first occasion that a conviction for wildlife crime of a summary nature has been appealed and heard. In itself this was useful in that the judge made comments that can be used to inform future decisions and prosecutions. However of even greater significance is that a confiscation order under POCA was made against the company involved. This sets a precedent that should in future be used to ensure that bat crime is not allowed to pay. Data for 2015 is as yet incomplete but indications are that the number of referrals to the police is less than the "high" seen in 2014 and near the long term average. There were 4 convictions

	<p>for bat crime in 2015 reflecting the long-term average. The Metropolitan Police recorded their first ever prosecution and conviction for such offences whilst an officer in West Mercia Police undertook two investigations into bat crime in 2015 both of which resulted in convictions. (One in 2016).</p> <p>Conversely there are a number of police forces who have difficulty investigating bat crime effectively. The PDG will look to identify ineffective investigations and will consider what might be done to improve the situation.</p> <p>We have been involved with NWCU in production of guidance for the investigation of bat crime and BCT have produced their annual Batcrime report.</p>
To identify forces who currently report positive outcomes of investigations, at a rate, below the UK average and to engage with them to establish if performance could be improved.	Analysis of 2014 data reveals that in 16% of cases offences were, in the view of the investigating officer, confirmed. The 2015 data has yet to be analysed but when available we can begin to look at how individual forces perform and what assistance might be provided.

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
9. All PDG's to consider a Twitter week of action to raise the public's awareness of their particular wildlife crime area. UKTCG: agreed. All PDG's to consider.	This objective was identified following the initiative of the Bat PDG to make bat crime the focus of a Twitter week.
10. The majority of bat intelligence received by NWCU is related to bat disturbance/killing via the unlicensed work of development companies. [Action for Bat PDG - to consider whether there is any more work that can be done with development companies].	BCT have a Built Environment Officer whose remit is to engage with the building and associated industries with a view to effecting positive change.
33. All PDG's who have not yet set three year targets to ensure they do so.	Bat priority targets were set and accepted during the summer of 2015. They are, in the view of the group, fit for purpose.

**Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting: February 2016**

<b>Action G4</b> – To identify and invite representative from local authority planners to sit on group.	Organisation has been identified but contact delayed pending letter from Chief Constable Prince to planning authorities.
<b>Action G6</b> - To endeavour to ensure that representatives from all countries in the UK participate in the work of the group.	Ongoing.
<b>Action G6A</b> – Plan owner to write to those who have not attended or offered apologies for this meeting to establish future intentions.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action G6B</b> – Plan owner to establish who will represent Welsh police forces at next meeting.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action G6C</b> – To ask NRW to provide a representative at these meetings.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action G6D</b> – To establish how the bat crime priority is being addressed in Scotland and if needed to invite a representative from Police Scotland onto the group.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action G6E</b> – To consider inviting a representative of Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) to sit on the group.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action P7</b> - NE are working with Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) to consider how instances of malpractice might be made known to each other.	SPOC now nominated between CIEEM and NE. Feb 2016 NWCU – when intel staffing is up to full strength an ISA with CIEEM will be pursued.

<b>Action P7E</b> - Enquiries to be raised with National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) and CIEEM to establish if ecologists can be added to the list of professionals whose governing bodies are informed if they are charged with criminal offences.	It is the police view that where the information is to be passed for the purposes of preventing crime and subject to information sharing agreement the processes are available where information can be provided to CIEEM.
<b>Action P7J</b> - To establish whether planners can require bat surveys to meet BS42020.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action P7K</b> – To identify current NPCC lead for Crime Prevention Design Advisors and to then consider raising the issue of BS42020 through that channel.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action P22</b> - At the conclusion of the Derbyshire appeal against conviction Chief Constable Prince to be asked to write to local authorities drawing their attention to Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act.	Appeal now being heard in March 2016.
<b>Action P25</b> - BCT's Built Environment Officer to be invited to talk to the group at next meeting.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action 119J</b> - Analysis of case disposals to be undertaken by BCT as time allows.	Completed for 2014, 2015 analysis to be undertaken prior to meeting in summer of 2016.
<b>Action 119L</b> - NWCUC to view and comment on analysis.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action 121</b> - Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) to circulate copy of protocol used by Kent Police and Hastings Council planners to exchange protected species information regarding sensitive planning applications.	Feb 16 no report - carry forward.
<b>Action 122</b> - ALGE to circulate list of ecologists employed or contracted by local authorities.	When circulated NWCUC to forward to PWCO network.
<b>Action E15d</b> - In the event of a POCA confiscation order being made in relation to a bat case, operation bat documents to be reviewed and amended to include such matters.	Ongoing.
<b>Action E17</b> - BCT and Countryside Link are engaging with the CPS pressing the need for effective prosecutions by specialist prosecutors.	BCT along with other members of Countryside Link have recently met with CPS who have set plans to improve prosecution of wildlife crime.
<b>Action E17C</b> - Advice on submissions of files to specialist prosecutors to be circulated to PWCO's.	No report - carry forward.
<b>Action E17D</b> - To establish whether and how NE could meet requests for independent expert witnesses to provide evidence in bat cases.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action E17E</b> - Police forces will consider proceeds against crime for any offence where financial gain of over £1000 can be evidenced. Do CPS have a similar view, if not what is the minimum amount that might warrant use of POCA applications?	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action E17F</b> - To consider whether guidance on the use of POCA available on the CPS knowledge hub can be shared with all or some members of the group.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action E18A</b> - To consider whether a presentation on bat crime can be made at a Heritage Crime Conference scheduled for 11 <sup>th</sup> April 2016.	Ongoing - added Feb 16.
<b>Action E19</b> – Scottish National Heritage (SNH) to be asked whether they will be making a response to the Scottish Governments review of strategic policing priorities.	Email to SNH.
<b>How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last two years?</b>	
Updated objectives and targets were set in September 2015.	

**Outline new three year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in three years time:**

Targets set and accepted in September 2015. New objective and targets outlined as per above sections.

**Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:**

Main issues are:

1. Better/more informed use of ecological and financial impact assessments to evidence the significance of incidents.
2. NRW concurs with emphasis focusing on preventative action.

**Recommendations to UKTCG**

**General**

Bat Persecution to be retained as a UK wildlife crime priority.

**Prevention**

- Bat PDG to continue to identify opportunities for press/media/social media coverage, including conferences and seminars, to raise awareness with developers (both corporate and private) and estate agents on the impact of Bat Persecution.
- Bat PDG to consider linking with residential surveyors who may identify bat roosts when carrying out home reports for houses about to be placed on the market for sale.

**Enforcement**

A representative from each of the six Regional Enforcement Groups to sit on the Bat PDG.

## **UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – CITES Issues (ivory, tortoises, traditional medicines and illegal trade in raptors)**

### All-Party Parliamentary Group

A new UK All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) is being set up to ensure the plight of endangered species is high on the Government's agenda. Set up in the aftermath of the killing of Cecil the lion, it will highlight the need for more to be done to ensure that endangered wildlife is protected. The APPG believes there is an urgent need for the international community to take steps to safeguard wildlife. It is hoped the new all-party group will make a lasting contribution to the debate over how best to conserve the planet's species.

### G7 leaders commit to tackle the illegal wildlife trade

In the declaration released after the annual G7 summit in June 2015, leaders of seven of the world's major industrial nations reconfirmed their commitment to fight the illegal wildlife trade.

### IATA and CITES to cooperate on reducing illegal trade in wildlife

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) and the CITES Secretariat signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in June 2015 to cooperate in reducing illegal trade in wildlife and their products, as well as ensuring the safe and secure transport of legally traded wildlife. Under the MoU, IATA and CITES will formalise their ongoing cooperation on the implementation of standards and best practices such as the IATA Live Animals Regulations, the IATA Perishable Cargo Regulations and the CITES Guidelines for the Non-Air Transport of Live Wild Animals and Plants. They will also support joint training and communications activities.

### Operation COBRA 3

COBRA 3 was initiated in the UK in early 2015 and sought to target and disrupt nominals engaged in the international trade of CITES goods. UKBF made over 300 seizures during the active phase of the operation, which totalled over 800 items of endangered species, including:

- 166 turquoise blue geckos
- 400 Horsefield tortoises
- 11 black bear claws
- 23 orchid and cacti
- 157 supplements
- 57 ivory products

Police seizures of CITES goods have increased significantly since Operation COBRA 3 was initiated and have carried on to date as we continue to uncover additional illegal trade. NWCU have supported police forces across the UK, which has led to the seizure of almost 700 illegal CITES goods - including 10,000 seahorses. Ongoing investigations may result in yet more seizures.

This clearly highlights the threat to *global* wildlife from actions by individuals within our own country - the UK is not only a transit route for endangered species but also a consumer, with a number of the police warrants proving that UK traders deal directly with suppliers from countries of origin.

**CITES intelligence**

CITES accounts for 14.1% (1111) of all intelligence submitted to NWCU. In addition, there were 25 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for CITES. The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the tables below:

<b>CITES</b>			<b>All CITES</b>		
<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>	<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
CITES European Eel	40	3.6%	Animal Health	353	31.8%
CITES Illegal Trade in Raptors	256	23.0%	NWCU	315	28.4%
CITES Ivory	197	17.7%	South East Region	127	11.4%
CITES Medicinal & Health Products	41	3.7%	UK Border Force	81	7.3%
CITES Other	365	32.9%	South West Region	57	5.1%
CITES Reptiles	142	12.8%	EU-Twix	41	3.7%
CITES Rhino Horn	57	5.1%	North Region	26	2.3%
CITES Timber	13	1.2%	Traffic	22	2.0%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1111</b>		East Region	17	1.5%
			Wales Region	12	1.1%
			Crimestoppers	10	0.9%
			RSPB	9	0.8%
			NGO - Other	8	0.7%
			Environment Agency	5	0.5%
			National Crime Agency	4	0.4%
			RSPCA	4	0.4%
			Interpol	3	0.3%
			Marine Management Organisation	3	0.3%
			Other Government Agency	3	0.3%
			Natural England	2	0.2%
			Port of Dover Police	2	0.2%
			Midlands Region	2	0.2%
			Police Service of Northern Ireland	2	0.2%
			Angling Trust	1	0.1%
			DEFRA	1	0.1%
			LACS	1	0.1%
			<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1111</b>	

**Overview of all CITES intelligence/seizures**

- There are not generally very high numbers of intelligence logs from UK *police forces* on CITES issues.
- Focused investigations within Scotland as a result of intelligence from COBRA 3 investigations has shown how critical it is for UK law enforcement authorities to conduct proactive intelligence gathering on the growing illegal internet trade.
- The majority of 'other' (non priority) CITES intelligence relates to illegal trade, which is clearly facilitated by the internet – eBay being the most commonly mentioned virtual auction house.

CITES European eel

- The European eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*) is listed on Annex B of the EU Wildlife Trade Regulation and Appendix II of CITES.
- It is believed that eels are being exported to Asian Countries where they are in high demand as a food source.
- Their high value now creates an increased threat of illegal catching from UK inland waterways.

<b>CITES European Eel</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
South West Region	25	62.5%
NWCU	6	15.0%
Environment Agency	5	12.5%
EU-Twix	2	5.0%
Angling Trust	1	2.5%
UK Border Force	1	2.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>40</b>	

There have been seizures of illegal eel shipments in France that related to British elvers. In January 2016 there have been two international seizures of eels from Madrid to Hong Kong – 1) two passengers were caught with 91 kgs of eels in their luggage and 2) four passengers were arrested for smuggling 109 kgs of eels in their checked-in baggage.

Illegal trade in Raptors

<b>CITES Illegal Trade in Raptors</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Animal Health	125	48.8%
NWCU	75	29.3%
South West Region	17	6.6%
North Region	12	4.7%
South East Region	7	2.7%
Wales Region	6	2.3%
East Region	4	1.6%
RSPB	3	1.2%
Midlands Region	2	0.8%
EU-Twix	1	0.4%
League Against Cruel Sports	1	0.4%
National Crime Agency	1	0.4%
Natural England	1	0.4%
RSPCA	1	0.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>256</b>	

- Intelligence continues to indicate that raptors are being taken from the wild and laundered into the captive market for profit. The main species being taken from the wild are Goshawk, Sparrowhawk and Peregrine Falcon.

CITES Ivory

- In the UK, ivory is being purchased via online auction houses.

<b>CITES Ivory</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
NWCU	60	30.5%
UK Border Force	46	23.4%
Animal Health	45	22.8%
South East Region	23	11.7%
EU-Twix	10	5.1%
Traffic	6	3.0%
Crimestoppers	2	1.0%
Interpol	1	0.5%
NGO - Other	1	0.5%
Other Government Agency	1	0.5%
East Region	1	0.5%
North Region	1	0.5%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>197</b>	

Medicinal & Health Products

<b>CITES Medicinal &amp; Health Products</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
UK Border Force	14	34.1%
NWCU	11	26.8%
Animal Health	5	12.2%
South East Region	5	12.2%
EU-Twix	2	4.9%
Port of Dover Police	2	4.9%
Traffic	1	2.4%
East Region	1	2.4%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>41</b>	

- The majority of intelligence regarding Medicinal & Health Products comes from UKBF.

CITES Reptiles

- The majority of intelligence regarding reptiles comes from the Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA).
- There are reasonable levels of intelligence from *police forces* (mainly the South East region).

<b>CITES Reptiles</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Animal Health	55	38.7%
NWCU	27	19.0%
South East Region	20	14.1%
Traffic	10	7.0%
EU-Twix	8	5.6%
South West Region	8	5.6%
UK Border Force	5	3.5%
North Region	3	2.1%
Wales Region	2	1.4%
Crimestoppers	1	0.7%
National Crime Agency	1	0.7%
Other Government Agency	1	0.7%
East Region	1	0.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>142</b>	

CITES Rhino Horn

<b>CITES Rhino Horn</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
NWCU	25	43.9%
South East Region	10	17.5%
NGO - Other	6	10.5%
Animal Health	4	7.0%
EU-Twix	3	5.3%
Traffic	2	3.5%
South West Region	2	3.5%
East Region	2	3.5%
Interpol	1	1.8%
UK Border Force	1	1.8%
Police Service of Northern Ireland	1	1.8%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>57</b>	

- 14 males, part of an organised crime group, were convicted for plotting to steal rhino horn and Chinese artefacts in a series of museum raids around the UK and overseas. They were jailed for more than a total of 70 years. This case had extremely high levels of national media coverage and raised the profile of the illegal rhino horn trade.

CITES Timber

The UK has an £8.9bn timber industry. The EU Timber Regulation (EUTR) puts obligations on businesses that trade in timber. The EUTR counters the trade in illegally harvested timber and timber products (both CITES and non-CITES) through three key obligations<sup>4</sup>:

1. It prohibits the placing on the EU market of illegally harvested timber and products derived from such timber.
2. It requires EU traders who place timber products on the EU market for the first time to exercise due diligence.
3. It obliges traders to keep records of their suppliers and customers to facilitate traceability.

<b>CITES Timber</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Animal Health	4	30.8%
EU-Twix	2	15.4%
NWCU	2	15.4%
South East Region	2	15.4%
Interpol	1	7.7%
UK Border Force	1	7.7%
South West Region	1	7.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13</b>	

The National Measurement and Regulation Office is the UK's Competent Authority and it oversees domestic compliance with the EU Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Regulation, which licences the import of timber and timber products from partner countries, however, no timber shipments covered by FLEGT have arrived in UK ports to date.

<sup>4</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber\\_regulation.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/environment/forests/timber_regulation.htm)

CITES – Other (non-priority issues)

<b>CITES Other</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Animal Health	115	31.5%
NWCU	109	29.9%
South East Region	60	16.4%
EU-Twix	13	3.6%
UK Border Force	13	3.6%
North Region	10	2.7%
East Region	8	2.2%
Crimestoppers	7	1.9%
RSPB	6	1.6%
South West Region	4	1.1%
Wales Region	4	1.1%
Marine Management Org	3	0.8%
RSPCA	3	0.8%
Traffic	3	0.8%
National Crime Agency	2	0.5%
DEFRA	1	0.3%
Natural England	1	0.3%
NGO - Other	1	0.3%
Other Government Agency	1	0.3%
Police Service of Northern	1	0.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>365</b>	

Big cats – increased intelligence

The vast majority of intelligence logs in the 'CITES other' category were in reference to illegal trade in big cat species. Several recent convictions have also been secured in relation to big cat trade.

Primates – increased intelligence

All monkey species are protected under at least Appendix II of CITES and if imported into the EU require export permits (issued by the originating country) and import permits (issued by an EU member state). A number of investigations have recently taken place in the UK where monkey parts and derivatives have been smuggled into the UK. Large profit is being made in the UK from this trade in wild endangered primates.

**Plan Owner Update**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>CITES Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Grant Miller, UKBF</b>
<b>Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:</b>	
Objective: Increase the number of disruption activities and detections of illegal trade in CITES priority species by increasing the amount of targeted compliance activity, increasing the number of intelligence submissions and intelligence products produced, improve the quality of analytical assessments and compliance in agreed timescales and increase the number of investigations and enforcement outcomes.	
	Evidence: Prevention, Intelligence, Enforcement activity against key priority area.
Anguilla Anguilla (European eel)	<b>Prevention:</b> CITES PDG sub group formed of key partners to tackle growing threat. <b>Intelligence:</b> Multi UK attendance at Europol workshop. Request to Member States for photographs and details of smuggling. <b>Enforcement:</b> Multi agency proactive case work ongoing.
Ivory	<b>Prevention:</b> Support to Duke of Cambridge's task force. <b>Intelligence:</b> NWCUC distributed draft of updated ivory threat assessment for the UK. NGO to conduct assessment of UK ivory market, exercise funded by China. <b>Enforcement:</b> Successful targeted operation on export ivory. UKBF and NGO working in conjunction with a private company developing forensic tools for security and control of goods. In conjunction with "Stop Ivory" UKBF 130kg+ ivory seizure audited.
Rhino Horn	<b>Prevention-</b> APHA to re-issue advice to Museums, stately homes on securing rhino horn. <b>Intelligence</b> – NWCUC to consider new rhino related intelligence briefing. <b>Enforcement</b> – Seizure of rhino horn August by UKBF, adopted by NCA.
Medicinal and health supplements	<b>Prevention:</b> Waiting on results of Czech government media initiative on health products. <b>Intelligence:</b> Educational products being developed for enforcement officer. <b>Enforcement-</b> High level of trade over the internet. Noticeable change in ingredients' from CITES animal to plant species.
Raptors	<b>Enforcement:</b> ongoing UK enforcement operations.
Reptiles	<b>Prevention:</b> Good levels of compliance being maintained by UK reptile dealers. <b>Enforcement:</b> Possible listing of species of concern at 2016 CoP.
Timber	<b>Prevention</b> – Timber guide published by Royal Botanic Garden Kew. <b>Intelligence</b> – No specific intelligence although threat remains.

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
9. All PDG's to consider a Twitter week of action to raise the public's awareness of their particular wildlife crime area.	Home Office restrictions on the use of social media by UKBF preclude the use of social media including Twitter; therefore we will not be implementing the recommendations of the last UKTCG.
32. All PDG's to consider doing more work across social media to get the message across that wildlife crime is socially unacceptable.	As above.
34. All PDG's who have not yet set three year targets to ensure they do so.	As per below.

**Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016:**

Action	Update
AP1 – CITES Law enforcement training in Scotland.	Matter sits with Police Scotland.
AP3- European eel risk intelligence brief requested.	NWCUC actioned - draft intelligence brief disseminated.
AP4 – Police Scotland attendance.	Consideration to be given to Police Scotland being assigned as an enforcement lead.
AP5 – Refresh of ivory risk assessment.	NWCUC actioned - draft disseminated.
AP6 – Update on Rathkeale Rovers trial Birmingham.	Custodial sentences for all defendants (15 months – 6 years each, totalling over 70 years).

### How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last two years?

### Outline new three year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in three years time:

We will review post 2016 CoP decisions, when we are made aware of funding, allocation of resource and political impetus. The UKBF and NCA control strategies drive UKBF business and the resource allocation. Generic objectives for a three year period can be:

- All law enforcement parties will rigorously enforce both the International and domestic legislation with the resources allocated against key priority areas.
- We will year on year endeavour to increase both seizure activity and successful prosecutions.
- We will work collaboratively to build communication pathways both nationally and internationally for mutual benefit.
- We will work with ICCWC (International Consortium on Combating Wildlife Crime) partners as necessary and establish closer working practices.
- We will provide Government timely advice on IWT when requested.
- We will champion partnership working across both law enforcement and the transport sector.

### Other Issues:

- UKBF have conducted a two phase training mission in Malawi as part of the IWT challenge fund. Second phase event with NWCU.
- UKBF supported Duke of Cambridge visit to Thames Gateway and launch of United for Wildlife taskforce.
- UKBF supported a World Customs Organisation training mission to Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania (Container Control Programme).
- UKBF participation in BBC documentary concerning illegal ivory trade.
- UKBF collaboration project to age export ivory.
- UKBF collaborating with Environmental Investigation Agency on new CITES ivory enforcement film.
- NWCU continue to address illegal wildlife trade on the internet.
- UKBF collaborated with Foreign and Commonwealth Office on CITES training event in Mexico.

### Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

Review of existing priorities by WCCAG sees **European eel** emerge as a top priority for enforcement, based on its critical global status, large-scale complementary actions and regulatory mechanisms in place and reports of UK involvement in illegal activities. **Traditional Medicines & Health Supplements** also re-confirmed as a priority, with volume of trade (particularly in health supplements and particularly in CITES listed plants species) increasing, with leopard, bear, lion, rhino and tiger included in the list of ingredients of Traditional Medicines being seized. Illegal trade in **rhino horn, ivory** (sale, (re-)exports and in transit), **diurnal birds of prey** (notably Goshawk and Peregrine) and **reptiles** (notably rare and high value live tortoises and Madagascan chameleons and geckos traded via specialist reptile forums) all remain high scorers, with **big cat parts & derivatives** (not included in Traditional Medicines) (notably leopard, lion and tiger) and **stony corals** also scoring high.

### Recommendations to UKTCG

#### General

- CITES to be retained as a UK wildlife crime priority, with specific sub-priorities to remain as they are currently.
- CITES PDG to consider whether Big Cat Parts & Derivatives and Stony Corals should be included as additional sub-priorities.

#### Prevention

NWCU to consider further development of the CITES section of the website and whether there is specific content that could assist with prevention of the illegal trade.

## UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Freshwater Pearl Mussels (FWPM's)

### Summary of Intelligence

Intelligence regarding Freshwater Pear Mussels accounts for 0.2% (13) of all intelligence submitted to NWCUC. In addition, there were 13 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for FWPM's. The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the table below:

- Intelligence recorded is lower than all other UK wildlife crime priorities; however, the impact of one offence of FWPM killing can erase an entire population of the species.

<b>FWPM</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
NWCUC	10	76.9%
South West Region	2	15.4%
Other Government Agency	1	7.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13</b>	

- The intelligence received is predominantly from Police Scotland, NWCUC and Devon & Cornwall (South West Region).
- Freshwater Pearl Mussels fall victim to over-fishing in pursuit of their pearl (which they seldom produce), river pollution and engineering works.
- The 'Pearls in Peril' scheme was launched to aid recovery of mussels and exercise tighter controls on illegal activities affecting the species. River Watch Scheme plans are underway to extend into 2016.

A recent report suggests there has been a 50% decline in Freshwater Pearl Mussels in the River Spey over the last 15 years. The report identified the cause of the decline as being pollutants, fertilisers and human waste. Conservation Groups are campaigning against plans for up to 2,000 new houses in the Cairngorms National Park, which will further increase pollution of the Spey<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Badenoch and Strathspey Conservation Group report by James Hutton Institute

**Plan Owner Update**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Freshwater Pearl Mussel Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Iain Sime, Scottish National Heritage</b>

**Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:**

The PDG has a number of outcomes that contribute to our overall objective: during 2016 to raise awareness of the threat posed by criminality and help communities in hotspots to prevent criminality and identify offenders (note: draft targets to support the overall objective shown below).

Objective	Evidence
<p><u>Prevention</u> Increase awareness of freshwater pearl mussels and wildlife crime in the press and media. The work of the PDG to generate &gt;three news releases that feature in local and national media per annum.</p>	<p>During 2015 the work of the PDG generated at least seven news releases. These were associated with the launch of Riverwatch schemes, the publication of hotspot maps, and three days of targeted activity by Police Scotland and partners targeting high risk pearl mussel sites. All planned Riverwatch schemes were launched during 2015. Following suggestion from UKTCG, plans are underway to extend the scheme into 2016. Hotspot maps finalised and published by Scottish Government in December 2015. Results of Scotland-wide survey of pearl mussels published in December 2015, with press release linked to hotspot maps. Coverage included BBC radio, ITV news, and press/online.</p>
<p><u>Intelligence</u> Improve the flow of intelligence about criminality to inform enforcement action, identify offenders and prevent further criminality. More than 75% of suspected crimes to be reported directly to the police.</p>	<p>During 2015, suspected crimes were detected in five cases. All were reported to the police and, where relevant, also reported to SEPA. A project to confirm the reasons for pearl mussel losses from rivers in Assynt has been delayed. However proposed way forward to be actioned during Spring 2016. NWCU/Police Scotland propose to visit jewellery and craft fairs during 2016 to finalise examination of jewellery trade.</p>
<p><u>Enforcement</u> Over three years from 2015, at least six pro-active operations to be initiated and actioned by the police, in collaboration with key partners.</p>	<p>Joint patrols between Police Scotland and partners took place over two days, on seven rivers during November 2015. Planning due to take place for further patrols/operations during 2016. A full-time Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer has been appointed in N Division, Police Scotland. This Division holds many of the most important remaining pearl mussel populations.</p>

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
SNH to consider better licensing regulations in relation to the commissioning and construction of Mini Hydro Schemes where the impact of these sites causes pollution running into rivers at FWPM sites.	SNH, with SEPA, local authorities and industry have held Sharing Good Practice event to encourage better management and enforcement during construction of hydro schemes. A trial of greater site inspections also taking place to encourage better pollution prevention in construction sites. SNH advice to regulators will also be strengthened if proposals are made to build hydro schemes near to pearl mussel populations.
SNH to apply for funding for an extension of the Pearls in Peril riverwatch scheme to cover other key rivers across Scotland.	See update against objectives. At present, working to confirm that Pearls in Peril riverwatch scheme can be extended into 2016.
All PDG's to consider a Twitter week of action to raise the public's awareness of their particular wildlife crime area.	PDG discussed and agreed to include within planned 2016 media plan for pearl mussel PDG. We expect that further joint patrols/operations, targeting high risk populations, can be used as the focus of a week of action (as was done during November 2015).
All PDG's to consider doing more work	See above. We have also taken advice from the SNH social

across social media to get the message across that wildlife crime is socially unacceptable.	media coordinator. He suggested that a blog post, posted on the SNH species blog service, would make a useful focus for social media messages. This will be included in the pearl mussel PDG media plan for 2016.
All PDG's who have not yet set three year targets to ensure they do so.	Draft targets suggested to UKTCG at November meeting and the three potential targets are listed above.

**Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meetings: 8<sup>th</sup> October 2015 and 20<sup>th</sup> April 2016:**

Action	Update
Police Scotland to plan 'days of action' on selected rivers subject to pearl fishing.	As mentioned above, two days of action took place November 2015, with press coverage.
To investigate research project look at persecution and pearl mussel declines in Assynt.	Delays in securing funding. Agreed to draft outline and agree legal position regarding surveillance cameras and take forward during 2016.
Finalise and publish first public pearl mussel persecution maps.	As mentioned above, published December 2015. Agreed with Scottish Government to publish 2015 maps in Spring 2016 – planning underway.
Establish a project re-surveying high risk pearl mussel populations.	Project completed March 2016. Results to be distributed to PDG members and results used to inform operations and any future enforcement.
Embed key PDG actions in wider PAW strategy in Highland.	Highland PAW group and strategy launched in March 2016, including several key actions from the pearl mussel PDG.
Investigate potential use of jewellery/craft fairs for evidence of trade in freshwater pearls.	Planning underway to attend local craft fairs during 2016, to finalise investigation of jewellery trade.
Collate information on the location and size of pearl mussel population across England & Wales, and disseminate to relevant police forces.	Information collated by NWCU and Natural England and distributed to relevant police forces during February 2016.

**How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last two years?**

There have been some notable successes against our objective and three draft targets:

1. The work of the PDG, through the riverwatch element of the Pearls in Peril project, and press releases associated with national surveys, Police Scotland intelligence-led patrols/joint action, and other conservation initiatives has resulted in significant media coverage on television, radio, press and online. Over the last two years there have been at least eight news releases and significant use of social media (target: >three per annum).
2. Approximately 90% of suspected crimes have been reported directly to the police during the past two years (target >75%).

In 2014 the first pro-active police operation, with partners was actioned on the River Spey. During 2015 further patrols were undertaken across two days covering seven separate rivers. The intention is to undertake further operations, led by Police Scotland, during 2016 (target is at least six operations over three years).

**Outline new three year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in three years time:**

The new draft targets – put forward to November 2015 UKTCG - remain as:

1. The work of the PDG to generate >three news releases that feature in local and national media per annum.
2. More than 75% of suspected crimes to be reported directly to the police.
3. At least six pro-active operations to be initiated and actioned by the police, in collaboration with key partners.

In future the PDG would anticipate maintaining this output, which will be more challenging when the EC funded Pearls in Peril project finishes (despite the anticipated extension of wildlife crime work to the end of 2016). The PDG, having supported the commencement of intelligence-led wildlife crime operations targeting pearl mussels, would anticipate extending such operations beyond N Division in Scotland. Particularly to the Grampian and Angus areas of Scotland where suspected crimes against pearl mussels

have been reported in recent years.

**Other Issues:**

- All wildlife crime actions within the Pearls in Peril EC LIFE+ project have been completed (as reported to 2015 UKTCG meeting). Agreements are being sought to continue this work, particularly gathering information on vulnerable pearl mussel populations, during 2016.
- The Pearls in Peril project conference will take place at Mar Lodge, near Braemar in May 2016.
- Within Highland Scotland (a core area for pearl mussels), it is particularly noteworthy that actions within the PDG plan are now embedded in the new Highland PAW strategy (from March 2016). And further, within N Division of Police Scotland a full-time Wildlife Crime Liaison Officer has recently been confirmed to help support wildlife crime work.
- The PDG remain of the view that pearl mussels are at considerable threat from wildlife crime. An example of evidence to support this comes from the Scotland national survey we published in December 2015, which found evidence of wildlife crime (principally pearl fishing) affecting 35% of rivers in Scotland<sup>6</sup>.

**Recommendations to UKTCG**

**General**

FWPM to be retained as a UK wildlife crime priority.

**Prevention**

- PDG to continue to raise awareness via social media on the impact of criminality, species decline and extinction and the overall impact on the environment and the economy.
- PDG to consider if a representative from each specific police force with populations of FWPM's in England should join the PDG to ensure local populations of FWPM are safeguarded.

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<sup>6</sup> [http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned\\_reports/901.pdf](http://www.snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/901.pdf)

**UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Poaching  
(Deer and Fish Poaching and Hare Coursing)**

**Summary of Intelligence**

Poaching overall

All forms of poaching account for 39.3% (3096) of all intelligence submitted to NWCU.

Deer Poaching

26.1% (809) of all the poaching intelligence (3096 logs) submitted to NWCU is in relation to Deer Poaching. In addition, there were 399 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Deer Poaching. The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the table below:

- The highest amount of intelligence submitted for Deer Poaching is from the South West Region (predominantly Devon & Cornwall and Avon & Somerset). This is closely followed by Police Scotland.
- The main motivating factor is money. Poachers selling to local business i.e. butchers and pubs can earn a considerable amount of 'cash in hand' per deer - the more poaching committed, the more disposable income the poachers will have.
- There are still reports of persons engaged in deer coursing for pleasure and esteem by posting images on social media.

<b>Deer Poaching</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
South West Region	403	49.8%
North Region	124	15.3%
South East Region	74	9.1%
East Region	69	8.5%
Crimestoppers	35	4.3%
NWCU	26	3.2%
Wales Region	26	3.2%
Midlands Region	25	3.1%
RSPCA	9	1.1%
Police Service of Northern	9	1.1%
LACS	6	0.7%
Environment Agency	1	0.1%
Natural England	1	0.1%
Other Government Agency	1	0.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>809</b>	

A teenage boy created an 'app' for reporting poaching as part of Project Poacher, a new national campaign to combat poaching in England & Wales. The app can be downloaded, for free, onto Android, Apple and Windows mobile phones and takes the user step by step through the reporting of an incident. It also allows them to pinpoint their location using the phone's GPS. The data can be sent to the police together with information about the type of incident, vehicles/suspects and other witnesses. The app also provides extra information about poaching legislation<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>7</sup> [www.countryside-alliance.org/schoolboy-creates-poacher-app-to-boost-fight-against-wildlife-crime](http://www.countryside-alliance.org/schoolboy-creates-poacher-app-to-boost-fight-against-wildlife-crime)

Fish Poaching

12% (370) of all poaching intelligence (3096 logs) submitted to NWCU is in relation to Fish Poaching. In addition, there were 152 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Fish Poaching. The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the table below:

<b>Fish Poaching</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Wales Region	61	16.5%
South West Region	58	15.7%
North Region	57	15.4%
South East Region	53	14.3%
East Region	48	13.0%
Angling Trust	39	10.5%
NWCU	29	7.8%
Midlands Region	7	1.9%
Marine Scotland	6	1.6%
Environment Agency	4	1.1%
Crimestoppers	2	0.5%
NGO - Other	2	0.5%
Interpol	1	0.3%
Marine Management Organisations	1	0.3%
Port of Dover Police	1	0.3%
Police Service of Northern Ireland	1	0.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>370</b>	

- Fishing without permits/licences on riverbanks remains high.
- High instances of illegal cockling have been reported in Wales and Scotland. There is a significant risk that the cockles are contaminated with E-Coli which could be passed into the human food chain.
- Illegal electro-fishing for razor clams continues. Poachers use generators and drop cables into the seabed to stun the fish before collection.

Organised gangs are reported to be poaching razor clams off the coast of Argyll, Scotland, violating a large number of laws. Fishers operate from unlicensed boats and employ electro fishing. Criminals can harvest up to £65,000 per day, which is higher than daily revenue from the sales of illicit drugs. The razor clams are shipped to Asian markets within a 24 hour period. Not only does this affect the Scottish economy it also damages the coastal ecosystems. Electro-fishing (which has been banned since 1998) is extremely dangerous for divers, sparking fears that workers are being exploited and exposed to potentially life-threatening conditions<sup>8</sup>. UK fishermen currently benefit from easy access to the EU market, with 85% of all UK shellfish exports (worth £360 million) heading for European shores in 2015<sup>9</sup>. The Seafood Expo took place in Brussels in April 2016 and the UK promoted their seafood in an attempt to boost even more exports to Europe.

The threat from illegal fish poaching/shell fishing in the UK is predicted to increase over the next few years.

<sup>8</sup> Illegal Fishing and Organised Crime Nexus: Illegal Fishing as Transnational Organised Crime - [www.globalinitiative.net](http://www.globalinitiative.net)

<sup>9</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/news/360-million-of-uk-seafood-making-a-splash-on-european-menus](http://www.gov.uk/government/news/360-million-of-uk-seafood-making-a-splash-on-european-menus)

Hare Coursing

25.4% (786) of all poaching intelligence (3096 logs) submitted to NWCU is in relation to Hare Coursing. In addition, there were 248 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Hare Coursing. The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the table to the right:

- The highest volumes of hare coursing reports are from the East Region - predominantly Cambridgeshire (42.5%) and Hertfordshire (21.3%).
- Participants are prepared to travel hundreds of miles to course hares in suitable locations.

<b>Hare Coursing</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
East Region	221	28.1%
South East Region	172	21.9%
North Region	151	19.2%
South West Region	94	12.0%
NWCU	36	4.6%
Midlands Region	29	3.7%
Crimestoppers	25	3.2%
Wales Region	21	2.7%
LACS	19	2.4%
RSPCA	12	1.5%
Scottish Badgers	2	0.3%
British Transport Police	1	0.1%
RSPB	1	0.1%
SAC (Scottish Agricultural College)	1	0.1%
Police Service of Northern Ireland	1	0.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>786</b>	

**Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Poaching Priority Delivery Group (England &amp; Wales)</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Glynn Evans, British Association of Shooting Conservation (BASC)</b>

**Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:**

To increase the level of awareness of poaching and hare coursing as serious wildlife crimes and build better trust and relationships between the law enforcement agencies and local communities, both leading to increased prevention activity, intelligence flows and enforcement success in England & Wales.

- The Priority Delivery Group launched Project Poacher (PP) at the National Wildlife Enforcers Conference in November 2015. Since its launch PP has received considerable media interest.
- There are currently three main elements to PP; a reporting app, a series of posters highlighting different types of poaching offences and a glossary of commonly used terms to help call handlers and others to correctly identify and direct resources to poaching incidents.
- Currently the reporting app has been downloaded 2372 times and 'opened' 5717 times with 77 reports sent. At present there are approximately 100 downloads per week. There has been interest from three police forces in putting the app on electronic devices supplied to officers.
- Details of the posters have been forwarded by NWCU to police forces and are available in high resolution to download and adapt to their own force identity free of charge. To date we are aware that three forces have used them with one force producing 1,000.
- NWCU have distributed the glossary of terms. It has also been forwarded to [www.askthepolice.com](http://www.askthepolice.com)
- Members of the Poaching PDG have attended regional rural/wildlife crime group meetings to promote PP and the work of the delivery group.
- The Poaching PDG has supported specific policing operations such as Leviathan and Traverse and through supporting the Angling Trust FESS raised awareness through the Angler Education Plan/EA partnership.

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
9. All PDG's to consider a Twitter week of action to raise the public's awareness of their particular wildlife crime area.	The PDG plans a week of action to promote PP in November (this is an appropriate time, seasonality wise) and will use Twitter and other forms of communication to do this.
32. All PDG's to consider doing more work across social media to get the message across that wildlife crime is socially unacceptable.	The PDG has agreed that social media and other means of promoting Project Poacher will be undertaken by all members of the group whenever possible.

**Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting: 7<sup>th</sup> April 2016**

Action	Update
AP2: All to continue promoting Project Poacher and to update other members of the Poaching PDG of this.	There has been considerable promotion of Project Poacher but this is an ongoing action point to maintain momentum.
AP5: Those members of the group who are interested in or know of suitable experts for officers to approach to forward details to AF ahead of the next meeting.	This is in relation to a discussion regarding impact statements and providing a source of expert advice if needed.

**How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last two years?**

See objectives and evidence above.

**Outline new three year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in three years time:**

- NWCU will identify five forces with a wide geographical coverage to establish a baseline of activity, reporting and success. Information in relation to the reporting app will also be used to assess the awareness and level of reports of poaching helping to monitor the success of Project Poacher.
- Ensure all 43 forces in England & Wales are aware of the PDG, Project Poacher, NWCU and the issues associated with poaching.

- The continued wide range of representation with the PDG of both NGO's and law enforcers.
- Increased reporting of intelligence from individual forces to NWCU both in the terms of number and geographical coverage.
- Promote enforcement success to communities via a wide range of media outlets to increase confidence in the process of reporting incidents and intelligence.
- To assist NWCU in the production and dissemination of Authorised Professional Practice in relation to dealing with poaching offences.

**Plan Owner Update ~ Scotland**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Scottish PAW Poaching and Coursing Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>John Bruce, British Deer Society</b>

**Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:**

*To build a greater level of public awareness of poaching and coursing as serious wildlife crime.*  
Use of all forms of media by all partners to highlight poaching and coursing crimes and issues.

*To build working relations, communications and information share between all agencies and organisations and rural communities.*

Police invited to Bailiffs' conference to maintain working relations.

*To increase prevention activity and enforcement*

**Enforcement:**

- Develop guidance for Force Control Centres to handle the reporting of wildlife crime incidents (including poaching and coursing) appropriately.
- 2015 returns from venison dealer licence holders now recorded by SNH and variations in local authority management to be explored.
- Operation Lepus 2016 launched in three police divisions (Forth Valley, Lothians & Borders and Highlands & Islands).

**Prevention:**

- All poaching and coursing convictions and other associated incidents given media coverage by group partners.
- Wildlife crime training (including poaching and coursing) for PWCO's planned for 2016.

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
All PDG's to consider a Twitter week of action to raise the public's awareness of their particular wildlife crime area.	Considered unnecessary. Poaching occurs in remote places and often at night; coursing is usually witnessed by the land management sector. There already exists a variety of social media sites hosted by partners highlighting poaching, coursing and associated issues. Doubt is cast on the value and return expected from time invested in a week long campaign.
All PDG's to consider doing more work across social media to get the message across that wildlife crime is socially unacceptable.	As above.
All PDG's who have not yet set three year targets to ensure they do so.	Still under development.

**Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting:**

Action	Update
Consider a wildlife crime training provision for police communication centres.	Ongoing.
Publish an article on how to establish a local network scheme.	Ongoing.
Progress the collation of impact and expert witness statements regarding poaching and coursing.	COPFS now taking this forward.
Research how the format for venison dealer's licence (VDL) records was established and to collate local authority policies around issuing VDL.	Ongoing.

**How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last 2 years?**

By:

- Use of all forms of media by all partners to highlight poaching and coursing convictions and issues.
- Police Scotland investigating poaching and coursing incidents reported to them.
- Circulating poaching and coursing seasonality charts to PWCO's.
- Producing incident notebook for witnesses to record poaching and coursing information.
- Delivering training to some police force communications centres.
- Proposal to validate roe deer DNA (refused).

**Outline new 3 year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in 3 years time:**

Still in development phase.

**Recommendations to UKTCG**

**General**

- Deer Poaching, Fish Poaching and Hare Coursing to be retained as UK wildlife crime priorities.
- WCCAG to again review issues around illegal shellfish poaching (last reviewed March 2015) due to increasing reports of extensive illegal activity.

## UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Raptor Persecution

### Summary of Intelligence

Raptor Persecution accounts for 7.6% (596) of all intelligence submitted to NWCUC. In addition, there were 109 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Raptor Persecution. The total intelligence submissions from every other region/agency are shown in the table below:

- Shooting still remains the most prevalent method of persecution.
- Poisoning continues - these are outlined in the maps produced each year by the Scottish Government. In England & Wales similar maps are planned for publication in 2017. They will include shooting and trapping data for the first time.

<b>Raptors</b>		
<b>Agency/Region</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
NWCUC	164	27.5%
SASA	107	18.0%
Natural England	61	10.2%
RSPB	59	9.9%
North Region	43	7.2%
East Region	40	6.7%
South West Region	26	4.4%
Wales Region	20	3.4%
Crimestoppers	19	3.2%
FERA/CSL	18	3.0%
South East Region	17	2.9%
Animal Health	7	1.2%
Midlands Region	6	1.0%
SAC (Scottish Agricultural College)	4	0.7%
EU-Twix	2	0.3%
LACS	2	0.3%
RSPCA	1	0.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>596</b>	

There have now been two successful vicarious liability convictions in Scotland. In 2014, a landowner was fined £675 and lost nearly £66,000 from his Single Farm Payment. In 2015, a landowner was fined £3,200 for the offences of his gamekeeper (use of an illegal gin trap).

A study in Finland measured the value of the environment to society and created environmental compensation legislation, where the killing or egg removal of a protected bird species could result in the offender being made to compensate society for the damage caused. The value of, for instance, a White Tailed Sea Eagle was judged to be approx £4,600 in the Finnish study<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> RSPB Legal Eagle # 76

**Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Raptor Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Superintendent Chris Hankinson, Greater Manchester Police</b>

**Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:**

Objective	Evidence
1 - National populations of four key species to be reviewed to consider focussed work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three of the species increasing but not Hen Harrier. Buzzards remain the key indicator for poisoning in England &amp; Wales.</li> <li>• Work by Natural England with poison maps has been overlaid with recordings of confirmed shootings and trappings. This reveals counties where focused work can take place in order to reduce numbers of persecution cases. Subject to the next Raptor PDG (in July 2016) and agreement on incidents to publish, that would mean focused work in particular force areas.</li> <li>• Discussion on four key England species identified the following from RSPB: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Goshawk – 250 pairs in England and 43 in Wales – slow increase.</li> <li>~ Peregrine Falcons – 553 pairs in England and 301 in Wales. Concern that the number of Peregrine chicks taken from nests needs media work for breeding season 2016 e.g. Anston and Bury Peregrine thefts.</li> <li>~ Red Kites – overall doing excellent with 1,600 pairs in Wales alone.</li> <li>~ Hen Harriers – average of only seven pairs in England over last five years with 43 pairs in Wales. Hen Harrier action plan owned by Defra.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Hen Harrier Action Plan for England has now been published by Defra.</li> <li>• Operation EASTER has been launched for spring of 2016 (some egg thefts may include the priority raptor species).</li> </ul>
2 - To establish effective terms of reference for the group.	Will be confirmed at next Raptor PDG in July 2016.
3 - Creation of poison maps in order to identify geographic hot-spots to inform activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completed. Overlay of shootings and trappings also complete. The Countryside Alliance want assurance that all shooting cases have confirmation of death by those means. This is currently being worked on by NWCUC through re-contacting all forces who had recorded shootings in their areas.</li> <li>• A “task and finish group” has been established to confirm the data that should be associated to any public facing map and the style that data should be presented in. The group will be meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> May at NE Offices in Cambridge.</li> <li>• The work by Natural England staff has shown where focused work should take place. This is to be further discussed at the next Raptor PDG on the 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.</li> <li>• Based on the current figures, the chair of the Raptor PDG will meet with the wildlife leads for the two forces where raptor persecution is worse for poisonings and shootings. The group will look to offer support for any proposed work that comes out of those meetings as this will include media coverage on the issues raised.</li> </ul>
4 - To partake fully in the consultation process for the Wildlife Investigative guidance APP on Raptor Persecution	The draft chapter of the guidance has been written. Once ratified it will go on all police force intranet sites on the Authorised Professional Practice (APP) site. Once published, the guidance will be reviewed on a yearly basis in order to stay current with wildlife cases and court decisions. It is envisaged that the Raptor guidance should be published in the spring of 2017.

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
22: Raptor PDG to consider coordinated action on Carbofuran, including an assessment of whether UK pesticides legislation would be a more successful vehicle for prosecution than the current offence of possession.	Poisons as a whole (and not just Carbofuran) has been discussed at PDG. A task and finish group is now looking to progress this with a particular company and Defra.

<p>24. Useful indicators of success that the PDG could work towards are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For Hen Harrier - restoring the target breeding population in the English Special Protected Area's (SPA's) in which Hen Harrier is a 'qualifying breeding interest feature'. The North Pennine Moors SPA held 11 pairs when designated; the Bowland Fells held 12 pairs when designated.</li> <li>• For Peregrines, a useful indicator of success would be restoring breeding Peregrines on upland grouse moors from which the recent BTO (British Trust for Ornithology) survey suggests they are being lost. Most of these areas are being monitored by North England Raptor Forum (NERF) so improvements in site occupancy and productivity should be relatively easy to assess.</li> <li>• For Red Kites – a reduction in levels of illegal poisoning – particularly around the areas of the last three release schemes in the north of England.</li> <li>• Goshawks – Increase in the Dark Peak population and improved productivity.</li> <li>• UKTCG: Chief Constable Prince cautioned that these are conservation goals (UKTCG should focus only on enforcement measures) and appear to be 'target' setting. Chris Hankinson to discuss with Martin Sims and progress at next E&amp;W Raptor PDG.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Hen Harrier action plan now published by Defra.</li> <li>2. Lancashire Police have held de-briefs on the Hen Harrier season (and other Raptors) within the Lancashire area (this includes Bowland).</li> <li>3. The next PDG in July will incorporate the indicators as items on the agenda.</li> <li>4. Operation EASTER is running again for Spring 2016 with regards to egg theft and nest disturbance for raptors. NWCU Investigative Support Officers will assist forces in any investigations.</li> <li>5. The chair of Raptor PDG to conduct introduction letters of the group for landowners who wish to become involved in raptor conservation.</li> <li>6. Chair of Raptor PDG to attend the next North Regional Enforcement Group meeting for the purpose of introduction and speaking to all force point of contacts about what work they are doing towards "prevention".</li> </ol>
<p>26: PDG to consider (for opportunistic cases) asking for landowner permission for surveillance without jeopardising an enquiry.</p>	<p>The Wainwright case from last year has now brought this into focus. Aspects of this matter have been incorporated into the raptor guidance.</p>
<p>27: To consider the PAW Northern Ireland report prior to publishing the poison hotspot maps on the PAW website.</p>	<p>The PAW Northern Ireland report highlights specific issues that relate to Agriculture as the main problem with raptor persecution and that is totally separate to the issues for England &amp; Wales. So although considered it is a separate issue.</p>
<p>9: All PDG's to consider a "Twitter week of action".</p>	<p>To be discussed at the next Raptor PDG on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.</p>
<p>32: All PDG's to consider doing more work across social media to get the message across that wildlife crime is socially unacceptable.</p>	<p>Once the Raptor Persecution maps are agreed a media campaign will be run to promote the maps.</p>
<p>33: All PDG's to set three year targets.</p>	<p>To be discussed at next Raptor PDG on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2016.</p>

<p><b>Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting:</b></p>	
<p>Action</p>	<p>Update</p>
<p>1- To establish the process for dealing with autopsies for shootings, poisonings and trappings within England &amp; Wales, in comparison to the Scottish model.</p>	<p>This was discussed at the PDG of the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2016. A key issue is the consistency of going through the one route for all raptor fatalities in Scotland, regardless of what the fatality is attributed too.</p>
<p>2- Natural England to determine what the criteria are for pesticides in England.</p>	<p>In hand. This is currently on archived pages on the Health &amp; Safety Executive website. NE will check on the timescales for this to be re-published and present at next PDG.</p>

3- NWCU to establish a task and finish group to look at the issues raised with data for shootings and trappings and report back at next group with a view of data maps having a detailed facility for circumstances etc.	This has been discussed. The use of the "MAGIC" system does not allow for a "hover" facility over hot-spots. This issue will go out to members of the task and finish group for consideration of next steps and potential presentation at Natural England offices in Cambridge.
4- Defra to arrange publication of 2014 maps as soon as possible.	In hand and subject to current "task and finish group" on this issue.
5- PDG chair to discuss with Natural England, what is required from the Raptor PDG for the Hen Harrier Action Plan.	Suitable person is attending the next Raptor PDG.
6- Defra to consider the potential of a poisons surrender as per the Scottish model.	Liaison to take place as to the potential of doing something on a regional basis where poisonings are prevalent.
7- Draft guidance on the use of Gas Guns in the Uplands to be drawn up due to their potential use near raptor nests. Existing NFU guidance does not cover this.	This is being done by Natural England and Moorland Association. Natural England have completed a first draft of a document but there is further work to do as a result of responses.
8- PDG chair to consider the PDG mission statement and objectives with a view of circulating to the group for comment.	Will be done in advance of next group.

**How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last two years?**

Future targets will be set by PDG and will be based upon specific areas of Raptor Persecution, for example they will initially focus on progression of the publication of the poisoning maps, with overlays for trapping and shooting. Targets will then be set for the key hotspot areas (as shown by the maps) and the plan owner will have direct meetings with those police forces.

**Outline new three year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in three years time:**

Will be progressed by plan owner and will focus initially on Hen Harrier.

**Other Issues:**

In September 2015, in Cambridgeshire, the body was found of a rare migrant Red Footed Falcon, the progress of which had been monitored by birdwatchers for several months as it flew around parts of the UK, notably the Midlands and East of England. There had been significant media interest in this bird due to its rarity here. A post mortem examination of the bird showed that it had been shot. This bird was of no threat to any game or farm livestock rearing interests as its primary food is dragonflies. There is no evidence of why it was shot and this crime remains undetected by Cambridgeshire Police.

A father and daughter appeared at Bury Magistrates Court in October 2015 where they were sentenced for two offences relating to the possession and offering for sale of two wild Peregrine Falcon Chicks. It is not known from which nest the chicks were originally taken. The chicks were re-homed into a surrogate nest by the Calderdale Raptor Study Group (RSG) (members of NERF) which identified a suitable nest and relocated the chicks into a nest in West Yorkshire. The nest was monitored by Calderdale RSG until all four chicks fledged. NERF, via Calderdale RSG, spent a considerable amount of time, not without risk, assisting these two chicks return to the wild.

In April 2015, film footage from RSPB cameras revealed the theft of Peregrine Falcon chicks from a nest in a Quarry in Anston, near Rotherham. The crime remains undetected but South Yorkshire Police have been very committed in the subsequent investigation and this has included search warrants executed within the Nottinghamshire area. There is a £1,000 reward offered by the RSPB for information that leads to a conviction.

Derbyshire Constabulary reported that on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015 a dead Osprey was found to the west of Derbyshire level, with injuries found to be consistent with spring trapping.

**Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:**

Specific comments from RSPB have been forwarded to the Raptor PDG plan owners for their consideration.

**Plan Owner Update ~ Scotland**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Scottish PAW Raptor Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>DCS Sean Scott, Police Scotland</b>

**Evidence on how objectives have been progressed:**  
*"Raise community trust and awareness to facilitate intelligence and incident reporting, leading to increased prevention and enforcement activity relating to Raptor Persecution"*

Objective	Evidence
Raise community trust and awareness to facilitate intelligence and incident reporting	<p><b>Raising community trust:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of estates participating in Heads Up For Harriers project through effective partnership working.</li> <li>Partnership working now resulting in some land managers reporting dead raptors to police.</li> </ul> <p><b>Raising awareness:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publication of RSPB report on 20 years of raptor crime.</li> <li>Publication of annual raptor crime maps.</li> <li>Media appeals for Hen harrier sightings as part of Heads Up For Harriers project.</li> </ul> <p><b>Incident reporting</b> Over 144 incidents reported to Police Scotland in 2015.</p>
Increased prevention and enforcement activity	<p><b>Enforcement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Over 144 raptors collected and submitted for post-mortem in 2015.</li> <li>All 27 incidents of raptor crime reported to police were investigated and vicarious liability enquiries undertaken where applicable.</li> <li>Work with SNH to pursue General Licence restrictions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Prevention:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All raptor crimes and other associated incidents given media coverage.</li> <li>Pesticide surrender scheme saw the disposal of a significant quantity of poisons.</li> </ul>

**Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2015):**

Action	Update
Raptor PDG's to consider coordinated action on Carbofuran including an assessment of whether UK pesticides legislation would be a more successful vehicle for prosecution than the current offence of possession.	Scotland has recently concluded a surrender scheme whereby substantial amounts of Carbofuran were destroyed. Possession of illegal pesticide is an offence within the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 in Scotland but COPFS do already consider all relevant legislation when marking pesticide abuse cases.
All PDG's to consider a Twitter week of action to raise the public's awareness of their particular wildlife crime area.	Considered unnecessary at this time as the issue regularly receives extensive media coverage when an incident occurs. There already exist a variety of social media sites highlighting raptor crime and associated issues on an almost daily basis. Some are from existing partners within the group and others by non-associated blogs.
All PDG's to consider doing more work across social media to get the message across that wildlife crime is socially unacceptable.	As above. Police Scotland regularly uses social media to highlight a variety of aspects of wildlife crime taking into account the seasonality aspects of such crimes.
All PDG's who have not yet set three year targets to ensure they do so.	Ongoing.

**Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting:**

Action	Update
Re-issue article on photographic disturbance in the Spring.	Uploaded onto PAW Scotland website.

Police Scotland to set up a group meeting in the North East with Dave Thompson MSP and SNH regarding red kites.	Meeting with MSP held. Meeting with SNH still being planned.
Request for a meeting with Scottish Raptor Study Group members to discuss the wider circulation of their research papers.	Meeting currently being arranged with chair from regional groups.
Relevant material / training courses on rodenticide usage to be circulated among group members.	Information circulated.

**How have you succeeded in meeting your objectives over the last two years?**

By:

- Unifying the group to back a single project – Heads Up For Harriers – to gain greater understanding around the cause of breeding failure (e.g. natural causes, criminality, predation etc).
- Publishing raptor crime maps and data, including for the first time ‘other poisoned baits’ where raptors could have been but were not a victim.
- Commitment by Police Scotland to investigate all offences against raptors whilst also considering and pursuing Vicarious Liability offences where applicable. In addition, recognising the serious nature of other forms of wildlife crime to build trust within the community (i.e. trap and snare interference etc.).
- Working with SNH to provide evidence to support the implementation of General Licence restrictions.
- Use of all forms of media by all members of the group (e.g. Police Scotland wildlife crime campaign 2015).
- Managing a successful pesticide surrender scheme.

**Outline new three year targets and then anticipate where you would like to be in three years time:**

Still in development phase.

**Other Issues:**

- Heads Up For Harriers project has achieved an excellent level of partnership working within the group. Cameras showed the five nests to either successfully fledge or fail due to natural causes. An increased number of estates are due to participate in 2016. New Hen Harrier sightings continue to be recorded on the Hen Harrier hotline and are followed up by Scottish Raptor Group members.
- Gas gun guidance being considered by SNH.

**Recommendations to UKTCG**

**General**

Raptor Persecution to be retained as a UK wildlife crime priority with key species to remain as they are currently.

**Prevention**

PDG’s to consider whether there is any scope for the UK creation of an environmental compensation legislation such as that utilised in Finland.

**Enforcement**

England & Wales Raptor PDG to carry out specific enforcement / preventative work with those police forces identified through the hot-spot maps as having the highest number of Raptor Persecution cases.

## Non Priority Emerging Patterns and Trends

### Other Intelligence

- The category 'other' (which includes all intelligence not related to the priorities) accounts for 24.7% (1946) of all intelligence at NWCUC.
- There were also 1234 intelligence logs from Police Scotland in relation to other *non-priority* wildlife crime. In fact, the vast majority of the 'other' intelligence comes from Police Scotland, which highlights the value of NWCUC having a direct link into the Scottish Intelligence Database.
- The total intelligence submissions (1946 logs), for all 'other' wildlife crime, from every other region/agency are shown in the table below:

Other Intelligence		
Agency/Region	Total	% of total
North Region	374	19.2%
South East Region	325	16.7%
East Region	276	14.2%
South West Region	201	10.3%
NWCUC	156	8.0%
RSPCA	97	5.0%
Wales Region	95	4.9%
Natural England	89	4.6%
Crimestoppers	76	3.9%
RSPB	76	3.9%
Midlands Region	67	3.4%
League Against Cruel Sports (LACS)	44	2.3%
Animal Health	17	0.9%
SASA	10	0.5%
Marine Management Organisation	8	0.4%
SAC (Scottish Agricultural College)	7	0.4%
British Transport Police	6	0.3%
Police Service of Northern Ireland	6	0.3%
FERA/CSL	4	0.2%
DEFRA	3	0.2%
EU-Twix	3	0.2%
NGO - Other	2	0.1%
UK Border Force	2	0.1%
Interpol	1	0.1%
Traffic	1	0.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1946</b>	

After Police Scotland, the North region has submitted the most intelligence, followed by the South East, East and South West regions.

This table clearly shows the range of organisations that submit intelligence to NWCUC.

It is only through the submission of 'other' wildlife that NWCUC can fully monitor emerging threats. Although submissions from police forces are high, it is unclear if all 'other' wildlife crime intelligence is being forwarded on.

NWCUC fully sub-categorise all 'other' intelligence to allow for in-depth analysis of emerging issues. The sub-category breakdown is shown in the table overleaf:

Shooting and suspicious activity were the most common sub-categories.

Suspicious activity reports tend to relate to observations of persons with dogs and/or typical crime equipment (camouflage gear, rifles, lamps, muddy boots, etc) near wildlife areas. Because it is unknown whether the suspicious persons are likely to have been poaching/targeting badgers, foxes or other species - the intelligence can only be classed as 'other' suspicious activity.

There were no specific emerging trends identified from the intelligence throughout the strategic period.

NWCU continue to monitor all intelligence on an ongoing basis for issues of note.

<b>Other Intelligence</b>		
<b>Sub Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Shooting	193	9.9%
Suspicious Activity	192	9.9%
Fox Hunting	165	8.5%
Traps/Snares/Nets	117	6.0%
Hunting with Dogs	84	4.3%
Illegal Fighting	83	4.3%
Lifestyle	83	4.3%
Trading	82	4.2%
Taking from the Wild	74	3.8%
Domestic/Livestock	71	3.6%
Concern	68	3.5%
Sabs/Protests	68	3.5%
Non Wildlife	60	3.1%
Dead Animals/Birds	56	2.9%
Nest Disturbance/Destruction	56	2.9%
Egg Theft/Op Easter	55	2.8%
Killing Animals/Birds	55	2.8%
Theft	49	2.5%
Poisoning Unconfirmed	43	2.2%
European Protected Species	37	1.9%
Cruelty	36	1.8%
Egg Collection	28	1.4%
Unconfirmed Poisoning	24	1.2%
Habitat Disturbance/Destruction	22	1.1%
Non Native Species	21	1.1%
Dangerous Animals/Dogs	20	1.0%
Operational	18	0.9%
Non Crime Related	15	0.8%
Hunting with Bird of Prey	14	0.7%
Bird Registration	11	0.6%
Disturbance/Destruction	10	0.5%
Illegal Slaughterhouse	10	0.5%
Confirmed Poisoning	8	0.4%
Poisoning Confirmed	6	0.3%
Trap/Cage/Snare Interference	6	0.3%
Big Cat Sighting	3	0.2%
Breach of Licence	3	0.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>1946</b>	

### **Non Native Species**

The WCCAG have noted that non native species have scored highly within their matrix.

A new EU Regulation on Invasive Alien Species (1143/2014) came into force in January 2016. Its aim is to prevent, eradicate or manage invasive non-native species. To achieve this, the Regulation contains a number of prohibitions (on keeping, movement, sale, breeding, or releasing etc) as well as requirements for Member States to put in place surveillance and rapid response mechanisms and to develop pathway and management action plans.

**Appendix A – Glossary**

<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Acronym</b>	<b>Meaning</b>
ALGE	Association of Local Government Ecologists	NWCU	National Wildlife Crime Unit
APHA	Animal & Plant Health Agency	NE	Natural England
APP	Authorised Professional Practice	NRW	Natural Resources Wales
BCT	Bat Conservation Trust	NGO	Non Government Organisation
BASC	British Association for Shooting Conservation	NERF	North England Raptor Forum
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management	OCG	Organised Crime Group
CoP	Conference of Parties	PAW	Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime
COTES	Control of Trade in Endangered Species	PWCO	Police Wildlife Crime Officer
CITES	Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species	PESTELO	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Organisational
COPFS	Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service	PDG	Priority Delivery Group
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	POCA	Proceeds of Crime Act
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	PP	Project Poacher
EA	Environment Agency	RSG	Raptor Study Group
FERA	Food and Environment Research Agency	REG	Regional Enforcement Group
FIB	Force Intelligence Bureau	RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
FWPM	Fresh Water Pearl Mussel	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
HMRC	Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs	SASA	Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade	SEPA	Scottish Environmental Protection Agency
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee	SID	Scottish Intelligence Database
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency	SNH	Scottish National Heritage
LACS	League Against Cruel Sports	SNCO	Statutory Nature Conservation Organisations
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding	UKBF	UK Border Force
NCA	National Crime Agency	UKTCG	UK Tasking and Coordination Group
NPCC	National Police Chief's Council	WCCAG	Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group

**Appendix B – Total Intelligence Submitted to NWCU (01/10/2013 – 31/03/2016)**

Intelligence submitted to NWCU 01/10/2013 - 31/03/2016					
Submitting Agency/Region	Total	% of total	Category	Total	% of total
North Region	1441	18.3%	Poaching (all)	3096	39.3%
South West Region	1137	14.4%	Poaching Other	1131	
South East Region	961	12.2%	Poaching Deer	809	
NWCU	806	10.2%	Hare Coursing	786	
East Region	781	9.9%	Poaching Fish	370	
Wales Region	393	5.0%	Other	1946	24.7%
Animal Health	379	4.8%	CITES (all)	1111	14.1%
BCT	320	4.1%	CITES Other	365	
Crimestoppers	230	2.9%	CITES Illegal Trade in Raptors	256	
Natural England	222	2.8%	CITES Ivory	197	
Midlands Region	212	2.7%	CITES Reptiles	142	
LACS	196	2.5%	CITES Rhino Horn	57	
RSPCA	190	2.4%	CITES European Eel	40	
RSPB	146	1.9%	CITES Medicinal & Health Products	41	
SASA	118	1.5%	CITES Timber	13	
UK Border Force	83	1.1%	Badger Persecution	707	9.0%
EU-Twix	46	0.6%	Raptor Persecution	596	7.6%
Angling Trust	40	0.5%	Bat Persecution	401	5.1%
Police Service of Northern Ireland	24	0.3%	Freshwater Pearl Mussels	13	0.2%
FERA/CSL	23	0.3%	<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7870</b>	
Traffic	23	0.3%			
Scottish Badgers	13	0.2%	<b>Category</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>% of total</b>
Marine Management Organisation	12	0.2%	Other	1946	24.7%
NGO - Other	12	0.2%	Poaching Other	1131	14.4%
SAC (Scottish Agricultural College)	12	0.2%	Poaching Deer	809	10.3%
Environment Agency	11	0.1%	Hare Coursing	786	10.0%
British Transport Police	8	0.1%	Badger Persecution	707	9.0%
Marine Scotland	6	0.1%	Raptor Persecution	596	7.6%
Other Government Agency	6	0.1%	Bat Persecution	401	5.1%
Interpol	5	0.1%	Poaching Fish	370	4.7%
DEFRA	4	0.1%	CITES Other	365	4.6%
National Crime Agency	4	0.1%	CITES Illegal Trade in Raptors	256	3.3%
Port of Dover Police	4	0.1%	CITES Ivory	197	2.5%
Civil Nuclear Constabulary	1	0.0%	CITES Reptiles	142	1.8%
Ministry of Defence	1	0.0%	CITES Rhino Horn	57	0.7%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7870</b>		CITES Medicinal & Health Products	41	0.5%
			CITES European Eel	40	0.5%
			CITES Timber	13	0.2%
			Freshwater Pearl Mussels	13	0.2%
			<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>7870</b>	

**Appendix C – Regional Enforcement Groups for Wildlife Crime ~ England & Wales**

