



# POACHING PRIORITY DELIVERY GROUP NEWSLETTER



## What is the Poaching Priority Delivery Group?

Welcome to the 5th edition of the Poaching Priority Delivery Group (PPDG) newsletter. Previous editions can be found [here](#)

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) strategies to tackle **wildlife** and **rural** crime recognise the seriousness, impact and importance of tackling poaching and hare coursing, with poaching being included as a priority in both strategies.

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). The PPDG comprises representatives from the National Wildlife Crime Unit, Crown Prosecution Service, Police, British Deer Society (BDS), Countryside Alliance (CA), Country Land and Business Association Ltd (CLA), Deer Initiative (DI), Environment Agency (EA), Food Standards Agency (FSA), National Gamekeepers Organisation (NGO), Natural Resources Wales (NRW), National Farmers Union (NFU) and Royal Society for the Protection of Animals (RSPCA).

In line with the NPCC strategies, our work is driven by a simple 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.*



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 guidance from other experienced officers, training, publicity and advice material including posters which individual police forces can use for their own anti-poaching publicity campaigns.

## **A message from Chief Constable Darren Martland, NPCC lead for Wildlife Crime and Rural Affairs**

Dear Colleagues,

In July 2019 I was privileged to be chosen to take up the role as the National Police Chiefs Council lead for wildlife crime and rural affairs, and I am looking forward to continuing the great work that my predecessors started. I feel there is so much that we can help with and I am passionate about working in this area of policing.



I am currently the Chief Constable of Cheshire and have previously served in both Cumbria and Merseyside police forces. My experiences have led me to believe that there are significant challenges in relation to poaching. This area of criminality is linked with wider organised crime groups who prey on our farming and rural communities. I am determined to do all I can to prevent these individuals causing harm to our communities physically, mentally and financially.

Chief Inspector Lou Hubble and Superintendent Steve Thomas will be continuing to support the respective wildlife and rural Priority Delivery Groups (PDG's). They both bring significant experience to the portfolio which I will be looking to tap into. Lou has a long standing background in wildlife crime and Steve is from an investigative background. To support Lou and Steve I have also asked Chief Superintendent Bill Dutton, Cheshire Constabulary, to assist me in managing the portfolio. He has previously worked in Durham Constabulary and he has a passion for problem solving and neighbourhood policing. I am confident that working together with my respective leads, the national rural Police & Crime Commissioner lead, Julia Mulligan, and the wider force and PDG leads, we can make a real difference to the communities that most need us.

I am keen for us to build on the existing partnerships we already have to effectively combat crime and support the wider strategies. To help promote these partnerships, we have a number of upcoming events, initiatives and operations.

In the coming months I am looking forward to meeting the different PDG leads and partners involved in the groups. Please keep me updated with the great work you do so that I can help to promote your work and share best practice. I hope to identify some opportunities to spend time on the front line with you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Darren Martland". The signature is stylized with a large, looped 'D' and a cursive 'Martland'.

Kind regards  
Darren Martland  
Chief Constable



### **Surrey poacher, 18, handed two-year Criminal Behaviour Order**

Eighteen-year-old Rowan Poole has been issued a two-year Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO), granted at Staines Magistrates' Court on Thursday, July 4th 2019, as a result of his anti-social behaviour in Guildford and Waverley.

The order bans him from a number of activities, including associating with five other people and attending any train stations in the boroughs, unless it is for the purpose of travel that day.

Poole, of Godalming, was forced to pay a total of £305 in March 2019 after pleading guilty to poaching, and it was at this point that an application was made for the CBO.



He admitted trespassing at night with an air rifle on land in Snowdenham Lane in Bramley with the purpose of "taking or destroying" game in September 2018.

### **35 sheep killed after deer poaching incident**

Deer poachers may have caused a flock of 200 sheep to stampede onto the A1 in **Rutland**. More than 30 of the frightened flock either died in collision with vehicles or were put to sleep by **Leicestershire Police** marksmen after they were left badly injured. The A1 was shut in both directions for almost five hours on December 30th, 2018.

It's thought the 200 ewes, part of a 500-strong flock which were all in lamb, may have been startled by the lights and dogs of illegal poachers who target that part of Rutland where around 1,000 deer roam woodland close to the A1.

Criminal gangs have regularly targeted the area, using lamps and lurcher dogs to confuse and kill deer.

### **Armed police in Derbyshire arrest suspected poachers**

In the early hours of January 24th, 2019, a firearms deployment took place in Snelston, Derbyshire after police received reports of suspicious activity at 1.30am.

Derbyshire Armed Response Unit attended and officers arrested three men. A spokesman for the force said: "Officers attended the scene and arrested three men from Coventry, aged 22, 29 and 34, on suspicion of poaching and dangerous driving".

Enquiries continue.

The vehicle being towed  
away from the scene



IMAGE: DERBYSHIRE CONSTABULARY (@DERBYSHIREARU)

## **Wild boar targeted in the Forest of Dean**

Police have launched a crackdown on poachers illegally stalking and killing wild boar in the Forest of Dean after animal parts were discovered in the woodlands in April 2019. They fear the issue is more prevalent than figures suggest and are calling on locals to help them catch the poachers. The warning comes weeks after Welsh RSPCA officials raised fears that bird and animal carcasses are being dumped near the main A48.

Police in Gloucestershire had previously received a call reporting that the body of a boar that had been stabbed to death had been found near to Speech House, Coleford. The previous month, boar skin and body parts were found in Newland and police believe this is just the tip of the iceberg.

PC Cath McDay, rural crime officer for the Forest of Dean says offenders are getting away with it because people are not reporting the incidents.

Enquiries continue.

## **Lincolnshire hare coursers fined more than £2.5k**

A prolific hare courser and three others were handed fines totalling £2,695 after they were found guilty of trespassing on land in Lincolnshire to hunt with dogs.

Three men and a 17-year-old were fined in relation to a hare coursing incident at Gedney Hill on 13 December, 2017.

Aaron Smith, a 24-year-old prolific hare courser from New Causeway, Reigate, Surrey, has been fined £1,015 and given a three-year Criminal Behaviour Order, which bans him from entering onto any private land in Lincolnshire with a sighthound, greyhound, long dog or lurcher type dog.

He has also been banned from accompanying anyone with these types of dogs, until he has the written permission of the landowner, and was ordered to have his dogs microchipped. Alfie Chambers (39) of Hersham, Surrey received fines and costs totalling £690.

Leonard Doe (36) of Hampton, Surrey received fines and costs totalling £620. The court also ordered to take away his car.

The 17-year-old, who has not been named by police, received fines totalling £370.  
Source: Lincolnshire Reporter

## Hare courser found with self-made videos on his phone

A man was found guilty of hare coursing after he filmed his dogs chasing and killing the animals on his phone.

Leo Price filmed himself hare coursing with his lurchers. The dogs have since been forfeited to the RSPCA.

The videos came to light after police, assisted by the RSPCA, raided Leo Price's home at the Brooks Green travellers' site in Keswick, Norwich on June 11th, 2018.

They found a cache of guns, ammunition and cannabis plants. Price was jailed for seven years on January 11th this year for possession of the firearms and cannabis. Five lurchers were also seized from the site, along with Price's mobile phone.

Price, currently a serving prisoner at HMP Wayland, refused to attend court on July 19, 2019. The case was proved in his absence. The 26-year-old was convicted of six counts of hunting a wild mammal with dogs between January and April of last year.

In an interview, Price admitted the dogs and phone were his and told officers they would find videos of his dogs chasing and killing hares.

Magistrates ordered forfeiture of the dogs and fined Price £100 for each of the six counts. They also ordered him to pay £500 court costs and a £30 victim surcharge.



## £3,000 bill for salmon poacher whose 'one for the pot' turned out to be one of a kind

In July 2018, Adrian Roberts was in court for poaching what experts say is likely to have been the only salmon in the Afon Caletwr.

The male fish was believed to be the only male salmon in the Afon Caletwr, a tributary of the Dee, near Bala in November 2017 and hooking it out of the water would have a significant impact on fish stocks, magistrates at Caernarfon heard.



Adrian Roberts, 57, of Yr Hafan, Bala, admitted charges of taking fish out of the water without a rod or line and having a gaff and a torch. He was ordered to pay fines of £2,000 and court costs of £1,050. The court ordered him to pay at the rate of £50 a month. The court ordered the gaff and torch be confiscated.

Bench chairman Elfed ap Gomer said: "As the prosecutor has said, this is a serious matter. Because of the way it affects fish stocks in the streams of North Wales, it is an aggravating feature."

## Man questioned about illegal netting

A man was detained and questioned in June 2019 after being found using a net in a North Wales river.

Officers from Natural Resources Wales (NRW), supported by North Wales Police rural crime team, apprehended the 31-year-old man from the Dolgellau area in an intelligence-led operation at the scene.

NRW officers confiscated the net and other equipment during the operation on the river Wnion.

Matt Roberts, team leader for NRW's environmental crime team, said: "There are rules and laws to protect species of fish that are an important part of the environment and economy in this area.

"Offences like these can affect the populations for years to come and impact the angling industry which is worth millions of pounds to the Welsh economy every year.

"We use information we get from anglers and the public to target our enforcement work, so we do urge anyone who sees poaching or illegal fishing to report it to us on 0800 807060."

## Substantial fine for breaking fisheries law

A licensed net fisherman was given a substantial fine and made to pay legal costs after admitting to breaking fisheries byelaws in breach of his licence conditions.

Appearing at Sunderland Magistrates' Court on July 10th, 2019, William Rarity, aged 66, of James Williams Street, Sunderland, admitted casting a drift net from his boat inside the Wear Conservation Zone on August 16th last year and failing to correctly complete the return catch logbook issued to him.



The Wear Conservation Zone is classed as a prohibited conservation area all year round, and between the months of June and August there is a higher concentration of salmon and sea trout migrating upstream to spawn.

Prosecuting for the Environment Agency, Chris Bunting told the court that in September, at the end of the licence season, fisheries officers checked the catch return logbook sent in by Rarity and found some apparent alterations from around August 16th that aroused suspicions. When later questioned, Rarity claimed he had simply made some mistakes.

However, when the fish merchants' actual invoices were obtained and checked for the whole season, it was found that Rarity's logbook had overstated his catches to the Environment Agency by over £17,000 worth of fish - even though he never actually received that money.

Rarity underwent further interviews under caution in January 2019, when the full extent of the discrepancies could be put to him by officers. He made no comment. In court, Rarity

accepted that the logbook, relied upon by the Environment Agency to monitor stocks, contained significant inaccuracies for the entire 2018 season.

Representing Rarity, Jason Smith explained that the drift net licence has now been abolished meaning that the defendant had lost his livelihood, and that he now relies on benefits. The court however agreed with the Environment Agency that the defendant's actions had seriously undermined the regulatory regime. Rarity had previously denied the charges but changed his plea on the day of trial.

Joe Watson, Fisheries Enforcement Officer for the Environment Agency, said: "This sizable fine (totalling £6,600) and action by the court sends out a very important message to commercial fishing operations and those people who choose to act illegally in contrary to their licence or permit. The Environment Agency aims to protect, maintain and develop fisheries in the region and to respect the migratory journeys of salmon and sea trout in our waters".

### **Lack of rod licence results in a fine of over £900 and loss of equipment**

At 1pm on Friday 5 April, 2019 a fisheries enforcement officer was on an intelligence-led patrol in the Blaydon area on the bank of the lower River Derwent when he observed two males – one of whom was fishing. He approached the pair and spoke to the male who was fishing, requesting that he produce his rod licence and verify his identity.

The male claimed he was only 16 years of age and so did not require a licence but refused to give his details and began to leave the area. The officer then arrested the male in order to verify his identity. The male became aggressive and had to be physically restrained while protesting the officer was hurting him and claiming that he had juvenile arthritis. The officer maintained his control hold and calmed the situation. The police were requested to attend and on arrival the male was questioned and produced identification which showed he was 20 years of age. The male was reported for offences of unlicensed fishing, failing to state name and address, and closed season fishing for freshwater fish.

The defendant, Alex Matthew Wade, pleaded guilty at Gateshead Magistrates Court on 24 June, 2019. He was fined a total of £974 and a confiscation order was issued for his fishing equipment.

### **Forces join together to tackle hare coursing**

Lincolnshire Police has launched Operation Galileo 2019/2020 to tackle hare coursing in the county.

The number of reports of hare coursing has significantly decreased in Lincolnshire since 2016. The launch will see drones return to the force's Operation Galileo effort, along with the additional Ford Rangers and other marked and unmarked 4x4 vehicles which the force uses to respond to incidents.

Lincolnshire has been seizing hare coursing dogs for a number of years. In fact the force has seized more than any other force in the country, and will continue to do so for 2019/20. Chief Inspector Phil Vickers, Lincolnshire's lead for rural crime, says: "We are in good shape for this season. Last season was very positive and we are looking at building on that, while



also improving our efforts to fight other rural crimes such as theft of machinery and dangerous driving.

“People who live in our rural communities play a vital part in helping us gather intelligence, and we really need their support.

“The big news for 2019/20 is bringing together the top 12 hare coursing forces across the country under the Op Galileo banner – we are targeting the offenders who cause greatest harm to our rural communities by sharing information and intelligence across the whole of the UK.

“The National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) have been supporting our analytical work, and we are in a position to use legislation against the key offenders in a way that has not been done before.”

### **North Yorkshire Police join Operation Galileo**

Police in North Yorkshire have warned poachers that their illegal behaviour will not be tolerated as Winter approaches.

The seasonal trend of illegal hare coursing matches the farming calendar, meaning there is typically an increase in poaching offences in September and October, after crops have been harvested and when fields are left empty and open.



As part of the operation in North Yorkshire, vehicles previously linked to poaching will be identified and targeted. Suspects will be stopped and dealt with robustly, and victims will be visited to obtain witness statements. Police intelligence and the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) network will be used to ensure an effective response to suspicious vehicles and activity.

Days of action will be planned using officers and specialist resources from the Rural Taskforce, Proactive Policing teams, Neighbourhood Policing officers and Mobile Rural Watch volunteers. During these days, police will deploy to areas of high activity to prevent offending and investigate offences.

As part of Operation Galileo, officers will also work closely with other police forces affected by illegal poaching. The forces will share information and intelligence (as offenders often operate across force boundaries), mount joint prosecutions where possible, and ensure a consistent approach in dealing with the issue.

*Source: North Yorkshire Police*

## Gwent Police join the growing number of forces with a dedicated Rural Crime team

Gwent Police has launched a dedicated Rural Crime team to help protect the green and pleasant land surrounding them. Officially launched on January 7, 2019, the Gwent Rural Crime team is comprised of Police Officers and CSOs who offer dedicated support for rural, heritage and wildlife crime which occurs within the force area.



The team, who prevent, detect and investigate incidents, work closely with partner agencies such as Natural Resources Wales, rural communities and neighbouring forces to tackle a range of crimes and to obtain and develop intelligence on crimes which affect those living in rural areas.

## Rural crime week of action

Between the 6-13 October, 2019 the National Police Chiefs' Council organised a week of action against rural crime across the country. There have been a number of successful operations and initiatives. A full report will be in the next edition.

## Resources and information:

**[www.projectpoacher.com](http://www.projectpoacher.com)**

This is a website dedicated to poaching and illegal coursing. It has a free information and reporting App to download, with links to the Poaching Priority Delivery Group and BASC.



## Wildlife Crime Policing Strategy 1

## Wildlife Crime Policing Strategy 2

The NPCC rural crime strategy sets out the aims for rural crime and wildlife crime in England and Wales.

**[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)**

Allows callers to report crime and incidents anonymously.  
0800 555 111

## NFU Rural Crime Reporting Line

By calling **0800 783 0137** or visiting **[www.ruralcrimereportingline.uk](http://www.ruralcrimereportingline.uk)**, farmers, rural businesses and the public can anonymously give information about crime relating to:

- Large-scale, industrial fly-tipping
- Hare coursing
- Machinery theft
- Livestock theft

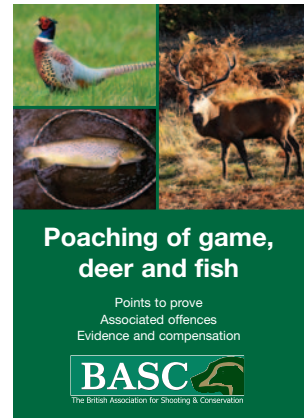
**Environment Agency incident hotline: 0800 80 70 60 (24hr).**

For advice on angling, licencing, illegal fishing methods, netting, pollution and environmental issues.

**CPS Hare Coursing Advice**

The Crown Prosecution Service have legal guidance for prosecutors when dealing with hare coursing cases. This best practice advice should help ensure the appropriate outcomes to these cases and can be found here

<https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/hare-coursing>

**BASC 'Poaching of Game Deer and Fish' Booklet**

Poaching is a serious crime. To help the police and other countryside users recognise and report poaching and other rural crime, BASC have produced this booklet. This booklet provides essential information and advice for law enforcers, gamekeepers, farmers and others affected by poaching. Working in partnership on a national basis as part of Project Trespass, BASC aims to increase awareness of poaching and associated crimes and to help identify action which can be taken to stop poachers.

This booklet is also available in hard copy to members and law enforcers by contacting the BASC Game and Deer Management team on 01244 573 019 or by **email**.

**BDS launches its new deer app which includes a section on poaching**

Go to the BDS website to download the app.



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

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