



# Badger Persecution PDG Newsletter

## Issue 1: October 2019

### Kevin Kelly – Chair BPPDG @NYAnimalCop



Hello, I am Kevin Kelly and I have recently taken on the role as National Chair here with the Badger Persecution Priority Delivery

Group. I have 17 years' experience as a Wildlife Crime Officer and have held the operational portfolio for wildlife crime in North Yorkshire for almost five years. During this time I have sat on the Badger PDG and the Poaching PDG, and I have also produced many initiatives such as a new streamlined investigation toolkit for wildlife crime, Operation Jumbo, that became Operation Galileo and I also created Operation Owl, that is more commonly known for tackling raptor persecution.

#### So why badgers?

I have proudly achieved a number of convictions over the years for badger crimes but I am still astounded by the level of suffering associated when this crime is committed, and the lengths that the most hardened criminals of society will go to when inflicting such atrocious acts. So I guess I am motivated by what I can do in this field. I have a wealth of experience investigating wildlife crime but badger crime is often complex from the outset and I do feel I can make a

difference nationally to how we approach this crime. My vision for the future is that we need an approved national investigative standard and also a toolkit for officers to use on the ground. This is the first thing members of the group and I will be focussed on providing in order to achieve a consistent level of prosecution and lead to better convictions. I will then be looking at who our offenders are nationally and how we can effectively target them.

Stopping their criminality by taking a national enforcement approach and promoting a culture of ownership within local force areas, I will be working closely with partners, members and of course the NWCU to achieve this. We also have more long term objectives to achieve, around our first response to incidents and achieving best evidence using Wildlife Crime Officers and expert witnesses to improve prosecution cases.

Lastly, I will be looking at how we collect incident data and will be encouraging all forces to provide information so we can formulate a group response to all badger crime, whether it be baiting, sett blocking, disturbance and alike. Rest assured that we are all working extremely hard to improve life for our badgers.

**We are already making a difference and will continue to do so.**

## Badger Day - 6th October 2019

Follow all the activity on Twitter, including these accounts:

@NYAnimalCop - Inspector Kevin Kelly, North Yorkshire Police

@ukwildlifecrime - UK National Wildlife Crime Unit

@RSPCA\_Frontline - RSPCA animal collection officers, animal welfare officers and inspectors

@RuralCrimeTeam - Dorset Police Rural Crime Team

@Naturewatch\_org - Naturewatch Foundation

@LeagueACS - League Against Cruel Sports

## Sue Eddy - National Wildlife Crime Unit



The National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) is a police unit that provides support to all police forces and other law enforcement agencies across the UK and internationally.

The unit comprises an intelligence and analytical function whilst also providing direct operational support to Police Wildlife Crime Officers in every UK police force.

The main role of the NWCU is to assist in the prevention and detection of wildlife crime. The NWCU does this by obtaining and disseminating information from a wide range of organisations and by assisting police forces in wildlife crime investigation. The NWCU produces analysis which highlights local or national threats and acts as a conduit between police

[www.nwcu.police.uk](http://www.nwcu.police.uk)

forces and PAW partners. Every two years the NWCU prepares a Strategic Assessment which recommends areas of wildlife crime that should be tackled as a priority.

The NWCU then supports each of the delivery groups set up to tackle the various priority areas. For badger persecution, the NWCU completes a yearly analysis of incident data which highlights which forces are most impacted by badger persecution, as well as showing seasonality trends and hotspots. The analysis is based upon incident records collated by the Badger Trust and Naturewatch and is refreshed and re-circulated by NWCU each year. Police forces can use the analysis for preventative work and/or proactive enforcement.

## Geoff Edmond - RSPCA

I am the National Wildlife Officer Coordinator for the RSPCA Inspectorate and as a result, represent



the RSPCA on the Badger Persecution Priority Delivery Group (BPPDG). The RSPCA, often in collaboration with the Police, investigates cruelty and crimes against badgers and where appropriate, prosecution cases through the courts. We also assist police forces with advice and support when they are undertaking their own

examinations. Partnership working is the key to achieving success when investigating these types of crimes which not only result in horrific injuries to the badgers but also to the dogs used when interfering with badger setts and digging for them.

These investigations may begin with a report from a member of the public who has seen people acting suspiciously and clearly in these cases there is a need for an immediate response at the scene from the police and the RSPCA. Other cases can be intelligence-led leading to complex and lengthy investigations into this type of crime. This area of work is carried out by the RSPCA's Special Operations Unit (SOU), which has responsibility for the collation and

sharing of intelligence to partner agencies through various agreements. The people committing these crimes often travel considerable distances and it is due to the partnership working with the police that these individuals can be traced and their activities investigated. I have been involved in badger crime investigations for many years as well as being a member of this group. My experience is in all wildlife-related matters with specialist knowledge in relation to badgers - from digging and sett disturbance, through to snaring, land development, sett interference, rescue, and rehabilitation as well as being an avid badger watcher.



The challenge as we move forward is to continue to embrace RSPCA/police partnership working arrangements like the

BPPDG, as essential in the effective investigation of wildlife and rural crime. Such collaborations not only provide opportunities to exchange knowledge, but also training opportunities as it is essential to continue upskilling Investigating Officers in this area of criminal investigation. Investigative knowledge bases must be kept up to date, focussing on relevant key areas to maintain professionalism and to ensure that investigations are always conducted to a high standard.

## Claire Dinsdale - Dorset Police @WildlifeCop



I am PC Claire Dinsdale of Dorset Police and Deputy Force Lead for wildlife crime. I joined the police 15 years ago with the dream of being a Rural and Wildlife Crime Officer. I am

proud of our UK network of partner organisations and Wildlife Crime Officers who are united in their passion and determination to work together to combat wildlife crime. The NWCU is essential to UK policing and is at the core of what we do.

Wildlife Crime Officers are busy cops volunteering to take on this role. Wildlife law can be complex so if we can provide easy to follow guides and action to take at the scene then we can maximise our success in bringing these offenders to justice. Over the years I have attended many badger sett crimes, including interference and digging, blocking, snaring and damage and disturbance from development. Sharing learning is essential so I endeavour to make our Dorset WCOs aware of the latest advice from the CPS, updates from our PDG and the lessons learned from cases in the UK. I also deliver training to our control room, neighbourhood teams and student officers. I am part of the South West Regional Rural & Wildlife Crime Group, the badger persecution and the poaching PDGS. There is a strong correlation with hare and deer coursing and badger baiting and offenders are often well known for acquisitive crime and violence.

Part of our work in the Badger Persecution PDG is to raise awareness inside and outside UK Policing. We were fortunate to have the badger persecution training day in 2017, delivered by an experienced retired wildlife cop, Craig Fellowes and sponsored by The Badger Trust and Naturewatch. Dorset is unfortunately one of the top locations for badger persecution crime.

I use social media @WildlifeCop @RuralCrimeTeam , attend events and give talks to spread the message about wildlife crime and how the public can help us.



In 2016 I became the Dorset Police Rural Crime Coordinator with an overview of the whole county for rural, wildlife and heritage crime. One of my roles is to review badger persecution crimes and give advice to other officers.

The Badger Persecution PDG, which includes CPS colleagues, means we can really focus on how to bring offenders to justice, share intelligence and identify best practice, legal matters and prevention. The biggest issue has been getting an experienced WCO to the scene of a possible badger persecution crime. We are working towards using trained volunteers to capture objective assessment on video, ensuring the best evidence is captured as soon as possible.



*Pictured: police arrested a group of men digging this sett in North Yorkshire in January 2019. A terrier dog, Brock, was treated by a local vet and rehomed. The men pleaded guilty and received suspended jail sentences.*

## Naturewatch Foundation



**Naturewatch Foundation**  
For the advancement of animal welfare

Naturewatch Foundation is a registered charity that has been speaking out on behalf of animals for over 25 years by:

- Campaigning peacefully against animal abuse
- Lobbying to improve animal protection legislation
- Raising awareness through education
- Supporting the World Animal Day movement to raise the status of animals around the globe

Our mission is to end animal cruelty and advance animal welfare standards around the world. Naturewatch Foundation has a badger baiting campaign, which aims to bring an end to badger baiting, sett digging, illegal lamping, killing and other acts of cruelty towards badgers involving the use of dogs.

As part of the Campaign we are:

- Lobbying the Home Office for badger crime to be better recorded and monitored
- Conducting our own covert investigations into badger crime, passing high-quality information packs to law enforcement agencies, to initiate further investigations, gather intelligence, or take enforcement action. Members of the public are asked to pass information on named individuals to Naturewatch Foundations' Animal Crime Manager
- Working with badger groups and police forces to deliver a School Awareness Programme to school children aged 13 years old and above to raise awareness of badger ecology, illegal badger persecution and legislation.
- Sponsoring the publication of a wildlife crime novel- 'A Badger's Tale'.
- Making an annual donation to the PAW Forensic Analysis Fund
- Members of key coalition groups, such as The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime UK,

The Wildlife and Countryside Link, the UK Badger Persecution Priority Delivery Group, and the Cyber-Enabled Wildlife Crime Priority Delivery Group

Naturewatch Foundation are pleased to have been members of the UK BPPDG since 2017, with their Animal Crime Manager Andy Swinburne holding the role of Secretariat. Whilst this role includes the administration of the PDG, it also importantly involves the monthly collation of badger incidents related to crime which are provided by members of the PDG. This data is analysed by the senior analyst at the National Wildlife Crime Unit on behalf of the PDG, who produces a yearly report Identifying prevalent methods of crime, hot spot areas and timelines. This information is a key part of the Priority Delivery Groups work under their Prevention, Intelligence and Enforcement Strategies.

Naturewatch Foundation welcomes the recent appointment of Inspector Kev Kelly of North Yorkshire Police as the new PDG Chair and looks forward to working with him and all the members to combat the illegal persecution of badgers.

Further information on Naturewatch can be found at: <https://naturewatch.org/>

