



# POACHING PRIORITY DELIVERY GROUP NEWSLETTER

 **PROJECT  
POACHER**

## What is the Poaching Priority Delivery Group?

Welcome to the 3rd edition of the PPDG newsletter; the last edition can be found here <http://www.nwcu.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/PPDG-Newsletter-Dec-2017.pdf>

Poaching is one of the UK's six wildlife crime priorities. Each priority is taken forward by a priority delivery group.

The England and Wales Poaching Priority Delivery Group is chaired by Glynn Evans of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) and comprises representatives from the National Wildlife Crime Unit, Crown Prosecution Service, The Angling Trust, British Deer Society (BDS), Countryside Alliance (CA), Country Land and Business Association Ltd (CLA), Deer Initiative (DI), Environment Agency (EA), Food Standards Agency (FSA), NGO, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and National Farmers Union (NFU). Our work is driven by our objective:-

*“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 (England & Wales).”*



Glossary of Poaching Terms (England & Wales)	
<b>Who is making the call?</b>	
Deer Stalker	
Farmer	
Forester	
Gamekeeper/under keeper	
Gamekeeper	
Landowner	
Stockman/hardman	
Water fish baiter	
<b>Any other person, who is familiar with the ground is more likely to know if the person(s) they are reporting, referring to have permission to be there.</b>	
<b>Member of the public</b>	
<b>If the call is being made by a member of the public unfamiliar with the ground, then the person(s) they are referring to may be engaged in a legal activity and have permission.</b>	
<b>Club Bailiff</b>	A person nominated by an Angling Club to assist in the management of the fishery under their ownership. Such a person has no additional powers in law than the ordinary citizen.
<b>Deer Stalker/manager</b>	Person who manages/controls deer
<b>Environment Agency</b>	Is the governing body responsible for regulating and enforcing fisheries legislation in England
<b>Fishery</b>	An area where fish are caught. This could include an area of river, stream, canal, ditch, lake or pond
<b>Fishery Occupier</b>	Is a person or body who are for the time being in actual possession of the fishery
<b>Fishery Owner</b>	Is the lawful owner of the fishing rights and includes any person who is entitled to receive rents from a fishery
<b>Forester</b>	Employed person in forestry production, harvesting and management in a specified area(s)
<b>Gamekeeper</b>	Employed person in charge of feeding/managing gamebirds and

Project Poacher is an initiative of the PPDG and is made up of two key elements; advice and support for law enforcers and a free, easy-to-use app for reporting poaching incidents. Part of the support for law enforcers is a series of posters which police forces can use for their own anti-poaching publicity campaigns. You can download the posters here: [www.nwcu.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Poaching-Poster.pdf](http://www.nwcu.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Poaching-Poster.pdf)

## Natural Resource Wales Fisheries Update

The areas in which NRW Fisheries Enforcement Officers work to protect our valuable salmon and sea trout varies during the year. In the Spring and early Summer, Natural Resource Wales (NRW) focuses on coasts and estuaries as these migratory fish return from the sea to their freshwater spawning habitats.

In June 2017, NRW secured a conviction against two fishermen for using an unlicensed instrument (drift net) to fish for salmon or sea trout. The Court awarded fines of £2,500 and costs of £4,000 per offender and ordered forfeiture of the equipment used. These financial penalties were a significant result for NRW and have acted as a notable deterrent to others.

Officers were on routine patrol monitoring activity in the Three Rivers and Burry Inlet, large estuaries in South Wales. In both, drift netting is banned as this fishing activity can have a massive impact on fish who congregate in these sheltered areas. They are vulnerable when the tide recedes confining them to narrow channels of water.

At dusk officers arrived at the viewpoints overlooking the Three Rivers. Immediately a small vessel was spotted inside the restricted area partially hauled up on a sandbank. After darkness had fallen the vessel mobilised and two nets were observed being set. The flashing strobe lights marking the ends of each were observed drifting with the tide, at all times in the restricted area.

After several hours when the vessel returned to shore the towing vehicle was stopped with assistance from Dyfed Powys Police Officers. The vehicle and vessel were seized for examination and the fishing equipment and catch for evidential purposes. Fortunately, no salmon or sea trout had been caught on the night in question. However, drift netting is an indiscriminate method of fishing and both species spawn in the Tywi, Taf and Gwendraeth rivers upstream of the estuary.

In Court both men pleaded guilty to the offences presented. The resulting media coverage was re-posted on angling forums. More importantly, since apprehending these offenders there has been a marked reduction in incident reports received about netting in the estuary and no activity has been detected by NRW during further routine patrols.

## North East Fisheries Enforcement Headlines

### Body Worn Video Trial

Our Partners in the Police Force have been using Body Worn Video (BWV) to capture evidential footage since 2005. However, it was not until 2017 after much campaigning from North East Fisheries Enforcement Officers and Environmental Crime Officers that the Environment Agency (EA) embraced the technology and commissioned a trial of the equipment in the North East.

The trial was intended to be solely to record, for evidence, interactions between anglers where hostility was shown or there was perceived potential for hostility towards the officers. During the trial, feedback from the Fisheries Officers was positive, despite initial concerns that they could actually exacerbate a potentially hostile situation. It was soon obvious the opposite was true, with the officers reporting an almost calming influence once the subject realised the BWV was on and filming.

The officers trialled the units for a number of months without incident until 18th June 2017. Two officers were carrying out an intelligence lead patrol on a stillwater at Ouston in County Durham. They were aware of previous reports from local anglers of anti-social behaviour by suspected illegal anglers, so had activated BWV. The officers detected two anglers suspected



of fishing without licences and were in the process of dealing with them when a third emerged from the grass, having been woken from his power nap (his phrase, not ours). It was immediately obvious he was unsteady on his feet and officers believed him to be under the influence of alcohol. He became threatening and aggressive towards the officers, lunging at them and grabbing at one officer's baton and threatening to push them in the pond. His manner was such the officers were able to successfully deal with only one of the suspected offenders, who had given his name and address to one of the officers. The offences of threatening behaviour and obstruction were followed up using the BWV evidence. He attended EA offices with a solicitor for interview as a voluntary offender and admitted the offence, claiming he was drunk and had not meant to be obstructive.

On 31st January 2018 he appeared at Newton Aycliffe Magistrates Court where he pleaded guilty to two offences of wilful obstruction and two offences of using threatening abusive or insulting behaviour. He was fined £534 and ordered to pay costs of £530.

It is highly unlikely the EA would have secured a conviction without the video evidence obtained through use of BWV. On the back of the success of the North East trial, it has been agreed that BWV will now be rolled out to enforcement teams in all areas.

### **Record-breaking season for Operation Galileo in Lincolnshire**

With the hare coursing season having drawn to a close, Lincolnshire Police reflect on the challenges faced by the rural community. The force has seen a 30% drop in incidents in 2017/18, with 1,365 incidents reported by residents compared with 1,965 in 2016/17. This season officers have seized 76 dogs being used for hare coursing and 45 people were arrested or reported for summons. Another 58 people were served with dispersal notices forcing them to leave the county and often without their dog.

Deputy Chief Constable Craig Naylor said: "We have had to raise our game to tackle what had been an increasing problem in Lincolnshire and these figures show our commitment to tackling rural crime. Criminals no longer see Lincolnshire as an easy target as they know we will seize their dogs which are worth thousands of pounds to them.

"We've had some fantastic results, particularly in the last few months – catching coursers in the act with the police drone, permanently rehoming dogs and getting Criminal Behaviour Orders served on offenders which prevent them from coming back to the county with dogs. We've also seen harsher fines.

"I'm pleased with this progress and we are already planning to build on this for next season. We encourage our farming community to continue working with us and thank all of them for their ongoing support, sharing of information and interest in reducing this vile crime."

### **Three men who admitted poaching offences in East Dorset have been sentenced at court.**

Shane David Manny Chapman, Maurice Cooper and Peter John Nurdin appeared at Poole Magistrates' Court where they pleaded guilty to a charge of daytime poaching under the Game Act 1831.

The offences occurred on rural land near to Sixpenny Handley.

At around 3pm on Friday 24th November 2017, a live video was posted on the Facebook account of one of the defendants showing the three of them driving around a field in a silver vehicle.

Chapman and Nurdin were seen catapulting pheasants with Chapman also driving, while his father Cooper filmed them on his phone.

Dead birds could be seen in a cardboard box on the rear seat of their vehicle and one was lying on the floor in the rear of the vehicle.

Chapman could be seen to fire several shots from his open driver's window and at one point is seen to try and jump on to a bird as it tried to escape. He was encouraging Cooper to keep filming.

At the sentencing hearing, Chapman was fined £600 and also ordered to pay £85 costs and a £60 victim surcharge. He was also fined £100 for an offence of driving a motor vehicle without lawful authority on land not forming part of a road. His vehicle, a Suzuki Vitara that had been seized by police, was also forfeited.

Cooper and Nurdin were fined £500 for the poaching offence and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £50.

PC Claire Dinsdale of Dorset Police's Rural Crime Team said: "On behalf of the rural community we very much welcome this result. Crimes such as poaching and repeat occurrences of criminal damage are prevalent across Dorset farms.

"Where farmers have tried to challenge trespassers and those causing damage, they are met with threats and abuse, or worse.

"Rural crime such as this is often hard to get to court, compared to urban crimes where CCTV and witness evidence assists a prosecution case. However, this is happening every week in Dorset.

"For anyone doubting the impact of poaching on our rural victims, please visit the National Farmers Union website and watch their videos of farmers talking about such rural crime. We are part of the national group set up to tackle poaching and bring standardisation to how offenders are dealt with in the courts. This is made up of police, CPS and organisations such as the NFU. For example, if you use your vehicle in crime we will apply for a disqualification from driving and for the vehicle to be crushed.

"Anyone that sees a suspected incident of poaching should call 999 immediately, reporting as much information as possible, such as vehicle registration, make and model if possible. Recent incidents not happening at the time can be reported online at [www.dorset.police.uk](http://www.dorset.police.uk). It is crucial everyone reports such offences so we get a clearer picture of where this is happening and when."

### **Operation Artemis – Court result**

On Thursday 14th June at Chippenham Mags Court 4 males were found guilty of criminal damage, daylight trespass and driving otherwise than on a road. The offences occurred at Manor Farm, Avebury, Wiltshire in Nov 2017.

The group was fined a total between them of £1,500. Unfortunately, the Court declined the application by Police and CPS to have the vehicle confiscated and destroyed.

At around 0900hrs on 19/11/2017 the group was observed by a farm worker and dog walker, driving across farmland with lurcher dogs out of the vehicle. Their movements across the fields suggested they were looking for hares. Both witnesses also stated that they had seen what they believed



to be a firearm pointed out of the window, although no firearm was later found.

As a result of their actions the group had caused significant damage to several fields by driving across winter crops. This damage was highlighted to the courts with the use of drone footage, whereby you could clearly see the damage caused by the vehicle. This evidence also highlighted the movement of the vehicle to demonstrate searching for game.

The group are well known to Wiltshire's Rural Crime Team, and had been targets for the Operation ARTEMIS, which aims to disrupt poaching within Wiltshire.

PC Jackson states "The RCT are happy with the court result for this incident, although we are concerned that the courts seem reluctant to enforce their powers to remove and destroy vehicles belonging to hare coursers. The victim of this incident had suffered a number of incidents involving groups of hare coursers last year and we will continue to work with them to disrupt this activity."

### **Wildlife Law Enforcer of the year 2017**

Sergeant Kevin Kelly, Wildlife Crime Officer for North Yorkshire Police (NYP), has been recognised for his extensive work tackling rural crime by winning a prestigious award. Sergeant Kelly was named Wildlife Law Enforcer of the year at the 2017 Wildlife Crime Conference.

The award is presented annually to the law enforcer who has done the most to combat wildlife crime within the UK – a vital but often overlooked area of enforcement. The awards are WWF-sponsored and the criteria the panel uses to choose the winners is based on a range of things from proven success in tackling wildlife crime in the last 12 months, partnership working, use of innovative techniques and dedication to the cause, amongst others. The panel is made up of various governmental departments and WWF.

Speaking about winning the award, Sergeant Kelly said;

"It's a great pleasure to receive such a prestigious award. I had no idea I had been nominated, so when I heard my work being read out, I was filled with excitement.

"Now is a good time for me to reflect on the past 10 years that I have been a Wildlife Crime Officer. I started from the bottom, having to earn the opportunity to be given a Wildlife Crime Officers course."

Inspector Jon Grainge said;

"Kevin is hugely passionate in his role. He frequently leads from the front on wildlife crime investigations, using his enthusiasm, knowledge, and experience to positively influence others."



**On the left Sergeant Kevin Kelly  
with Sir Ranulph Fiennes**



**If you would like further information regarding the work of the PPDG, contact BASC's Glynn Evans at [glynn.evans@basc.org.uk](mailto:glynn.evans@basc.org.uk)**

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