

National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU)
Tactical Assessment
May 2017
Public version



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Introduction

Aim

The main objectives of the Tactical Assessment are:

- Analyse all intelligence submitted to the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) since the last assessment was written. The period analysed was from 1st October 2016 – 31st March 2017.
- 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 Tactical Assessment is a National Intelligence Model product aimed at providing an overview of the threats faced by the UK since the last 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.

Glossary

A glossary of terms is available at Appendix A.

UK Wildlife Crime Overview

International Illegal Wildlife Trade

Defra and Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) worked very closely with the Vietnamese Government to deliver a successful 3rd international conference on the IWT (Illegal Wildlife Trade) in Hanoi on 17-18 November 2016, including providing funding and 2 full time members of staff to act as the Conference Secretariat. At the Hanoi Conference, 42 countries adopted the Hanoi Statement, and 23 countries pledged specific actions in the Statement Annex to deliver on their commitments from London and Kasane to tackling IWT. Since the conference, the UK has used its bilateral influence in fora such as the G20, G7, EU and UN to drive continued commitment to, and action on, measures to combat the illegal wildlife trade. The UK will invite global leaders back to London in 2018 for a 4th high-level Illegal Wildlife Trade event. Officials from Defra, FCO and Dept for International Development (DfID) are working together on initial plans for the meeting. As part of this, Defra will be continuing to engage with the very active and knowledgeable community of stakeholders to support preparations for the meeting¹.

Ivory

The Home Secretary has requested an assessment of the ivory trade and links to Serious and Organised Crime – this will be completed by the National Assessments Centre which forms part of the Intelligence Directorate of the National Crime Agency.

CITES CoP²:

The 17th Conference of the Parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) took place in Johannesburg between 24 September and 5 October 2016. The conference delivered strong agreements to protect some of the world's most iconic species. The UK chaired discussions on rhinos, resulting in investigative action into failures to halt rhino horn trafficking in key destinations. A proposal to allow trade in rhino horn was also rejected. The conference voted against proposals that could have resulted in the reopening of some international trade in ivory.

The UK led negotiations on African lions which saw the trade in wild lion bones banned and the establishment of a new CITES Task Force. In addition, global rules on hunting trophies were enhanced, with export permits now mandated for almost all species listed as endangered. Many more decisions were made besides this, including action to protect pangolins, as the world's most trafficked mammal, the African grey parrot and species of sharks amongst others. The whole genus of Dalbergia, a type of rosewood, was listed in Appendix II, along with species of two other African genera also known and traded as rosewood, and one of the six iconic Madagascan Baobab trees. Some agarwood species, highly prized for their fragrant resin, were afforded additional protection through an annotation to cover woodchips, which are widely traded.

On Illegal Wildlife Trade, proposals were passed to strengthen cooperation, share information, and submit annual reports. A new resolution on reducing demand for illegally-traded specimens of CITES-listed species was passed, as was a proposal stressing the importance of applying UN provisions against corruption, which also called on Parties to ensure CITES authorities are trained.

Investigative Guidance³

The college of policing and NPCC made an executive decision that guidance will no longer be issued to police. As a result the wildlife crime 'guidance' is being split into 2 areas – Authorised Professional Practice (APP) will contain aide-memoirs for Call Handlers and first responders and Police On-Line Knowledge Area (POLKA) will hold Briefing Notes with lengthy details for full investigations. APP and POLKA are held on Force intranet sites for England and Wales and the script is written for all English

¹ Update provided by Defra

² Update provided by Defra

³ <https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/investigations/wildlife-crime/>

and Welsh forces. The Badger and Bat sections are now published on both and work is ongoing for the other sections.

Regional Enforcement Groups

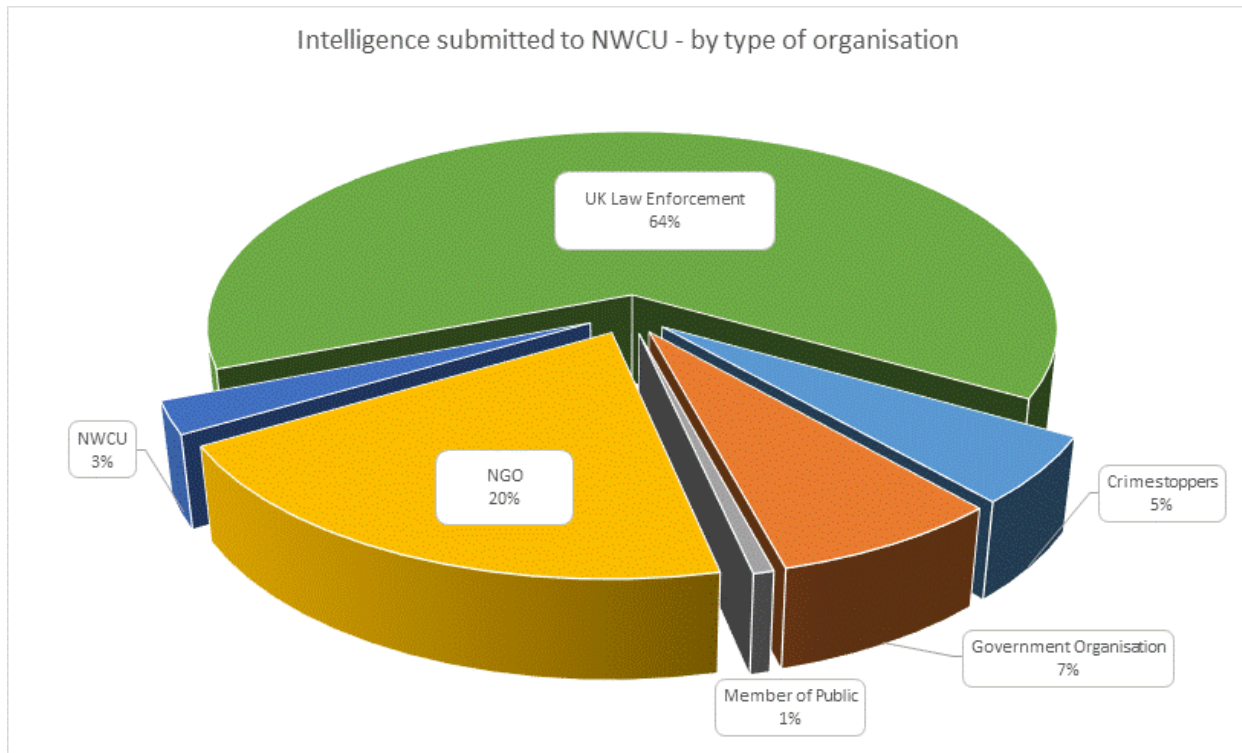
Work is ongoing to split the current 6x Regional Enforcement Groups (in England & Wales) into 9x smaller groups which are more closely aligned to the ROCU structure (Regional Organised Crime Units).

Intelligence Overview

All submitted intelligence to the NWCU within the period 1st October 2016 – 31st March 2017 was analysed. Total intelligence received is shown in Appendix B. A further breakdown of each priority area, showing which agency/force the intelligence came from, is included within the relevant sections.

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

Chart 1 – intelligence submitted to NWCU: 01/10/2016 – 31/03/2017



In relation to the 64% provided by UK law enforcement agencies, this encompasses police forces, National Food Crime Unit, Port of Dover Police, British Transport Police, UKBF and NCA.

7% of all intelligence submissions came from Government Organisations in this tactical period. This includes Animal & Plant Health Agency (APHA), SASA (Science & Advice for Scottish Agriculture), Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), Welsh Government, Marine Management Organisation (MMO) and Natural England (NE).

UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Badger Persecution

Summary of Intelligence

Badger Persecution accounts for 17.7% (298) of all intelligence submitted to NWCU. In addition, there were 22 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Badger Persecution. The total intelligence submissions from every other force/agency are shown in the table below:

Badger Persecution			
UK Law Enforcement	#	Other Agencies	#
West Yorkshire	12	Badger Trust	211
Dyfed-Powys	5	Crimestoppers	18
Cambridgeshire	3	League Against Cru	15
Cumbria	3	Natural England	7
Dorset	3	RSPCA	1
Police Service of Nor	3	Welsh Government	1
Derbyshire	2		
Hertfordshire	2		
Humberside	2	Total	253
North Yorkshire	2		
Kent	1		
Merseyside	1		
South Wales	1		
South Yorkshire	1		
Suffolk	1		
Sussex	1		
Thames Valley	1		
West Mercia	1		
Total	45	Grand Total	298

- The highest volume of intelligence reports have come from the Badger Trust. This is due to proactive intelligence sharing from their crime coordinator.
- The highest number of intelligence logs relate to sett entrances being blocked. In the main, this is being carried out by those involved in Hunts.
- High volumes of intelligence continue to indicate development/building works are a significant threat to badgers.
- Badger baiting using dogs and digging out setts remains a volume issue.

The Naturewatch Foundation and the Badger Trust have joined forces to deliver accredited training courses to police forces across the UK. A one day course will teach officers to recognise unusual activity around badger setts, how best to use legislation and how best to investigate crime scenes to gather and present evidence that will stand up in court and lead to successful prosecutions⁴.

⁴ <http://naturewatch.org/campaign/badger-baiting-in-the-uk/2017-strategy-to-end-badger-baiting>

Plan Owner Update

Plan Owner Update:	Badger Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	Mike Darby – Dorset Police

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):	
Action	Update
NWCU to send intelligence request to REG's to ensure all available intelligence has been collated, thereafter a problem profile will be undertaken to inform the PDG of the extent and nature of Badger Persecution throughout the UK.	Action superseded by the NWCU's recent analysis of the badger PDG incident data – which will be more effective in highlighting hotspot areas than analysis of <i>intelligence</i> will.

Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting:	
Action	Update
Advice note for enforcers and badger groups on use of CCTV and covert action in badger investigations.	Advisory note written by CPS- recent case re RSPB surveillance to be added by NWCU to add case law – on completion to be circulated across Police Forces.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?
Increased awareness – Intelligence – lack of police intelligence being passed to Badger Trust about badger incidents to be placed on the England / Wales timeline – no capacity at NWCU to provide this. Complex issue about individual forces being able to supply this intel – to be further discussed.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?
Action from meeting is for 3 year targets to be identified, agreed and set.

Other Issues:
Police area representation now improving at the BPPDG – good buy in at last meeting North Wales RCT have produced good and impactive Anti badger persecution posters – circulated to members for adaption and use regionally.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:
No comments from WCCAG.

UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Bat Persecution

Summary of Intelligence

Bat Persecution accounts for 3.5% (59) of all intelligence at NWCUC. There have been no intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Bat Persecution in the 6 month time period. The total intelligence submissions from every other force/agency are shown in the table below:

Bat Persecution			
UK Law Enforcement	#	Other Agencies	#
Derbyshire	1	BCT	53
Hertfordshire	1	Crimestoppers	2
Metropolitan	1	Natural England	1
		Total	56
Total	3		
		Grand Total	59

- 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) remain the biggest single contributor of intelligence received.
- Development/Construction work continues to be the main cause of concern in relation to Bat Persecution.
- Tree felling remains a risk to bats.
- Within the intelligence received several species of bats have been noted ie Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long Eared, Natterers, Whiskered, Great Horseshoe and Lesser Horseshoe.

Plan Owner Update

Plan Owner Update:	Bat Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	Andy Long

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):	
Action	Update
No recommendations received from TCG.	

Action
List of actions and updates not copied into plan owner template.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?
List of actions and updates not copied into plan owner template.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?
Not considered at last meeting.

Other Issues:
During the past months it has become noticeable that some WCO's and OIC's are finding it increasingly difficult to find time to investigate bat crime. As a consequence we are seeing a number of cases that have not been adequately investigated either at all, or within statutory time limits. We would ask TCG to consider whether similar trends are identified by other priority delivery groups and to identify actions aimed at ensuring that all forces recognise wildlife crime as a policing responsibility. Forces should be asked to make a commitment recognising the unique nature of environmental crime in not having an identifiable victim.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:
No comments from WCCAG

UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – CITES issues
(eels, illegal trade in raptors, ivory, medicinal & health products, reptiles, rhino horn and timber)

CITES intelligence

CITES accounts for 9.6% (162) of all intelligence submitted to NWCUC. In addition, there were 6 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for CITES. The total intelligence submissions (for **priority issues**) from every other force/agency is shown in the tables below:

CITES ~ priority issues								
UK Law Enforcement	CITES European Eel	CITES Illegal Trade in Raptors	CITES Ivory	CITES Medicinal & Health Products	CITES Reptiles	CITES Rhino Horn	CITES Timber	Grand Total
Avon & Somerset	1							1
Cambridgeshire			1					1
Derbyshire		3						3
Devon & Cornwall	1		1					2
Humberside		1			1			2
Metropolitan		1	5		2			8
National Crime Agency			1			2		3
NWCUC	3	9	19		1	1		33
Sussex			1					1
Total	5	14	28	0	4	3	0	54
Other Agencies								
Angling Trust	1							1
APHA		7	3	3	7	1	2	23
Cefas	3							3
Crimestoppers			1		2			3
IFAW			1					1
Member of the Public			8					8
Natural Resources Wales	1							1
NGO - Other			2					2
RSPCA					2			2
Total	5	7	15	3	11	1	2	44
Grand Total	10	21	43	3	15	4	2	98

Overview of all CITES intelligence

- Intelligence regarding Medicinal & Health Products and Timber remain key intelligence gaps.
- There are not generally very high numbers of intelligence logs from UK police forces on any CITES issue.
- NWCUC generated intelligence on CITES is high.

CITES European eel

8th March 2017 – Operation ABAIA⁵

Greek and Spanish authorities, supported by Europol and Eurojust, arrested 17 persons for smuggling glass eels. Two tonnes of eels worth EUR 2 million were seized, along with data storage devices, luxury cars, EUR 1 million in cash and gold bars. It is believed that, for the current season, 10 tonnes of eels have been smuggled from EU to China, with a profit estimated at EUR 10 million. The

⁵ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/newsroom/news/17-arrested-for-smuggling-glass-eels-worth-eur-10-million>

operation was initiated by the Spanish Guardia Civil's Environmental Protection Service SEPRONA. Investigators discovered a company that had been suspiciously purchasing eels from four different countries. Once the fish were introduced into the legal market, the company would deliver them to Greece using false documentation. The eel was finally exported illegally to Asia as "fresh fish". The operation, called Abaia, is a direct outcome of Operation LAKE, a joint action between France, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom. Operation Lake was launched by Europol in 2015 within the framework of the European Union Action Plan against wildlife trafficking.

CITES Illegal trade in raptors

8th March 2017 – Sheffield man pleads guilty to possessing wild Tawny owl

Dwaine Tavernor, 34 yrs, of Knotton Road, Sheffield pleaded guilty to possessing a wild Tawny owl at Sheffield Magistrates Court on 8th March 2017. Police visited Tavernor's home on 4th September 2016 where they found a Tawny owl which was wearing a leg ring indicating that it was bird that had been lawfully bred in captivity. However, when officers from the NWCUC made enquiries about the provenance of the owl they found that the ring had originally been fitted to a captive bred Barn owl. Subsequent enquiries indicated that that Barn owl had been lawfully bred in captivity and had been sold to Tavernor. However, at some stage the ring has been removed from the Barn owl and placed on the Tawny owl. Tavernor was charged with possessing a wild Tawny owl, an offence to which he has now pleaded guilty. A further charge relating to the possession of a European Eagle owl was withdrawn. Sentencing was adjourned until 10th April 2017 when he will also be sentenced for offences contrary to the Animal Welfare Act relating to dog that had been in his possession. Tavernor had pleaded guilty to those offences at a previous hearing. During the investigation, the NWCUC identified another individual that had made false statements to obtain permits to sell Annex 'A' species (barn owls), this was not directly linked to offence committed by Tavernor and the offender was dealt with by way of a caution.

CITES Ivory

- **November 2016** – Chao XI, Portsmouth pleaded guilty to COTES and CEMA offences relating to the advertising and sale of ivory pieces via eBay, he received 1 years imprisonment, suspended for 2 years ; Community Order for 1 year with 150 hrs of Unpaid Work requirement ; Costs £85 and Victim Surcharge of £85.
- **October 2016** – Shane Ball pleaded guilty to 'Prohibited offering and keeping for sale elephant ivory'. Ball had claimed ivory carvings he was offering were all pre-1947, but radio carbon dating proved that they were all modern. Ball received 7 months (suspended for 2 yrs) plus costs of £1300 and a rehabilitation of offenders course (Cumbria Police and NWCUC).

CITES Rhino horn

Overnight on 6th/7th March, a rhino was killed and his horn stolen in a Paris zoo garden called "Parc de Thoiry". The four-year-old rhinoceros, named Vince, was shot three times in the head by poachers who then cut off his horn with a chainsaw. This is the first time in Europe a live animal living in captivity has been killed by poachers.

CITES – Other (non-priority issues)

The total intelligence submissions (for non-priority issues) from every force/agency is shown in the table below:

CITES ~ all other non-priority issues	
UK Law Enforcement	#
Avon & Somerset	1
Cumbria	1
Derbyshire	1
Devon & Cornwall	1
Metropolitan	11
NWCU	6
UK Border Force	1
Total	22
Other Agencies	#
APHA	35
Crimestoppers	1
Member of the Public	3
NGO - Other	1
RSPB	1
Trading Standards	1
Total	42
Grand Total	64

The majority of non-priority CITES intelligence continues to relate to illegal trade, which is clearly facilitated by the internet – eBay being the most commonly mentioned virtual auction house.

Orchids – increased intelligence

There were more intelligence reports regarding orchids in this tactical period than there has been previously.

There were no other significant trends identified in this tactical period however there have been several ongoing investigations:

18th Jan 2017 - A trader in illegal animal specimens who sold pickled lizards and monkey heads on eBay was jailed following an investigation by the NCA. Daniel Stocks, who ran a legitimate website selling artificial shrunken heads, used eBay to sell taxidermy specimens under the brand name Killer Curios UK. The 42-year-old, from Kingkerswell, near Newton Abbot, Devon, was sentenced to six months in prison at Exeter Crown Court. Border Force officers alerted the NCA to Stocks after finding a veiled chameleon specimen in a package sent from Philadelphia to Stocks' address. Stocks did not have a licence to import the chameleon and NCA officers arrested him and searched his house and the industrial unit he rented. They found doctored

specimens at both locations including a stuffed African white-backed vulture, macaque heads and skulls, monkey tails and monkey paws framed and mounted above the phrase 'Make a Wish'. The investigation revealed Stocks had been trading in horn bills, leopard cats, langur monkeys and green monkeys in contravention of the CITES laws that govern the sale of controlled specimens. Stocks claimed to officers that he did not know the CITES rules, but listings he wrote for eBay made highly specific references to the regulations. He pleaded guilty to four charges relating to the trade in specimens.

December 2016 – William Adams pleaded guilty at Carlisle Mags Court to 'Prohibited sale and keeping for sale' approx 5000 wild taken snowdrop bulbs (COTES 1997 Reg. 8(2)). He also pleaded guilty to uprooting snowdrops and bluebells (WCA 1981) and one charge of fraud by misrepresentation. Total fine and costs £375 (Cumbria Police and NWCU).

Plan Owner Update

Plan Owner Update:	CITES Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	Grant Miller, UKBF

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):	
Action	Update
NWCU to attend antique trade seminars across the UK.	Ongoing
NWCU to consider how best to utilise available intelligence to make significant progress with CITES.	Ongoing
NWCU, UKBF and APHA to remain engaged with Defra over the COTES statutory instrument.	COTES SI delayed
Approved Professional Practice (APP) guidance for Wildlife Crime should go live imminently. NWCU to publicise guidance pages for each priority area within England and Wales when this becomes available.	CITES section delayed

Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting: 20th January 2017	
Action	Update
Letter notifying purchasers of CITES listed specimens at auction of CITES export requirements.	N/A
Approach to DEFRA regarding conflicting advice on worked specimens.	N/A
Threat assessment on illegal Raptor trade & activity within the UK to be commissioned from the NWCU.	N/A
Scottish Crown Office to be approached in order to conduct a formal debrief of the [REDACTED] case.	N/A

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?	
Anguilla	Prevention: CPDG sub group formed of key partners to tackle ongoing threat. 2017 Fishing season planning ongoing. Intelligence: BF & NWCU attendance at Europol events. Enforcement: Excellent cooperation in Multi - agency proactive casework on going. One arrest for illegal export.
Ivory:	Prevention: Work with Antiques trade associations being developed including processes to audit & seize unwanted ivory pieces. Intelligence: BF are in process of implementing a new method of ivory intelligence handling & dissemination to NWCU using a single point of contact within BF Intelligence. Enforcement: Export detections referred to Police, who with significant support from the NWCU have achieved excellent results.
Rhino Horn	Prevention- 20+ police forces in UK tasked by NWCU to visit and assess the security arrangements of UK premises housing live Rhinos following Paris incident. Intelligence – NWCU to consider new Rhino related intelligence briefing Enforcement – Ongoing operations although details cannot be shared at this time.
Medicinal and health supplements	Prevention: On going work in CITES plant community looking at ways of amending and simplifying CITES plant annotations with delisting or some extracts a distinct possibility. Intelligence: Seizure data being analysed to target large scale importers from internet sales seized in courier and parcel post. Enforcement- High level of trade over the Internet. Noticeable change in ingredients' from CITES Animal to plant species. Large scale illegal importation of medicinal products including under declaration at import - not to be progressed further.
Raptors	Prevention – Low level intelligence on possible export of peregrines. Ongoing Intelligence- Intelligence provided by NWCU to international enforcement partners relating to laundered birds, forged leg rings and invalid Article 10 certificates Enforcement: ongoing UK enforcement operations
Reptiles	Prevention: Good levels of compliance being maintained by UK reptile dealers. Intelligence: Nothing specific. Enforcement; Poison arrow frog case closed NFA.
Timber	Prevention –. CITES Timber guide published by RBG Kew to be updated on line to reflect CITES CoP17 amendments. Intelligence – No specific intelligence although issues around musical instruments starting to

develop.

Enforcement – Following recent CoP 17 amendments to species listings emerging issues involving musical instruments with parts made from Rosewood (*Dalbergia Spp*) identified at UK Border 10,000+ unlicensed items seized to date.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?

- The aim is to align domestic CITES related operations with larger focussed global operations. BF CITES Team HOU now sits as a non executive on the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group.
- Improve the intelligence pathways between the NWCU, Police and BF, to ensure relevant intelligence is disseminated to the various parties in a constructive and timely manner.
- Taking IWT into account BF CITES Team HOU to lead an FCO sponsored delegation to Vietnam to explore opportunities for co-operation in the border environment.

Other Issues:

- BF in partnership with the World Customs Organisation has successfully conducted an assessment of the Ugandan Revenue Service (Customs) ability to address the illegal wildlife trade passing through its national borders.
- NWCU in cooperation with Wildlife Training have developed and delivered the first Police CITES course as a follow on to the police Wildlife Foundation course, further courses are planned in 2017.
- BF have withdrawn the “free training resource” from the Police CITES courses due to the introduction of a commercial partner, the HOU has offered to deliver commercially as a “sub contractor”. This is to ensure consistency of approach with all commercial entities.
- NWCU continue to assist UK Police and CPS in cases involving butterfly species under the WCA and Habitat regulations.
- BF HOU working with IATA on Illegal Wildlife Trade participating in and speaking at numerous international events.
- NWCU continue to monitor and investigate the illegal wildlife trade on the Internet.
- NWCU continue to address the issue of unworked ivory exhibits being handled by UK domestic auction houses
- BF continues to work in partnership with Heathrow Airport Limited and United for Wildlife in promoting the fight against the illegal wildlife trade.
- NWCU, Met Police & BF attended an industry led antiques seminar focussing on CITES related interaction with the national and international antiques trade.
- BF & NWCU attended EU EWG 33 to promote CITES enforcement initiatives & development of EU Action plan including identifying representatives for the new EU enforcement priority species.
- NWCU providing significant assistance with multiple CITES cases in Scotland.
- NWCU assisted UK Police force in prosecuting a case involving illegal possession of wild taken Snowdrop bulbs
- BF & NWCU handling numerous cases involving mammal & reptile skulls and big cat claws both illegal import and sale. This area of illegal trade could be worthy of an intelligence assessment.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments from WCCAG

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

Summary of Intelligence

- Freshwater Pearl Mussel persecution accounts for 0.1% (1) of all intelligence at NWCU.
- There have been no intelligence logs from Police Scotland for FWPM in the 6 month time period.
- 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.

The 'Pearls in Peril' scheme was launched to aid recovery of mussels and exercise tighter controls on illegal activities affecting the species, this will continue in 2017. A £3.5million habitat restoration project has been undertaken by Scottish Natural Heritage, breaking down artificial banks and barriers on the River Dee to develop pools that better suit the mussels and the fish they rely upon⁶.

Plan Owner Update

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

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):	
Action	Update
NWCU to work in conjunction with Angling Trust to determine if and where pearls are being targeted along riverbanks in England & Wales.	Ongoing

Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting: 25th October 2016	
Action	Update
Raise awareness of the threat from criminality in the press and media	A week of action on social media took place in November 2016. Media plan for 2017 to be finalised and include further social media action.
Attend appropriate meetings/events to promote awareness of freshwater pearl mussel crime	Members of the PDG attended >6 events during 2016. Further meetings and events planned for 2017 including training with ranger services.
Publish annual map of crime hotspots for freshwater pearl mussels in Scotland	This has been postponed due to concerns about sensitivities around pearl mussel locations.
Hold a minimum of 2 priority delivery group meetings per year, update action plan and report progress	Complete
Undertake research to confirm cause of pearl mussel losses at hot spots	Sites identified, and resources partially secured. Remaining funding being sought for 2017.
Identify and agree sites for appropriate signage to raise awareness of criminality	Site identified and proposal still to be finalised.
Establish and maintain riverwatch schemes in 17 protected areas in Scotland	Completed by Pearls in Peril LIFE+ project. Discussions due to commence about continued resourcing of this activity.
Maintain a record of potential incidents and recorded crimes involving freshwater pearl mussels	Ongoing. Agreed to share intelligence from Scottish databases with England and Wales.
Establish and maintain liaison with travelling communities across Scotland	Liaison continuing.

⁶ <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2016/aug/13/river-dee-pearl-mussels-habitat-restoration>

Continue to promote stakeholder contribution within our own organisation	Ongoing – with key partners including SEPA utilising information.
Introduce River Watch measures and add all Water Bailiffs to the Wildlife and Rural Crime alert system in Highlands	Training completed with water bailiffs during 2016
Deliver two specific operations annually to combat salmon poaching and Fresh Water Pearl Mussel (FWPM) crime	Completed during 2016 and early 2017.
Introduce training for all Probationary Officers and Special Constables in Northern Division	Training being delivered under auspices of Highland PAW group.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

Overall there seems to be good progress. Proactive patrols took place during 2016, and the Pearls in Peril project was extended into 2017, allowing more “Riverwatch” activity to take place. This included patrols in February 2017 at several key at risk populations. Coordinated social media action took place in December 2016. This included the twitter account for the Pearls in Peril project (#MoTheMussel) which has been recognised as best practice in social media communications by the European Commission. The group’s membership now includes Wales and England, with awareness raising material and intelligence within PDG. Planning for outstanding tasks to consider signage and monitor key vulnerable populations using cameras are still underway.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?

Our 3 year targets (in bold) are:

1. Prevention: Increase awareness of freshwater pearl mussels and wildlife crime in the press and media. **The work of the PDG to generate >3 news releases that feature in local and national media per annum.**

During 2016 more than 3 news releases were issued and picked up by a variety of media. This has resulted in stories in the national and local print press (e.g. Observer, Scotsman) and online. Further interest was also generated by planned social media action during December 2016. It is our intention to undertake further planned social media action during 2017.

2. Intelligence: 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.**

During 2016 all suspected criminal activity has been reported directly to the police.

3. Enforcement: **Over 3 years from 2015, at least 6 pro-active operations to be initiated and actioned by the police, in collaboration with key partners.**

During 2016, two groups of pro-active operations were initiated and actioned by Police Scotland.

At present all targets were met for 2016 and, overall, are on schedule to be met by the end of the 3 years (end of 2017). They will be reviewed at the next PDG meeting which is scheduled for May 2017.

Other Issues:

Following December social media action, a lesson learned has been the need to better coordinate with central government during the planning and implementation of actions. This will be done during 2017. Guidance to help identify the time when pearl fishing incidents took place (based on the aging of the shells) has recently been drafted. This will be finalised and disseminated by the PDG during early 2017.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments from WCCAG

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

Summary of Intelligence

Poaching overall

All forms of poaching account for 45% (759) of all intelligence submitted to NWCU. Threats of violence and intimidation are associated with these criminals and therefore can negatively impact on the numbers of victims who are willing to come forward.

Category	Total	% of total
Hare Coursing	381	50.2%
Poaching Other	218	28.7%
Poaching Deer	141	18.6%
Poaching Fish	19	2.5%
Poaching (all)	759	

Deer Poaching

18.6% (141) of all the poaching intelligence (759 logs) submitted to NWCU is in relation to Deer

Deer Poaching			
UK Law Enforcement	#	Other Agencies	#
Devon & Cornwall	30	Crimestoppers	9
Police Service of Northern	17	League Against C	2
West Yorkshire	12	RSPCA	1
Avon & Somerset	10	Total	12
Dorset	10		
Sussex	6		
Gloucestershire	5		
Cambridgeshire	4		
Derbyshire	3		
Dyfed-Powys	3		
Kent	3		
Norfolk	3		
Surrey	3		
Thames Valley	3		
Humberside	2		
National Food Crime Unit	2		
NWCU	2		
Suffolk	2		
Bedfordshire	1		
Cumbria	1		
Essex	1		
Hampshire	1		
Hertfordshire	1		
Metropolitan	1		
North Yorkshire	1		
Nottinghamshire	1		
West Mercia	1		
Total	129	Grand Total	141

Poaching. In addition, there were 71 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Deer Poaching. The total intelligence submissions from every other force/agency are shown in the table to the left.

- Devon & Cornwall, PSNI and West Yorkshire have reported the most intelligence on Deer Poaching in this tactical period.
- The main motivating factor continues to be money. Poachers selling to local businesses ie Butchers, Restaurants and pubs can earn a considerable amount of 'cash in hand' per deer.
- Shooting and hunting with dogs is the most prevalent method of poaching.

Fish Poaching

2.5% (19) of all poaching intelligence (759 logs) submitted to NWCU is in relation to Fish Poaching. In addition, there were 43 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Fish Poaching.

The total intelligence submissions from every other force/agency are shown in the table to the right.

Fish Poaching			
UK Law Enforcement	#	Other Agencies	#
Cambridgeshire	6	Marine Management	1
Derbyshire	3		
Dyfed-Powys	2	Total	1
Suffolk	2		
West Yorkshire	2		
Devon & Cornwall	1		
Humberside	1		
Kent	1		
Total	18	Grand Total	19

- Fishing without permits/licences on riverbanks by individuals remains high.
- Intelligence continues to relate to Eastern European individuals fishing without permits/licences for their own personal consumption.
- Cockle picking and shellfish poaching continues - introducing fish into the food chain without the proper health checks for contamination.
- Illegal electro fishing for razor clams continues in Scotland.

Hare Coursing

Hare Coursing			
UK Law Enforcement	#	Other Agencies	#
Cambridgeshire	200	Crimestoppers	7
Humberside	32	League Against Cru	6
Bedfordshire	19	Natural England	3
Norfolk	13		
Lincolnshire	12	Total	16
Kent	11		
Derbyshire	10		
Thames Valley	10		
Essex	9		
Hertfordshire	6		
Surrey	6		
West Yorkshire	6		
Wiltshire	6		
Suffolk	4		
Avon & Somerset	3		
Dyfed-Powys	3		
Lancashire	2		
Leicestershire	2		
North Yorkshire	2		
Staffordshire	2		
Cumbria	1		
Dorset	1		
Durham	1		
Metropolitan	1		
Nottinghamshire	1		
Sussex	1		
West Mercia	1		
Total	365	Grand Total	381

50.2% (381) of all poaching intelligence (759 logs) submitted to NWCUC is in relation to Hare Coursing. In addition, there were 119 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Hare Coursing. The total intelligence submissions from every other force/agency are shown in the table to the left.

- The significantly highest volumes of hare coursing reports are from Cambridgeshire police.
- Several ‘dispersal notices’ have been issued in the Cambridgeshire area. These give officers the power to expel people from the county if they are suspected of being involved in hare coursing.

Hare Coursers are becoming increasingly more violent. Farmers in Lincolnshire have said they fear for their safety after an escalation in the level of violence used by people setting dogs on hares. A farmer was terrified in one incident when coursers threw rocks and hammered the side of his car when were confronted. Other farmers have reported threats of violence, verbal abuse and property and crops damaged⁷.

A 13 year old boy has been charged over hare coursing in Dalkeith, Scotland. He will be reported to the Children’s Reporter⁸.

According to the Hare Preservation Trust the number of brown hares in the UK has declined by 80% since the late 1880’s⁹.

⁷ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-38530950>
⁸ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-39482331>
⁹ <https://www.league.org.uk/hare-hunting-and-hare-coursing>

Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales

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

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):

Action	Update
PDG to ensure Trading Standards and the National Food Crime Agency continue to raise awareness via media & social media regarding Health & Safety issues with illegally sourced shellfish and meat from poaching.	With the FSA now represented on the group this should be better facilitated. At the last meeting it was agreed that the plan owner and FSA representatives will continue to look at ways to carry this forward outside of the formal meetings.
PDG to further consider how to tackle the numbers of Eastern European poachers who are unaware of UK law.	The PPDG felt that this issue was largely connected to fishing and that the Angling Trust have done significant work on this area. The Angling Trust provided a comprehensive update.
PDG's to ensure they link to PAW before future social media campaigns [reassurance].	No social media campaigns are currently planned but the action is noted for the future.
Tasking from the UKTCG Dec 2015 for each PDG chair to summarise your minutes/action plans and forward to chair of the PAW Training Group	Completed. Previous minutes/or action plans have been forwarded. They will also be shared with the 'sister' PPDG in Scotland.

Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting:

Action	Update
AP1: ALL to inform [redacted] if their individual organisations are willing to be listed as willing to assist by 15 March.	This action is in relation to providing assistance in identifying suitable expert witnesses. Completed.
AP2: Standing action point. ALL to feed any issues with problem police forces back to [redacted].	This action is in relation to potential situations where feedback to organisations suggests issues in the handling of poaching incidents may have occurred. Ongoing.
AP3: [redacted] and [redacted] to discuss any specific training that the group could deliver to police forces and for [redacted] to report back at the next meeting.	Ongoing.
AP4: [redacted] to circulate to the PPDG the information given to call handlers in the South West by 15 March.	This action is in relation to a pro forma document supplied to call handlers and is now scheduled to be completed by the UKTCG meeting.
AP5: [redacted] to share information in regards to poaching incidents with [redacted] by 15 March.	This action was in relation to the supply of news items for the Project Poacher newsletter. Completed.
AP6 [redacted] to provide an update on the joint days of action	This action is in relation to Operation Galileo.
AP7: [redacted] to circulate the presentation to Regional Crime group representatives ahead of the next PPDG meeting.	This action is in relation to circulating a presentation in order to highlight some of the issues and outcomes to help with future operations.
AP8: Regional Crime Groups to submit at least two news items to [redacted] within two weeks of request for inclusion in the Project Poacher Newsletter.	Ongoing.
AP9: [redacted] to look into options for preventative method advice and discuss with [redacted] ahead of the next meeting.	Ongoing.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

The Project Poacher app has been downloaded over 6,000 times with 140 reports sent. It appears that the app is being used as a point of reference by some Police officers. Following feedback some updates to include details of search powers are currently being made.

The Project Poacher newsletter is shortly to be released and a standing action point should ensure sufficient news for it to be produced twice yearly, once in the spring and once in the late Autumn, to coincide with seasonality poaching.

Details of poaching are now included on "AskthePolice.Com".

Representatives of the Angling Trust addressed the Magistrates' Association AGM and produced a lead article in the 'Magistrate' magazine, raising awareness of fisheries crime and rod licence compliance.

The PDG is looking into ways of providing advice to those affected by poaching on preventative measures and action points to develop this, in time for Autumn when poaching/hare coursing will become more prevalent (once crops are harvested), have been set.

A number of organisations within the PDG have indicated they would be willing to assist with finding stand space at 'events' for the "PAW trailer" subject to certain caveats regarding the content of any display material.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?

The following targets were set in spring 2016 (current progress is referenced beneath in italics). A review of these targets will be carried out at the next meeting of the PDG meeting scheduled for September.

1. The NWCUC will identify five forces with a wide geographical coverage to establish a base line 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.

The NWCUC has identified five forces geographically placed across England and Wales. The NWCUC will shortly be contacting them to discuss their potential involvement. In relation to Project Poacher please see the update above.

2. Ensure all 43 forces in England and Wales are aware of the PPDG, Project Poacher, NWCUC and the issues associated with poaching.

The delivery group now has representation from all of the regional wildlife crime groups which should help facilitate the dissemination of information.

3. The continued wide range of representation within the PPDG of both NGO's and Law enforcers.

There is ongoing wide participation. The FSA have recently joined the group and all of the regional wildlife crime groups are now represented. All members of the PDG now submit an update (at meetings) on their efforts and activities in relation to tackling poaching and tacking the group's objectives.

4. Increased reporting of intelligence from individual forces to the NWCUC both in the terms of number and geographical coverage.

5. Promote enforcement success to communities via a wide range media outlets to increase confidence in the process of reporting incidents and intelligence.

This is an ongoing area with various members of the PDG disseminating 'news' in different ways (an example being BASC recently issued press releases on Project Poacher and North Yorkshire's rural crime team). Collectively the Project Poacher newsletter will contain information on 'successes' and all members will promote this. Representatives from the regional wildlife crime groups have a standing action point to provide sufficient news stories.

6. To assist the NWCUC in the production and dissemination of Approved Professional Practice in relation to dealing with poaching offences.

Relevant members of the PDG have assisted the NWCUC in the production of briefing notes primarily in relation to fish and deer poaching.

Other Issues:

The group's prevention lead, who was instrumental in the creation of Project Poacher, has stepped down from that role since his retirement. A Sussex Police PWCO has taken up this position and the PDG has agreed that BASC and the previous lead (acting as a volunteer under BASC's authority) will provide assistance.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments from WCCAG.

Plan Owner Update ~ Scotland

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

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):

Action	Update
PDG to ensure Trading Standards and the National Food Crime Agency continue to raise awareness via media & social media regarding Health & Safety issues with illegally sourced shellfish and meat from poaching.	Shellfish not considered under the remit of the group. Contact been established with the recently formed Food Standards Scotland who are looking to have a meeting with NWCU in the near future when this recommendation can be addressed. Contact with Trading Standards still being looked into.

Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting: 22/02/2017

Action	Update
Promote the use of local networks to prevent wildlife crime, including poaching.	Currently exploring existing networks established by the Community Network Scheme.
Share information with Scottish Association of Rural Landlords and NFU Scotland as part of a strategy to address hare coursing.	Meeting with NFU Scotland being arranged to establish their strategy to address hare coursing concerns amongst members.
Produce leaflet on hare coursing.	Electronic leaflet to be drafted.
Consider effectiveness of venison dealers licences	Considerations around the effectiveness of venison dealers licences to be initiated.
Explore crime prevention opportunities with local authority Traveller Liaison Officers.	Approach to local authority Traveller Liaison Officers to be made.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

<i>Attend appropriate meetings of rural workers and organisations to promote awareness of poaching issues.</i>	Police presentations and/or attendance at Water bailiff's conference, BASC AGM, Scottish Gamekeepers Assoc AGM.
<i>Investigate opportunities to highlight poaching and coursing through neighbourhood watch schemes.</i>	Engagement with Community Network Scheme.
<i>Maximise all opportunities to produce successful prosecutions.</i>	(1) Reprinting incident notebook to aid witnesses regarding poaching activity, (2) engagement with Traveller Liaison Officers and NFU Scotland being sought, (3) electronic wildlife crime training packages available to all Police Communication Centres
<i>Encourage reporting of all suspected poaching incidents.</i>	Production of an electronic leaflet planned.
<i>Raise awareness of threat from criminality in press & media. Utilise PAW Media Group.</i>	Media releases regarding convictions in Tayside & Scottish Borders for hare coursing. BBC news article involving Police and NFUS regarding hare coursing. Article on Police facebook page regarding hare coursing.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?

Not progressed. Group continuing to work towards original objectives set in 2015-17 plan.

Other Issues:

Concern whether venison dealer licence process requires modernising. To be researched.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments from WCCAG

UK Wildlife Crime Priorities – Raptor Persecution

Summary of Intelligence

Raptor Persecution accounts for 4% (68) of all intelligence submitted to NWCU. In addition, there were 8 intelligence logs from Police Scotland for Raptor Persecution. The total intelligence submissions from every other force/agency are shown in the table below:

Raptor Persecution			
UK Law Enforcement	#	Other Agencies	#
British Transport Police	1	APHA	5
Derbyshire	10	Crimestoppers	4
Humberside	1	League Against Cruel	1
Lancashire	1	Natural England	15
Norfolk	1	RSPB	10
North Wales	1	RSPCA	1
North Yorkshire	1	SASA	8
NWCU	1	Welsh Government	2
South Wales	1	Total	46
Sussex	2		
Thames Valley	1		
West Yorkshire	1		
Total	22	Grand Total	68

- Natural England, RSPB and SASA reported the highest levels of raptor persecution intelligence in this tactical period.
- From law enforcement agencies – Derbyshire reported the highest levels of raptor persecution this period.
- Shooting still remains a very prevalent method of persecution.
- Poisoning still continues at high levels.
- Taking Peregrine Falcons from the wild (eggs or chicks) is still a current threat.

The RSPB’s 2015 Birdcrime report was launched in February 2017. Between 2010 and 2015 the RSPB reported 349 incidents of crimes against birds across the UK. They infer that raptor persecution is more prevalent in areas where driven grouse shoots operate and they envisage that the introduction of a Shooting Estate Licence, tougher sentences from Court proceedings and the cascading of Vicarious Liability across England and Wales would put a huge pressure on the industry and be a powerful tool in halting illegal persecution.

Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales

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

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):	
Action	Update
NWCU to continue Op Easter, relating to egg theft and nest disturbance into 2017.	Complete
NWCU to continue to identify any potential OCGs across the UK.	Ongoing

Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting: 30 th March 2017	
Action	Update
All to consider appropriate communications concerning the Scottish Borders Golden Eagle Project for discussion at next meeting.	
██████████ to review the public leaflet on satellite tagged body recovery and re-brand it to produce a revised leaflet to be agreed nationally.	
██████████ and ██████████ to discuss process and responsibilities for evidence gathering in the event a dead bird is reported, listing the issues and questions to be answered and reporting back to group.	
██████████ to circulate old document that relates to guidance on how the public report suspected poisoned Raptors.	
██████████ to consider any revision needed to be made to the document.	
██████████ to amend the pop-up box dialogue to ensure that any user realises that the symbols used do not pin-point the exact location of an	

incident. [redacted] to then circulate revised text for the Group to agree.	
[redacted] to review details of the nest destruction cases and the set trap cases in conjunction with the Scottish protocol and circulate conclusions to the group along with Scottish protocol. All to then consider conclusions and raise any matters for consideration.	These cases have now been reviewed and 7 nest destruction cases forwarded for inclusion in the mapping process. Consideration of Set traps where there is an admission of guilt should also be considered.
Based on what the maps already highlight, representatives from North Yorkshire Police and Norfolk to be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss the persecution figures within the 2 counties.	Actioned and will form part of the next Raptor PDG meeting with both Inspectors attending.
[redacted] to research a representative from the National Parks joining the Group.	
[redacted] to discuss with [redacted] who will continue to represent Natural England on the Raptor PDG.	

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

From the last UKTCG, the two actions were for:

- 1) **Martin Sims** to ensure communication with PSNI re preventative work before the eagles are released as part of the Scottish Borders Golden Eagle project: **PC Charlie Everitt** is liaising with PSNI as to what the protocol will be between Northern Ireland and Scotland for 2018.
- 2) NWCU to discuss with head of WIIS scheme to agree protocols for submission and testing of any dead eagles: **PC Everitt** has established that subject to whether any bird is shot, poisoned or trapped, then whatever forensic examinations are not completed within England, Wales or Northern Ireland, then they will be completed by Scotland at SASA.

National Populations of 4 key species from 2016

- Hen Harrier – poor year with only 7 fledged chicks this season from 3 nests.
- Peregrine Falcon – continued persecution around nests sites with poisonings and nest theft. Some key intelligence is being worked on with regards suspects for nest thefts
- Goshawk – a better season this year and the Peak District has seen all known nests fledged. It is believed that media coverage of the Hen Harrier disturbance by a man with a decoy assisted in media coverage in highlighting the issue and preventing further disturbance in the locality.
- Red Kite – poor in North Yorkshire and surrounding area due to the numbers of persecutions that occurred during the year. This relates to a number of poisonings and shootings that are being investigated.

[See the below section for update on matters arising with the 4 key species and on-going work](#)

- 2- Establish effective terms of reference for the group: Feedback to Superintendent Hankinson has been given and the final Terms of Reference will be confirmed for next group meeting along with protocols.
- 3- Creation of poison maps in order to identify geographic hot-spots: Please see above as already highlighted.

The work on maps covering shootings, trappings, poisons and nest destructions is coming to a head with Natural England soon to produce the final version for ministerial sign-off. This will drive some of the activity for the group and allow the public to view what all members of the Raptor PDG will state are confirmed Raptor crimes. It should be noted that there are others that the shooting lobby will not allow relating to the setting of traps, whereby no Raptors or other birds have been caught. This is an area where dialogue will continue between all parties to establish how some or all will be allowed onto the maps.

4- To partake in the consultation process for the wildlife APP on raptor persecution: The national guidance for wildlife crime now has 2 Police Intranet sites for the housing of respective guidance. This is due to decisions between the College of Policing and the National Police Chief's Council. As a result information for the Police will be held in both Authorised Professional Practice (APP) and the Police On-Line Knowledge Account (POLKA). APP will hold the guidance for Call Handlers and "first responders" to incidents. POLKA will hold detailed notes for Police officers and staff who have to investigate a wildlife crime. It is envisaged that the raptor notes will be ready for submission around Christmas time, if not before.

The first draft of the Raptor crime briefing notes for Police has been completed. They were submitted to the RSPB as part of the consultation and have now come back with recommended changes. These are to be considered on the 22nd of May with Natural England before any wider circulation takes place.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?

Due to the concern with Raptor deaths through poisonings in North Yorkshire and which have had such an

effect on Red Kites as a priority species, North Yorkshire Police will be attending the next Raptor PDG to discuss poisonings. Similarly, Norfolk will be attending to discuss shootings in the county and its impact on Goshawks. The NWCU visited the BTO Headquarters in Norfolk in December and discussed their satellite tagging programme of the Birds in Thetford Forest, which had seen all tags for last season fail to respond after the death of the Sandringham Estate Goshawk.

Other Issues:

Emerging risks are:

- Replacement of Head of the NWCU on the group
- Obtaining Ministerial sign-off on the Raptor persecution maps once completed
- Risk of [REDACTED] stepping down from the Raptor PDG and who would replace as a representative from Natural England.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments from WCCAG

Plan Owner Update ~ Scotland

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

Update on Recommendations from last UK TCG (Nov 2016):

Action	Update
NWCU to continue Op Easter, relating to egg theft and nest disturbance into 2017.	Complete
NWCU to continue to identify any potential OCGs across the UK.	Ongoing

Update on Actions from last Priority Delivery Group meeting:

Action	Update
To pull together a list of articles which have been published which can be added to the PAW website.	Scottish Govt progressing
To consider the drafting of statements which can be used in court, and what information can be utilised.	COPFS now leading this and update being sought
Research who is the owner of a dead wild bird/mammal	Now referred to PAW Legislation Group
To consider use of rolling 5 year hotspot maps to coincide with the wildlife crime annual report	Scottish Govt assessing feasibility

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

"Raise community trust and awareness to facilitate intelligence and incident reporting, leading to increased prevention and enforcement activity relating to Raptor Persecution"

Hen Harrier Action Plan - The project's aim is to identify reasons for nest failures. A range of estates participated in 2016 covering both grouse moors and agriculture. The project will continue in 2017 with an increased number of estates wishing to participate. Media releases are planned throughout the year.

Golden Eagle Release Project – Planning for a five-year project to release Golden eagles in Southern Scotland has received £1.3m from the Heritage Lottery Fund. Partners in the project include representative organisations from both the land management and conservation sectors. The first release of birds will now be in 2018. Wildlife crime risk assessment has been undertaken by NWCU to inform crime prevention activity in England and southern Scotland ahead of the release of any birds.

Scottish Government's report on the disappearance of satellite tagged Golden eagles is yet to be published.

An article on the contribution provided by walkers in identifying raptor carcasses and its wider implications beyond just wildlife crime was submitted to the PAW Media Group for dissemination.

How have you progressed with the setting of your new 3 year targets (which sit under your primary objective)?

Still under consideration.

Other Issues:

Police Scotland and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service representatives appeared before the Scottish Parliament's Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform committee. Discussion included data collation and presentation in the Scottish Government's report on annual wildlife crime, recording of wildlife crime by the Police and the raptor crime hot spot maps.

Review of Satellite Tag and Evidence Gathering protocols in progress.

Police Scotland hosted a display and provided a presentation at BASC's Keeper's Day at Scone Palace.

Police Scotland officers attended the SGA's AGM.

Police Scotland Wildlife Crime Standard Operating Procedures have been reviewed (including section on raptor crime).

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments from WCCAG

Non Priority Emerging Patterns and Trends

Other Intelligence

- The category ‘other’ (which includes all intelligence not related to the priorities) accounts for 20.1% (339) of all intelligence at NWCU.
- There were also 110 intelligence logs from Police Scotland in relation to other *non-priority* wildlife crime.
- The total intelligence submissions (339 logs), for all ‘other’ wildlife crime, from every other force/agency are shown in the table below:

Other non-priority issues			
UK Law Enforcement	#	Other Agencies	#
West Yorkshire	24	Crimestoppers	30
Kent	23	Natural England	14
Dorset	22	RSPB	12
Devon & Cornwall	19	APHA	3
Hertfordshire	19	NGO - Other	3
Surrey	18	League Against Cruel Sports	2
Avon & Somerset	16	Badger Trust	1
Staffordshire	16	Total	65
Cambridgeshire	15		
Metropolitan	15		
Cumbria	10		
Thames Valley	9		
Humberside	8		
Lancashire	8		
Bedfordshire	7		
Derbyshire	7		
North Yorkshire	5		
Police Service of Northern Ire	5		
Dyfed-Powys	4		
Gloucestershire	4		
Sussex	4		
Wiltshire	4		
Durham	3		
Essex	2		
Suffolk	2		
Lincolnshire	1		
Merseyside	1		
NWCU	1		
Port of Dover Police	1		
West Mercia	1		
Total	274	Grand Total	339

This table clearly shows the range of organisations (in addition to police forces) that submit intelligence to NWCU.

- Crimestoppers are becoming a very significant contributor of intelligence to NWCU.
- In relation to submissions from Law Enforcement agencies - after Police Scotland, West Yorkshire, Kent and Dorset have submitted the most intelligence.
- NWCU continue to monitor all intelligence on an ongoing basis for issues of note.
- NWCU fully sub-categorise all ‘other’ intelligence to allow for in-depth analysis of emerging issues.
- Throughout this tactical period, there was no re-emergence of previous issues (the taking of wild bird eggs and finch trapping) and there were no other major issues of concern.

Invasive Non Native Species (INNS)

The WCCAG previously noted that non-native species scored highly within their matrix. NWCU continue to see very little documented intelligence on non-native species.

Appendix A – Glossary

Acronym	Meaning	Acronym	Meaning
APHA	Animal & Plant Health Agency	NWCU	National Wildlife Crime Unit
APP	Authorised Professional Practice	OCG	Organised Crime Group
BASC	British Association for Shooting Conservation	PAW	Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime
BCT	Bat Conservation Trust	PDG	Priority Delivery Group
BIAZA	British and Irish Association of Zoos and Aquariums	PESTELO	Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental, Legal, Organisational
BPPDG	Badger Persecution PDG	POLKA	Police On Line Knowledge Area
Cefas	Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science	PPDG	Poaching PDG
CITES	Convention for International Trade in Endangered Species	PSNI	Police Service of Northern Ireland
CoP	Conference of Parties	PWCO	Police Wildlife Crime Officer
COTES	Control of Trade in Endangered Species	RBG	Royal Botanic Gardens
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service	RCT	Rural Crime Team
Defra	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	REG	Regional Enforcement Group
DfID	Dept for International Development	RIPA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act
EU	European Union	RIPSA	Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act Scotland
FCO	Foreign & Commonwealth Office	ROCU	Regional Organised Crime Unit
FWPM	Fresh Water Pearl Mussel	RPPDG	Raptor Persecution PDG
IATA	International Air Transport Association	RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
INNS	Invasive Non Native Species	RSPCA	Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
ISO	Investigative Support Officer	SASA	Science and Advice for Scottish Agriculture
IWT	Illegal Wildlife Trade	SID	Scottish Intelligence Database
LEA	Law Enforcement Agency	SNH	Scottish National Heritage
MMO	Marine Management Organisation	UKBF	UK Border Force
MS	Member States	UKTCG	UK Tasking and Coordination Group
NCA	National Crime Agency	UN	United Nations
NE	Natural England	UNEP	UN Environment Programme
NGO	Non Government Organisation	WCA	Wildlife & Countryside Act
NPCC	National Police Chief's Council	WCCAG	Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group
NRW	Natural Resources Wales	WID	Wildlife Intelligence Database

Appendix B – Total Intelligence Submitted to NWCU (01/10/2016 – 31/03/2017)

Intelligence submitted to NWCU 01/10/2016 - 31/03/2017					
Submitting Agency/Region	Total	% of total	Category	Total	% of total
East Region	358	21.2%	Poaching (all)	759	45.0%
North Region	221	13.1%	Hare Coursing	381	
Badger Trust	213	12.6%	Poaching Other	218	
South West Region	181	10.7%	Poaching Deer	141	
South East Region	171	10.1%	Poaching Fish	19	
Midlands Region	98	5.8%	Other	339	20.1%
Crimestoppers	89	5.3%	CITES (all)	162	9.6%
APHA	66	3.9%	CITES Other	64	
BCT	53	3.1%	CITES Ivory	43	
NWCU	43	2.6%	CITES Illegal Trade in Raptors	21	
Natural England	40	2.4%	CITES Reptiles	15	
League Against Cruel Sports (LACS)	31	1.8%	CITES European Eel	10	
Police Service of Northern Ireland	25	1.5%	CITES Rhino Horn	4	
RSPB	23	1.4%	CITES Medicinal & Health Products	3	
Wales Region	22	1.3%	CITES Timber	2	
Member of the Public	11	0.7%	Badger Persecution	298	17.7%
RSPCA	8	0.5%	Raptor Persecution	68	4.0%
SASA	8	0.5%	Bat Persecution	59	3.5%
NGO - Other	6	0.4%	FWPM	1	0.1%
Cefas	3	0.2%	Grand Total	1686	
National Crime Agency	3	0.2%			
Welsh Government	3	0.2%	Category	Total	% of total
National Food Crime Unit	2	0.1%	Hare Coursing	381	22.6%
Angling Trust	1	0.1%	Other	339	20.1%
British Transport Police	1	0.1%	Badger Persecution	298	17.7%
IFAW	1	0.1%	Poaching Other	218	12.9%
Marine Management Organisation	1	0.1%	Poaching Deer	141	8.4%
Natural Resources Wales	1	0.1%	Raptor Persecution	68	4.0%
Port of Dover Police	1	0.1%	CITES Other	64	3.8%
Trading Standards	1	0.1%	Bat Persecution	59	3.5%
UK Border Force	1	0.1%	CITES Ivory	43	2.6%
			CITES Illegal Trade in Raptors	21	1.2%
			Poaching Fish	19	1.1%
Grand Total	1686		CITES Reptiles	15	0.9%
			CITES European Eel	10	0.6%
			CITES Rhino Horn	4	0.2%
			CITES Medicinal & Health Products	3	0.2%
			CITES Timber	2	0.1%
			Freshwater Pearl Mussels	1	0.1%
			Grand Total	1686	