

# **Tactical Assessment – UK Wildlife Crime**

**May 2019**

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(NWCUC)**



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## Overview

See Appendix A for Aim & Purpose of TA.

### **National Strategy and Delivery Plan**

Since the NPCC launched the National Wildlife Crime Policing Strategy in July 2018, a national delivery plan has been created. All Regional Enforcement Groups, Priority Delivery Groups and the NWCU are actively contributing to the objectives contained within the national delivery plan. Measurement of activity against these objectives will be assessed at each forthcoming UKTCG meeting. Some NGO's (notably the Wildlife & Countryside Link) have voluntarily decided to contribute to delivering the objectives.

## Badger Persecution

### Incident Analysis

NWCU have analysed three years of Badger Persecution incident data on behalf of the Badger Persecution PDG (England & Wales). It highlights which forces are most impacted by incidents of badger persecution<sup>1</sup> and shows the

Category	2016	2017	2018	Total	%
<b>Sett Interference</b>	247	350	326	<b>923</b>	54.1%
<b>Other</b>	73	107	106	<b>286</b>	16.8%
<b>Baiting/Fighting</b>	78	69	62	<b>209</b>	12.2%
<b>Traps/snares</b>	47	40	39	<b>126</b>	7.4%
<b>Poisoning</b>	23	33	8	<b>64</b>	3.7%
<b>Shooting</b>	30	17	16	<b>63</b>	3.7%
<b>Hunting with dogs/lamping</b>	13	17	4	<b>34</b>	2.0%
<b>Trading</b>	1	1		<b>2</b>	0.1%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>512</b>	<b>634</b>	<b>561</b>	<b>1707</b>	

associated seasonality for each different type of incident. The analysis is based upon incident records collated by PDG members and will be updated annually. The analysis will be circulated to all police forces in England & Wales to consider preventative work around seasonality and/or proactive enforcement.

### Summary of Intelligence

- Developers are deliberately disrupting, destroying or blocking setts.
- Hunting using dogs and digging out setts continues.
- Snares and traps continue to be utilised.

A North Yorkshire gamekeeper was found guilty for failing to check a snare which led to badger death. Austin Hawke, 51, of Ilkley, failed to check a snare following an incident at Denton on 29 May 2018 where a badger was found dead – an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Following a trial on 26 February 2019, Hawke was found guilty and received a conditional discharge. He was also ordered to pay £645 costs and surcharge.

Five men who used two dogs, one of which was heavily pregnant, to attack a badger sett have each been jailed for six months. Andrew Booth, 44, Kirk McGarry, 50, John Horner, 19, George Horner, 26, and Richard Willey, 46, were caught digging at a sett in East Yorkshire in 2017. They were each found guilty of wildlife and animal cruelty offences at Beverley Magistrates' Court last month. Humberside Police said the muzzled dogs suffered serious injuries "caused by a badger defending itself" in Melton on the afternoon of 30 December 2017. In addition to the jail time, they were also handed a 10-year animal banning order and told to pay £2,000 costs for dog kennelling and vets' fees.

### Plan Owner Update

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Badger Persecution Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Andy Swinburne (Secretariat)</b>

### Your objectives:

- 1) Improve and increase the recording of incidents, crime and intelligence of persecution.
- 2) Improve the Investigation Process.
- 3) Increase awareness of Badger persecution across the UK.

<sup>1</sup> incidents occurring between 01/01/16 and 31/12/2018

**How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?**

- 1) Analytical incident data covering a three-year period has been completed and cascaded to PDG members with a proposed 2019 week of action.  
PDG members have been asked to make sure intelligence is disseminated to the correct Police Force via NIM or Crime Stoppers who now have a wildlife crime tab.
- 2) Training to Police forces in England and Wales has continued into 2019, now solely provided by PDG member (The Badger Trust). A Badger Crime Training Manual is due to be published May/June which is a joint initiative by PDG members (Badger Trust and Naturewatch Foundation). PDG workshop at National Enforcers Conference December 2018
- 3) PDG with a NWCUC lead led a coordinated social media campaign over the winter, to raise awareness and highlight the prevalence of Sett interference and Badger baiting over this period. PDG member Naturewatch Foundation developed School Awareness Programme for teenagers on badger baiting to be delivered by Police and/or Badger Groups. This included an illustration competition linked to a novel to be published on badger crime for teenagers and adults. Naturewatch Foundation also held social media campaign in February 2019 linked to named individual campaign which saw increase in information on persons engaged in illegal persecution.

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

Action	Update
<b>Ongoing Action:</b> BPDG Sub Group formed to address volume crime of Sett Interference as highlighted in the analytical data.	Social media campaign launched and led by NWCUC on 10/11/2018 to highlight the prevalence of Baiting and Sett Interference over the winter months.
<b>Ongoing Action:</b> Badger Crime Training Document	NWF and BT jointly producing Training manual on Badger Crime for Police, CPS. Currently being proof read and publication likely to be May/June period.
<b>Ongoing Action:</b> PDG to conduct a week of enforcement action linked to the Analytical data and current intelligence held by NWCUC prioritising nominals engaged in illegal persecution crossing force borders.	<b>Timeline of action:</b> Produce a hot spot map of all incidents from analysis data in England and Wales that have post code or grid reference, Research intelligence via NWCUC/ PNDB and produce list of nominals, Advise BPPDG when these are complete (estimated end of July). PDG to identify specific week of enforcement action in 2019 once analysis complete PDG to produce PDG Operation Order Consider driving proactive engagement via new PDG Chair and NPCC lead Circulate Operation Order/Intelligence to WCO's and REG's
<b>Ongoing Action:</b> PDG Sub Group working party to be formed to look at developing "Advanced Practitioner Programme" Nationally	Face to Face Sub Group meeting to be identified with input from CPS on the term Advanced Practitioner.  Sub Group to look at formulating Training Programme (3-4 days) regionally to create accredited Advanced Practitioners' who can attend crime scenes and record evidence for Experts to give opinion on thus assisting timelines on evidencing current use.
<b>Ongoing Action:</b> PDG to consult CPS on areas of concern	Report to be compiled and sent by Secretariat to CPS PDG representative. PDG to seek meeting with CPS lead.
<b>Ongoing Action:</b> Ensure PDG Partners disseminate intelligence to	Partners such as the RSPCA/LACS with intelligence capacity to disseminate via NIM Other partners such as BT or NWF can disseminate via Crime Stoppers

correct Police Force with NWCUC now linked to PNDB	who now have a Wildlife Crime Tab. Information via Crime Stoppers is expeditiously passed to correct Police Force and NWCUC copied in.
<b>Closed Action:</b> To Increase membership and participation of the Police regional Groups on BPDG	Raised at the UK TCG November 2018 and REG Chairs asked to respond. Vacancies in Wales, East Midlands and the North West now filled. South East on maternity cover. Action now complete
<b>Closed Action:</b> PDG workshop at National Enforcers Conference 2018	Two workshops entitled "Badger Persecution Today - Trends and Solutions" completed and areas reviewed by BPPDG at last meeting 04/04/2019 were: 1) NYP Advanced Practitioner Programme 2) Volunteer responders at crime scenes 3) Nationwide list of Expert/Competent Witnesses  BPPDG to take forward via Sub Group working party to look at Advanced Practitioner Programme linked to points 2 & 3.

**What are your 3-year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

The three-year targets are:  
**Prevention** – BPPDG Newsletter to be re-introduced with six monthly issues once new Chair in post.  
**Intelligence** - Information Sharing Protocols in PDG to be developed and established in order to work towards an increase in intelligence to Police Forces and/or Crime Stoppers.  
 This is ongoing pending the NPCC writing generic ISP due to GDPR and the Law Enforcement Directorate. Now awaiting new lead at ACRO to progress.  
**Enforcement** - Proactive enforcement initiatives by Police Service, based on the analytical data compiled by NWCUC (Derived from Incident list collated by Secretariat from PDG members).  
 Analytical data identifies hot spots linked to geographical location, methodology of crime and seasonal timelines. Analytical data circulated by NWCUC to Regional Enforcement Chairs to initiate proactive Prevention and Enforcement initiatives.

**Other Issues:**

1. UK TCG Action to identify new Chair for PDG.
2. Police Scotland remain the only Scottish PDG member, but recent staff changes at Scottish Badgers may result in their return hopefully to the PDG membership.

## Bat Persecution

NWCU continue to receive monthly incident data from the BCT.

### Summary of Intelligence

- Development/Construction work is the main cause of concern in relation to Bat Persecution.
- Tree felling is also a great risk to bats.

A development company has been fined more than £18,000 for illegally destroying a building where protected Pipistrelle bats were known to roost. Landrose Developments was fined £18,820 at Brent Magistrates' Court on Friday, 5 April after pleading guilty to destroying the breeding site / resting place of a European Protected Species (EPS), namely Pipistrelle Bat. The court heard how the company was involved in the demolition / re-development of a detached bungalow in Dennis Lane, Stanmore in October 2016. In 2011, plans were submitted to demolish and redevelop the property. A subsequent ecological survey of the premises revealed the presence of Pipistrelle bats within the property. The presence of the bats meant that the building could not be demolished without a European Protected Species License and appropriate mitigation in place. The Council imposed a condition stipulating that ecological features should be maintained within the premises.

It was raised to the owner of the property that demolition without an EPSL or appropriate mitigation would destroy a roost and constitute an offence under the Conservation of Species and Habitat Regulations. Yet despite being aware of the existence of two bats at the location, the property was demolished, under the authority of Landrose Developments, in October 2016 without any measures in place to protect the bats. Police were alerted to the demolition of the property in July 2017 and an investigation commenced by the Met's Wildlife Crime Unit and Harrow's designated Wildlife Crime Officer. The development company was charged with destroying a bat roost on 12 September 2018 after attending a voluntary interview at Colindale Police Station.

On Wednesday 6th February 2019 Mr Piara Singh SEHAJPAL pleaded guilty at Haywards Heath Magistrates Court to two charges of destroying bat roosts. The first charge related to the destruction of a brown long eared roost and the second a common pipistrelle roost. Although initial surveys confirmed the presence of the roosts no emergence surveys were undertaken. Some considerable time after the first survey the property was visited. The buildings hosting the roosts were found to have been demolished. Unusually Mr SEHAJPAL pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity and was fined £500 on each charge along with a victim surcharge of £50 and £85 costs.

### Plan Owner Update

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Bat Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Pete Charleston BCT</b>

### **Your objectives:**

To reduce bat crime by,

- Working with key stakeholders to raise awareness of responsibilities and criminal offences against bats.
- Promoting a preventative approach.

- Improving the quality of intelligence submissions and standards of investigation relating to bats across the UK.

**How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?**

The group has not met since August 2018. Regrettably our chair has indicated a need to stand down. An advert has been published via Chief Constables and PWCO's for a police led chair at Sgt or Insp level. Closing date is 14<sup>th</sup> May 2019. With the appointment of a new chair it is anticipated that our objectives will be reviewed and targets identified that will look to deliver on the objectives of the NPCC wildlife crime strategy.

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

<p>The actions identified during our last meeting have not been reported upon and have been suspended pending the appointment of a replacement chair.</p>	<p>Individual members of the group have been active in raising awareness of bat crime by the provision of training to a number of police forces. Workshops on bat crime have also been run at the UK &amp; Scottish conferences organised by the Bat Conservation Trust. We have made an offer to present at the 2019 PAW wildlife crime forum, should it take place. BCT were in attendance at the PAW wildlife crime stand at last year's Bird Fair.</p> <p>BCT have responded to the Defra consultation on the recording of wildlife crime, have been instrumental in the production of the Wildlife and Countryside Link 2017 annual wildlife crime report, and have published Batcrime 2017.</p> <p>Since the group last met there have been three convictions for bat crime, one in North Yorkshire, one in Thames Valley Police area (the first recorded for this force), and the most recent in the Metropolitan Police area. This most recent case is of great significance with developers being fined £18K for destroying the roost of just two pipistrelle bats. The previous highest fine for a single such charge was £5K. This case was heard by District Judge Brennan who provided a written judgement justifying the size of the fine that can be referred to in future cases.</p>
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**What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

Targets will be considered when the group next meets.

**Other Issues:**

The Bat PDG has been very fortunate, over its lifetime, in enjoying the support of many organisations with an interest in the issue. Many stand ready to continue their involvement when the group next meet. Natural England (NE) in particular have been very helpful in providing, free of charge, meeting rooms and telephone conferencing facilities. However our long standing NE representative has recently transferred to Defra. As yet there has been no indication from NE as to who will now sit on the group. It is felt that the involvement of all four statutory nature conservation organisations is important and that they all play an active role in the bat PDG. It would be helpful if, via the UKTCG, a recommendation could be made for NE to consider further active involvement in the group and identify a member of staff to participate in our work.

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

No comments made.



## CITES

### Summary of Intelligence

Across all the intelligence regarding CITES species being traded in the UK, there is continued mention of an increasing variety of on-line platforms, which clearly facilitate the trade, both legal and illegal.

### CITES – illegal trade in raptors

At Snaresbrook Crown Court on 8th January 2019, Jeffrey Lendrum, who has previous convictions for similar CITES offences in Canada, Brazil and Africa, pleaded guilty to attempting to import 19 bird eggs into the UK. He was jailed for three years and one month. The smuggling attempt was uncovered by Border Force officers at Heathrow Airport on 26 June 2018 when officers stopped Lendrum after he arrived on a flight from Johannesburg. Lendrum, 57 and of no fixed UK address, was wearing a heavy jacket which officers thought was unusual due to the very warm weather conditions. When asked whether he had anything to declare, Lendrum stated he had some Fish Eagle and Kestrel eggs strapped to his body. During a full search, he was found to be wearing a body belt concealing 19 bird eggs as well as two newly-hatched chicks. Border Force specialist officers identified that the eggs were protected under CITES. Officers ensured that both the eggs and the live chicks were kept warm they were later moved to a specialist care facility. Lendrum was arrested and the investigation passed to the National Crime Agency (NCA). Lendrum stated during an interview that his intention was to rescue the eggs after he encountered some men chopping down trees containing their nests. However in court, experts stated that a number of the eggs were from birds that nest in cliffs. Their values on the black market ranged from £2,000 to £8,000.

### CITES – ivory

Intelligence regarding the sale of ivory via auction houses and antique centres continues.

### CITES – other (non-priority issues)

On 4th April 2019, Matthew REYNOLDS, 29, of Gloucester appeared at Cheltenham Magistrates Court where he pleaded guilty to charges contrary to the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 relating to the sale of an African Grey Parrot. Two further charges under the same legislation were not proceeded with. REYNOLDS was given a 6 month curfew order with the condition that upon fitting of the appropriate tagging device he must remain in his home between the hours of 19.00hrs and 07.00hrs. He was also ordered to pay £85 costs and an £85 surcharge. In September 2017 REYNOLDS sold an African Grey parrot for £350, at the time of the sale REYNOLDS failed to provide the new keeper with any paperwork including the relevant Article 10 certificate that was required in order for the bird to be sold. The new owner of the bird contacted REYNOLDS requesting that he send them the appropriate Article 10, eventually in November 2017 after repeated requests for the certificate REYNOLDS sent the new owner an Article 10. When the certificate was examined it was found that ring number on the certificate was not the same ring that was currently on the parrot, it was also noted that the certificate put the bird as 11 years old and not 6 years old as claimed by REYNOLDS when he originally sold it. As a result of this the matter was reported to APHA who confirmed that the certificate was in fact false – the certificate number related to an African Grey parrot bred by another breeder but the ring number on the certificate was a fake number. The matter was then reported to Gloucestershire Police and the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCUC). As a result of further enquiries, on 14th February 2018, REYNOLDS was arrested at his home address in relation to the alleged offences and a search was carried out of the premises.

Later that day Gloucestershire Police in company with an NWCU Investigations officer formally interviewed REYNOLDS. He admitted selling the parrot but had supplied the wrong paperwork with it, when he was shown the false Article 10 certificate he admitted it was fraudulent but stated that he hadn't fraudulently altered it but it had been given to him by another person, he was unable to supply any details of this person.

Stephanie Scolaro, 26, was given a 160-hour community order to be carried out over the next two years after she pleaded guilty to two counts of importing goods with the intent to evade a prohibition. She was also charged with two counts of keeping for sale a species acquired unlawfully, and two counts of selling a species unlawfully imported, at an earlier hearing. During the trial the court heard the socialite imported baseball caps and travel bags worth more than £17,000 from Indonesia. The swimwear model then sold the illegal goods on a website called SS Python or to other fashion outlets. Judge Michael Gledhill QC branded Scolaro, from Marylebone, "utterly self-centred", adding she took a "very dim view" of the wildlife crimes. Police launched a probe into Scolaro's snakeskin trade in November 2017 after a package containing 10 snakeskin hats and two bags was intercepted at Leipzig airport in Germany. Officers seized 35 illegal hats during the investigation, as well as bags which were advertised for sale at £2,800 each. Scolaro now faces a confiscation proceedings to recover her criminal profits.

### Plan Owner Update

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>CITES Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>UKBF</b>

#### **Your objectives:**

To tackle the illegal import, export, transshipment of protected species listed in the CITES Appendices and Annexes of the EU Wildlife Trade regulations from non-EU countries. Additionally, to ensure all domestic sales of these protected species are compliant with UK & EU legislation.

#### **How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?**

**Ivory:** CPDG members have worked actively in supporting the implementation of the Ivory bill and subsequent design of the registration system for exempted items. The impact of the delay in introducing the Ivory bill is being monitored.

**Reptiles:** EU - exit may impact heavily on the UK threat depending on outcomes. **Recommendation is that reptiles remain a priority but should be reviewed post EU exit.**

**Medicinal and Health supplements:** New products containing controlled ingredients continue to be identified. **Recommendation - Decisions at COP18 need to be monitored.**

**Trade in Raptors:** The successful prosecution of Jeffrey Lendrum for smuggling viable bird's eggs from South Africa to the UK is a significant success for BF. NCA supported by the CPS secured a prosecution of 37 months on four charges to run concurrently.

**Stony corals:** Compliance in the trade sector remains good.

**European Eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*):** Enquiries remain ongoing.

**CITES LISTED TIMBER;** Significant seizures continue to be delivered at the border across a range of commodities and species. **Recommendation - Decisions at COP18 need to be monitored.**

**What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

Across all commodities a collaborative approach will be taken to reduce criminal activity through seizure and domestic offence action. This will be achieved through continued identification of cross agency targeted operation both nationally but also Internationally in support of Europol, W.C.O. and INTERPOL activities. Information will be shared in a collaborative manner and enhanced into Intelligence packages serving all parties in line with best practice.

**Other Issues:**

EU exit - the impact of a deal or no deal means that all priority areas are in a state of flux. EU exit has seen a role out of a national training being delivered to BF Staff, delivering a further 250 staff to process CITES permits.

The BF National CITES Enforcement team will be recruiting a further six officers to manage the increased CITES compliance resulting from a no deal and deliver increased operational activity although the officers arrival, is not dependent on a no deal.

The NWCUC reported the delivery of an in-house training day. The NWCUC have successfully delivered a three day CITES training course to 18 police officers.

BF remain engaged with the Royal Foundation Transport Task Force and will be attending the next global meeting May 2019, at a senior director level. BF have been asked to present on the Lendrum case and role task force members played. HRH The Duke of Cambridge visited HWDC postal depot to witness the collaborative work between Border Force, Police and The Royal Mail in his capacity as the head of the Royal Foundation Transport Task Force and was in the company of Lord Hague of Richmond. Hertfordshire police were represented on behalf of UK policing.

The second meeting of the Heathrow IWT forum will take place in July and follows on from the first meeting chaired by Lord Hague. The meeting will focus on compliance issues within the “legal” trade sector. This will include a detailed session on the IATA Live animal regulations. Training material has been provided to key security stakeholders on airport to identify ongoing threats using the existing screening regimes.

HRH Prince Charles during a visit to Heathrow airport was briefed on the IWT threat by BF.

The Home Secretary on a visit to Heathrow airport was briefed on the IWT threat by BF.

BF team members have delivered training or contributed to International workshops in the following countries since the last report, namely Mongolia, Malawi, Hong Kong and Malaysia.

The UK continues to chair the Interpol Wildlife Crime Working Group, it is now possible this period of tenure will be extended due to unforeseen developments.

NWCUC attended the EU EWG in March.

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

No comments made.

<b>Cyber Enabled Wildlife Crime Priority Delivery Group</b>
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**Plan Owner Update**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Cyber Enabled Wildlife Crime Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>NWCU</b>

**Your objectives:**

To facilitate collaboration between enforcement agencies, government departments, non-government organisations and civil society organisations to deliver a joined up, cohesive, pro-active approach to identifying and tackling Cyber Enabled Wildlife Crime.

The strategic objectives of the Cyber Enabled Wildlife Crime PDG are to:

1. Raise the profile and increase awareness of cyber enabled wildlife crime via the public, partners and law enforcement agencies through a clear partnership communication plan.
2. Share best practice between group members and non-group members.
3. Share proposed future work streams / projects to reduce duplication and aid learning.
4. Identify and provide evidence for changes to legislation and to work with partners to deliver meaningful change.
5. Increase intelligence sharing between stakeholders with a focus on quality.
6. Identify processes for submitting intelligence and reporting incidents.
7. Coordinate national and international cross border responses to cyber enabled wildlife crime.
8. Where relevant, tackle Organised Crime Groups linked to cyber enabled wildlife crime, by building strong relationships with Regional Organised Crime Units and the National Wildlife Crime Unit.
9. Identify opportunities to promote training and education for partners and the public

Each of these strategic objectives will provide focus and direction for the group, enabling them to deliver against the above Strategic Aim and a number of the objectives contained within the NPCC National Wildlife Crime Policing Strategy.

**How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?**

N/A

**What are your 3-year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

Targets and a 3 year plan will be formulated at the next meeting on the 03/05/2019. P.I.E Leads were appointed at the last meeting.

**Other Issues:**

Crimestoppers are currently working closely with an organisation who are developing and supporting policing Digital Asset Management Systems and the Single Online Home for digital content.

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

No comments made.

## Fresh Water Pearl Mussels

### Summary of Intelligence

- No Intelligence recorded in the last 6 month period.
- Intelligence recorded is lower than all other UK Wildlife Crime priorities, however, the impact of this crime type can erase entire populations of species.

### Plan Owner Update

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

### **Your objectives:**

To raise awareness of the threat posed by criminality and help communities in hotspots to prevent criminality and identify offenders

### **How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?**

Since the last UKTCG (November) the work of the PDG has been relatively quiet due to the time of year. But we have confirmed funding to continue surveillance and deterrent signage at two key pearl mussel rivers in Sutherland during 2019, which have been the subject of ongoing pearl fishing. This work was started in 2018 (no damage from pearl fishers that year) and funding secured from Scottish Natural Heritage.

Following an investigation into a pearl fishing incident on the River Spey during 2018, we have identified some potential further forensic tools that may be useful – to try and determine if a method can be developed to demonstrate which river any pearls may have originated from. Discussions to take place with SASA about the potential to develop and take to PAW Science Group.

Awareness raising during 2018 included BBC Scotland, Landward TV and Out of Doors radio programmes. And presentation at UK enforcers conference.

Training/awareness raising planned with SEPA and potentially with Scottish Government Rural Payments & Inspectorate Division staff. Training of Scottish Fishery Trust staff also scheduled to take place in summer 2019.

Discussions held with Alexander Burnett MSP (Scottish Parliament Species Champion for freshwater pearl mussels) and plans underway to increase his involvement with, and awareness of, the work of the PDG.

Information and ideas shared with colleagues in England and Wales.

### **What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

The PDG has agreed to continue with the same 3 year targets as they all remain relevant to the work's group, with the group's work continuing to focus on prevention and awareness raising (targets are in bold)

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 2018 the PDG's work featured in 3 news releases.

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 2018 and early 2019, all suspected criminal activity was reported directly to the police, including suspected pearl fishing in the Highlands and Tayside.

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 the last 3 years, at least 12 pro-active operations have been led by the police, all done in collaboration with key partners.

**Other Issues:**

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

No comments made.

**Poaching**

**Summary of Intelligence**

**Deer Poaching**

- The main motivating factor is money. Poachers selling to local businesses can earn a considerable amount of cash. No health checks are being carried out, which clearly represents a public health concern.
- Shooting is the most prevalent method of poaching.
- Deer Coursing reports continue. There are also reports of use of quads and vehicles to chase down deer.
- Damage to farmer’s property continues.

In November 2018, ten parties of poachers were apprehended and dealt with by West Mercia Police. During the activity numerous interviews took place and an air weapon was seized. The activity came as a result of information from the community, specifically an organised group called Poacherwatch. Poacherwatch is a group formed by local landowners, farmers, gamekeepers and stalkers who work in conjunction with West Mercia Police and Gwent Police forces to share information and provide a co-ordinated response to poaching in Herefordshire, the Forest of Dean and Gwent.

Further to this disruptive work by West Mercia Police and Poacherwatch; two men from Aberdare, South Wales, have been found guilty of illegally shooting a deer, under the Deer Act 1991. The pair entered land in North Herefordshire in February 2018 and were sentenced at Hereford Magistrates Court on Monday (12 November 2018). Brian Morgan, aged 41, from Aberdare, South Wales and Justin Hopkins, aged 38, from Aberdare, South Wales were ordered to pay £2,400 in fines, costs and compensation, both men had their fire arms certificates revoked and Hopkins was disqualified from driving for 3 months.

**Fish Poaching**

- Prohibited fishing on riverbanks continues.

**Hare Coursing**

- A report has just been released as part of a national project looking at identifying the scale of hare coursing across the UK. A scoping questionnaire was sent to all 35 Forces across the UK to determine what extent hare coursing impacts on their Force area and what measures they have in place to deal with the problem.

**Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>England and Wales Poaching Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Glynn Evans (BASC)</b>

<b>Your objectives:</b>
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.

**How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?**

PPDG members continue to raise awareness of poaching and hare coursing through various mediums including; in house publications, websites, social media, press releases and meetings (including with politicians).

The latest edition of PPDG’s own newsletter was released in February 19.

Our prevention lead worked with ‘Countryfile’ on a feature (which went out in February 19 and also featured other members of the PPDG) highlighting issues around hare coursing and other rural crime.

There was wide participation and support by members of the PPDG in the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s National Rural Crime Day of Action which took place on 8th November 2018. This resulted in a significant amount of publicity and awareness raising of poaching issues.

Members of the PPDG continue to work with the PAW training group, providing training on poaching issues to a number of police officers from different forces. We are also working with the Head of the NWCUC to further develop work in this area with ongoing consideration of a national anti-poaching training day.

The CPS representative within the PPDG has been instrumental in the development of legal guidance which the CPS has produced in relation to prosecutions for hare coursing.

Members of the PPDG are assisting/working with Lincolnshire police on developing a national enforcement initiative to combat hare coursing.

Members’ views in relation to increasing the number wildlife crimes which are classed as ‘notifiable’ were forwarded on via to the relevant leads.

**What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

The PPDG is due to meet in early May 2019 where it will review its 3 year targets to ensure they are ‘SMART’ as per the recommendations of the WCCAG and also that these targets are compatible and contribute to the objectives contained within the National Wildlife & Rural Crime Policing Strategies.

Ahead of this, an update on current targets:

**The NWCUC will identify five forces with a wide geographical coverage to establish a base line of activity, reporting and success.**

Having identified that it would be difficult for the NWCUC to undertake this work a member of PPDG has completed this work. Figures for poaching related incidents over the past 12 months have been produced for six forces/enforcement agencies comprising of North Wales, Dorset, Cambridgeshire, Lincolnshire, North Yorkshire and Natural Resources Wales. Ongoing this process will be repeated annually to provide a measure and to help assess trends.

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

The PPDG has representatives from all regional enforcement groups. With the PPDG sitting in both Wildlife and Rural crime strategies there is an increased opportunity to raise awareness and joint working; an example being the National Rural Crime day of action.

**The continued wide range of representation within the PPDG of both NGO’s and law enforcers.**

There continues to be wide representation within the PPDG.



**To assist in the production and dissemination of best practice advice in relation to dealing with poaching offences and the criminal justice system.**

CPS advice in relation to hare coursing has been produced and is available on its website. Ongoing work to review 'interview' templates used successfully by one force is nearing completion by relevant members of the PPDG.

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

No comments made.

**Plan Owner Update ~ Scotland**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Scottish Poaching &amp; Coursing Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>John Bruce</b>

**Your objectives:**

"To build a greater level of public awareness of poaching and coursing as serious wildlife crime, to continue to build working relations, communications and information share between all agencies and organisations and rural communities in order to increase prevention activity and enforcement."

**How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?**

**To build greater level of public awareness:**

- Press coverage on deer poaching and hare coursing in the north of Scotland.

**To continue building working relations, communications and information sharing:**

- Chair met with the newly appointed Police Scotland Wildlife Crime Co-ordinator to discuss re-engaging the committee and assisting to deliver initiatives.
- Fisheries Management Scotland conference held in March 2019.
- Scottish Gamekeepers Association AGM held in Perth in March 2019.
- SNH have been collating venison dealer license returns for 2018.

**To increase prevention activity and enforcement:**

- Awaiting results of Lincolnshire Police's research into hare coursing across UK.
- Fisheries Management Scotland training on salmon poaching held for COPFS & Police in March 2019.
- Wildlife crime awareness training provided by SNH to Scottish Countryside Rangers Association.

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

None set.

**What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

None set.

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

No comments made.

**Raptor Persecution**

**Summary of Intelligence**

- Intelligence continues to be received regarding pigeon fanciers killing birds of prey.
- Poisoning continues and analysis by FERA identified instances of Bendiocarb, Carbofuran, Aldicarb and Chloralose being utilised.

**Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales**

<b>Plan Owner Update:</b>	<b>Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group</b>
<b>Submitted By:</b>	<b>Superintendent Nick Lyall (Chair)</b>

<p><b>Your objectives:</b></p> <p><b>Aim</b> To reduce the scale and impact of all raptor persecution* in England and Wales.</p> <p><b>Strategic Objectives</b> These will be tracked through the RPPDG Tactical Action Plan and are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To increase awareness of raptor persecution</li> <li>2. To prevent people from becoming involved in raptor persecution</li> <li>3. To develop / identify and communicate best practice on preventing raptor persecution</li> <li>4. To promote intelligence-sharing</li> <li>5. To promote a coordinated response to raptor persecution in England &amp; Wales and, where relevant Scotland and Northern Ireland</li> <li>6. To promote enforcement opportunities against those identified as being involved in persecution offences</li> <li>7. To identify, gather and analyse appropriate evidence to support policy development</li> </ol> <p>*Persecution is to include: - Shooting, poisoning, egg theft, chick theft, trapping, taking from the wild and nest disturbance/destruction of raptors (including attempts to commit these offences).</p>
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<p><b>How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?</b></p> <p>I have consulted key group members about the creation of an Enforcement Sub-group which has overwhelming support. This would focus on specific activities to progress this element, moving it away from the main RPPDG agenda. Work is underway to identify a Chair and Deputy for this meeting, so that TOR can be drafted and meetings arranged. Uptake from PWCOs nationally has been slow, I will now be writing to the regional group chairs directly.</p> <p>RPPDG Meeting held on 16th January 2019 which received widespread media coverage following the organised short notice non-attendance of a number of partners. This followed the resignation from the group of the National Gamekeepers Organisation who shared their resignation letter with a Times newspaper reporter.</p> <p>RPPDG Meeting held on 24th April 2019, ToR signed off as agreed and many actions from the TDP allocated out to owners. A really productive meeting with all partners contributing actively to the groups aims.</p> <p>Agreement has been obtained that `Operational Owl` will be adopted as an NPCC `owned` national campaign aimed at awareness raising of Raptor Persecution. The website is rapidly coming together and currently with “critical friends” for feedback before wider circulation. The Twitter feed is live but</p>
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not actively being used at this time and a national weekend of high profile activity is currently being arranged by North Yorkshire Police.

As Chair, I have attended the Scottish Raptor Study Groups annual conference, the first All Wales Rural Crime meeting and continued to meet with RPPDG members outside of the structured meeting process in order to develop understanding & relationships.

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

NL to amend ToR (to include media handling and decision-making process) and circulate by 1st Feb for sign off by whole group by 1st March.	Final version circulated.
NL to speak to DCC Craig Naylor about the possibility of Operation Owl becoming widespread, with a view to the RPPDG supporting it rather than merging with it.	I have spoken with DCC Naylor who has agreed that Operation Owl will be an NPCC led initiative to raise awareness of Raptor Persecution. NPCC Communication department have been briefed.
NL to circulate link to the mock-up Op Owl site	Website is being built, small group of peers sent link for initial feedback round. Will widen this out as the website builds and work on a formal launch.
All members to send additional feedback on the action plan, signifying where individual organisations can or can't agree to certain actions. After 1st March, once ToR have been agreed.	Minimal feedback received by March Deadline, plan refreshed and new deadline (5th April) set. Good feedback now received and document signed off.
XX to investigate potential membership of RPPDG enforcement sub-group amongst regional enforcement groups.	
XX to coordinate hosting of next meeting (24th April)	Complete

**What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:**

To be reviewed.

**Other Issues:**

Hen Harrier Action Plan - Brood Management Plan Appeals have been lodged- watching brief currently.

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

No comments made.

## Appendix A – Aim and Purpose of Tactical Assessment

### Aim and 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.

The main objectives of the Tactical Assessment are to:

- Analyse all intelligence submitted to the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCUC) since the last assessment was written. The period analysed was from 1<sup>st</sup> November – 30<sup>th</sup> April 2019.
- 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.
- NWCUC, 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.

### Methodology

The following data sources were used:

- Data held by NWCUC in the Wildlife Intelligence Database (WID). WID contains intelligence from a range of sources, including regulatory and law enforcement bodies and Non-Government Organisations. This is augmented by intelligence generated by NWCUC staff.
- Data held on the Scottish Intelligence Database (SID).
- Other information or data received from UK Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA's).
- Other information received from partner agencies.
- Open source information.

### Dissemination:

This Tactical Assessment is marked 'OFFICIAL - SENSITIVE'. It will be disseminated through email to secure email addresses only. After the UKTCG has ratified the document it will be published on the Police Online Knowledge Area (POLKA) which is a restricted website. A sanitised version will later be published on the NWCUC website.