

Tactical Assessment – UK Wildlife Crime

November 2019

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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 persecution¹ and shows the associated

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

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 has been circulated to all police forces in England & Wales to consider preventative work around seasonality and/or proactive enforcement.

Summary of Intelligence

- Badger baiting continues.
- Snares and traps continue to be utilised.
- Poisoning continues.

On 11th June 2019 at Taunton Magistrates Court Daniel Brockely was convicted of Animal Welfare Act 2006 (unnecessary suffering of dog) and sentenced to 140 hours unpaid community work, £2250 in costs and £85 victim surcharge.

On 23rd June 2019 at Merthyr Magistrates Court Ryan Harrison, Thomas Young and Cyle Jones were convicted of animal cruelty and sentenced to 22 weeks imprisonment, 20 weeks imprisonment and 18 weeks imprisonment respectively, and not allowed to keep dogs.

On 29th July at Scarborough Magistrates Court Clint Dodd, Daniel Joyce, Michael Dodd and Connor Pounder were convicted under the Badger Act 1992 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006 - digging for badgers, sett interference and causing unnecessary suffering of a dog were disqualified from keeping dogs for five years and ordered to pay costs. 10 week suspended sentence and ordered not to enter North Yorkshire for 12 months. Michael Dodd also had a suspended sentence of Disqualified Driving and sentenced to 14 weeks imprisonment.

On 19th August at Jedburgh Sheriff Court Alan Wilson was convicted of shooting and trapping offences by Police Scotland in relation to badgers, otters and birds of prey. He was sentenced to 225 hours unpaid work, imposed night time curfew for 10 months and firearms confiscated.

¹ incidents occurring between 01/01/16 and 31/12/2018

Plan Owner Update

Plan Owner Update:	Badger Persecution Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	Inspector 1072 Kevin Kelly – BPPDG Chair

Your objectives:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve and increase the recording of incidents, crime and intelligence of persecution. • Improve the Investigation Process. • Increase awareness of Badger persecution across the UK.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Badger Trust fund and deliver badger crime training to forces nationally. 2) PDG led a coordinated social media campaign in the run up to and over national badger day, to raise awareness and highlight the prevalence of Sett interference and Badger baiting and disturbance offences. This campaign was cascaded to members and partners who have carried the momentum onward into rural crime week and beyond. 3) PDG member Naturewatch Foundation developed School Awareness Programme for teenagers on badger baiting to be delivered by Police and/or Badger Groups. This has been adopted by West Yorkshire police and North Yorkshire police. Once this adoption period has been implemented then it will be rolled out through PDG members.

Update on Actions from your last Priority Delivery Group meeting:	
Action	Update
Ongoing Action: The Sett Interference and Advanced Practitioner Sub Group have merged to form a new Sub Group named the Enforcement Subgroup which will look at: i) address volume crime as highlighted in the analytical data. ii) developing “Wildlife Crime officers in scene management”. iii) to identify seasonal peaks in the offences and look to profile the problem and provide a sustainable solution.	<p>National Badger day 6th October was a huge success. This was a social media focused operation where a media strategy was implemented that reached over 52000 interactions on social media.</p> <p>Sub Group are formulating an uplift in “Wildlife Crime officer training”.</p> <p>BT identifying list of expert witnesses</p> <p>Work has commenced into profiling the issue of sett blocking offences with a view of a partnership and problem solving approach towards the issue, utilising current partners and reaching out to new partners to deliver on the strategy.</p>
Ongoing Action: Badger Crime Training Document	NWF and BT jointly producing Training manual on Badger Crime for Police, CPS.
Ongoing Action: PDG to conduct a week of enforcement action linked to the Analytical data and current intelligence held by NWCU prioritising nominals engaged in illegal persecution crossing force borders.	<p>Timeline of action:</p> <p>Secretariat will complete incident data records and liaise January 2020 with XX to finalise list and categories of crime.</p> <p>Produce a hot spot map of all incidents from analysis data in England and Wales</p> <p>PDG to identify specific week of enforcement action in 2020.</p> <p>Drive proactive engagement via new PDG Chair and NPCC lead.</p>

<p>Ongoing Action: PDG to create National Impact Statements on illegal Badger Persecution covering aspects such as impacts on the species, environment and local issues</p>	<p>XX to circulate examples to Enforcement leads for leads to formulate paper of examples and template that can be circulated outside PDG to WCOs.</p>
<p>Ongoing Action: PDG to promote Naturewatch Foundation School Awareness Programmes for Teenagers on Badger Baiting in order to raise awareness, prevention, intelligence and ultimately enforcement.</p>	<p>XX has circulated to all WCO's and REG with request for Police to undertake presentations in schools. Naturewatch Foundations Animal Crime Manager to be contact for details and implement</p>

<p>What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:</p>
<p>The three-year targets are: Prevention – BPPDG quarterly Newsletter now re-introduced with first letter released in October on National Badger Day. 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. Enforcement - Proactive enforcement initiatives by Police Service, based on the analytical data compiled by Senior Analyst NWCU (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 NWCU to Regional Enforcement Chairs to initiate proactive Prevention and Enforcement initiatives. There have been a number of significant cases nationally in Humberside and North Yorkshire Police areas where custodial sentences have been passed. The improvements the PDG has implemented around expert evidence capture and delivery have been critical to these cases success, along with fantastic improved investigations on the ground.</p>

<p>Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:</p>
<p>No comments made.</p>

Bat Persecution

NWCU continue to receive monthly incident data from the BCT, which is assessed for intelligence value and uploaded to the NWCU database.

Summary of Intelligence

- Development and construction work is the main cause of concern in relation to Bat Persecution.
- Tree felling is also of great current risk to bats.

On 11th October at Bournemouth Crown Court, Ian Russell Turner, a developer was convicted of disturbing a bat roost. He was fined £3,000 and £475 costs with a £3720 POCA confiscation order.

Plan Owner Update

Plan Owner Update:	Bat Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	PS 10 Shaun DOBLE

Your objectives:
<p><u>Present Bat PDG objective and targets - last amended 2015</u></p> <p><i>To reduce bat crime by working with key stakeholders to raise awareness of responsibilities and criminal offences against bats, promoting a preventative approach and improving the submission of intelligence and standards of investigation relating to bats across the UK. To identify and bring to the attention of the TCG any obstacles preventing delivery of our objective.</i></p> <p>Prevention working group (BCT lead)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should contain at a minimum representatives of the Police, each SNCO, Local Government planners and ecologists and appropriate NGO's. Stand in's should be arranged if lead contact is not available. • To report to the PDG lead, on initiatives undertaken to prevent bat crime and other work undertaken in support of our initiative. • To identify how many incidents of crimes being prevented were recorded in 2014 providing a base line against which future performance will be measured. • To identify and report on good crime prevention practice. • Produce at least two newsletters a year to be widely circulated containing information that can be used to prevent bat crime. <p>Intelligence working group (NWCU lead)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should contain at a minimum representatives of NWCU, regional enforcement groups and SNCO's. • To report to the PDG lead, on levels of bat crime recorded since the last meeting and what work has been undertaken in support of our objective.

- To identify groups, individuals and companies suspected of being involved in organised bat crime. To produce and disseminate intelligence packages relating to identified suspects, to develop intelligence and undertake investigations into each package.
 - To identify forces who are not submitting intelligence relating to bat crime and to engage with them to address the situation.
 - That 50% of all reports of bat crime made known to NWCUC should be confirmed by formal intelligence submissions.
- Enforcement working group (Police lead)
- Should contain at a minimum representatives of NWCUC, regional enforcement groups, CPS, Natural England, Local Government and Bat Conservation Trust.
 - To identify best practice and deficiencies in the investigation and prosecution of bat offences across the UK. To undertake, on request, reviews of investigations.
 - To identify forces who currently report positive outcomes of investigations, at a rate, below the UK average and to engage with them to establish if performance could be improved.
 - To report to the PDG lead on the work undertaken since the last meeting in support of our objective.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

The chair role was vacant for some time and as such the majority of the actions raised have not been addressed. I am newly appointed to the chair of the Bat PDG and have had an initial meeting with group members and plan to meet with regional enforcement leads at the National wildlife enforcers' conference at the end of November. Plans are currently being made to hold full key holders meeting in December.

Work undertaken to meet our objective in the last 3 years include –

Courses conducted on relevant legal issues held in relation to EPS with Woodland trusts, consultants (in Wales) and Police.

Work towards a guidance document on the investigation of bat offences with the College of Policing.

The last BPDG meeting was held on the 5th September 2019 where a number of actions were raised. The emphasis is to rejuvenate the group to maximise input, with a problem solving approach, in order to raise awareness of responsibilities, with a pro-active approach to prevention and to raise the standards of investigation.

The group are currently reviewing the objectives and targets to ensure they are SMART and in line with NPCC strategy.

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

Work is ongoing, group members have been asked to review the current objectives/targets and give opinions/suggestions for the next 3 years in line with WCPS.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments made.

CITES

On Monday 28/10/2019, Arron William Halstead appeared at Burnley Crown Court charged with 21 offences contrary to the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997. Halstead pleaded guilty to 3 offences of 'prohibited offering for sale Annex 'A' species', namely a Rhinoceros skull, a Sawfish rostrum and a Sperm whale tooth. Halstead pleaded not guilty to a further 15 offences relating to the 'sale, keeping for sale and offering for sale Annex 'A' species', including Rhino horns, Tiger skulls, Elephant tusks and a Pangolin. The case was listed for trial, which is expected to last 4 days, commencing on 24th March 2020.

CITES – illegal trade in raptors



Wellings Barn owl fitted with plastic cable tie, no permit or leg ring

On the 1th November 2019, Lee WELLINGS, a breeder of Barn owls from Walsall was sentenced at Walsall Magistrates Court for 13 offences relating to the prohibited sale of Annex 'A' species, making false statements to obtain permits to sell Annex 'A' species and for possessing 3 wild barn owls. WELLINGS had pleaded guilty to all the offences at a previous hearing. WELLINGS was given a 12 month Community Order, 80 hours unpaid work, a total of £270 costs and the forfeiture of 6 Barn owls. The case was the result of a protracted investigation by West Midlands Police and the National Wildlife Crime Unit. As the result of an allegation that WELLINGS had sold a Barn Owl without a permit, commonly known as an Article 10 Certificate (A10), specialist officers

from NWCU and West Midlands Police executed a search warrant at WELLINGS home on 18th December 2018. During the search officers found six Barn owls that were being kept in aviaries at the address. Only three of the birds were fitted with correct rings and covered by A10 Certificates. Officers seized a large quantity of paperwork relating to WELLING's trade in Barn owls. Subsequent examination of the paperwork and records of his applications for A10s to the Animal and Plant Health Agency, showed that WELLINGS had been applying for permits and had repeatedly been providing false provenance in his applications; he claimed to breed owls and used details of parent birds that he later admitted he had never possessed. Records showed that WELLINGS had been issued with 124 A10 Certificates in a four-year period, at least 57 of the A10s he had been issued were as a result of him making 'false statements'. Barn owls are also included on Annex 'A' to the COTES Regulations. The commercial use, including sale or offering for sale such species is prohibited, unless there is a valid exemption certificate.

CITES – ivory

Two men who illegally exported carved ivory fans to Hong Kong and America have been sentenced. Guy Buckle and Sik-Hung Or of Champion Hill, were each sentenced to 28 months imprisonment at Inner London Crown Court on Monday, 23 September after pleading guilty to three counts of the illegal export of ivory goods, contrary to the Customs & Excise Management Act 1979. The court heard how on 8 November 2017, the Met's Wildlife Crime Unit were contacted by the National Wildlife Crime Unit after two parcels, destined for China, were seized by UK Border Force at Heathrow; the parcels each contained a carved ivory fan. An investigation commenced and officers quickly identified the sender as an online trader, selling identical carved ivory items. Police enquiries established that 136 carved fans had been exported outside the EU between January 2014 and November 2017 with the sales totalling £145,259.

October 2019 - a Spalding man was sentenced to nine months in prison for trading in illegal ivory. Slawomir Kazmierczak pleaded guilty to nine charges relating to the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 relating to offences between 2013 and 2017. Ivory items created after 1947 require an Article 10 certificate – Kazmierczak didn't hold any of these. eBay has had an imposed ivory ban in place for more than 10 years. In this case items were bought and sold under code names such as 'faux ivory' and 'bovine bone'.

CITES – rhino horn

An Irish man who smuggled a cup made from a protected rhino horn from Miami to London was sentenced to 14 months in prison. Richard Sheridan pleaded guilty on 1st October 2019 to trafficking an artefact made from rhino horn. Sheridan, who was extradited to the United States from the UK, will be under two years of supervised release after serving his sentence. Sheridan was arrested in the UK in 2012 as part of Operation Crash, a nationwide criminal investigation led by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In April 2012, Sheridan and Michael Hegarty, another Irish national, purchased the libation cup - a drinking vessel used in religious ceremonies - at an auction house in Rockingham, N.C. Sheridan bid \$57,500 for the cup. The duo received the item a few days later at an address in Florida, and then travelled to London where they intended to have a flaw on the cup fixed before they could resell it. About a month later, Sheridan was arrested in London, while attempting to sell the cup to a Hong Kong native. Shortly after Hegarty was arrested in Belgium. He was then extradited to the United States and pleaded guilty to conspiring with Sheridan to traffic in the libation cup. In November 2017, Hegarty was sentenced in federal court in Miami to 18 months in prison and three years of supervised release.

CITES – other (non-priority issues)

On Thursday 1st August 2019, officers from the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit and West Yorkshire investigating the illegal import (from China) and subsequent sale of Siamese Crocodile skulls, executed three search warrants in the Bradford area. As a result of the operation a 26 year old man was arrested on suspicion of evading import restrictions and prohibited sale of Annex 'A' species (Siamese crocodile and Black bear skulls). He was later released under investigation, while officers continue their enquiries. A 27 year old female was also arrested, but she was later released without charge. Siamese crocodile is a critically endangered species and receives the highest level of protection. Any import or commercial use of the species is strictly controlled.



August 2019 - 28 primate skulls were seized after police raided properties in Devon searching for endangered species. A 52-year-old man from Newton Abbot was interviewed by police in connection with the seizures and released while an investigation is carried out. The multi-agency operation included officers from Devon and Cornwall Police, the NWCU, Border Force and Trading Standards. The skulls are believed to be Long Tailed Macaques (*Macaca fascicularis*). In total, the defendant is believed to have imported around 125 skulls. eBay records show he has sold 99 since 2016 for a profit of over £3000.

On 15th October 2019, Michael TANG appeared at Cardiff Crown Court where he pleaded guilty to 18 charges contrary to COTES (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 and six charges contrary to the CEMA Act 1979 relating to the illegal import and purchase of a number of skulls of protected species. TANG pleaded guilty to all 24 charges and was sentenced to 12 weeks imprisonment (suspended for 12 months) 120 hours unpaid work and £1200 costs. All the items subject to these charges were forfeited. In August 2018 officers from the South Wales Police and the National Wildlife Crime Unit attended at the home address of TANG and discovered a number of skulls which originated from species listed under CITES and EU regulations, these included Gorilla, Chimpanzee and Orangutan skulls as well as the skull of a Sulawesi Babirusa and a La Plata River Dolphin. TANG was



unable to provide evidence of the legal purchase or importation of a number of these items, which were subsequently seized. An expert examined all of the items seized and observed that skulls from a Gorilla, Chimpanzee and Orangutan all still had evidence of shot within them, indicating they had been shot and taken directly from the wild. Although there was no evidence that TANG was directly concerned with the original taking of these species from the wild, his involvement in the trade as a buyer helped fuel the demand for such items and the subsequent illegal taking and trade from the countries of origin of these species.



July 2019 - PSNI and NWCU executed a warrant in Rathfriland, Northern Ireland and found a large amount of spiders and smaller numbers of scorpions and centipedes. There were also some reptiles including Sand Monitor (*Varanus gouldii*). The owner appears to be trading on a large scale and investigations are ongoing to ascertain if he has acquired them legally.

Plan Owner Update

Plan Owner Update:	CITES Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	UKBF

Your objectives: CITES Priority Delivery Group.

Ivory, Rhino Horn, Reptiles, Medicinal and health supplements, Trade in Raptors, Stony corals, European eel (*Anguilla Anguilla*) and CITES listed Timber.

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:

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.

Stony corals: Compliance in the trade sector remains good.

CITES LISTED TIMBER: Significant seizures continue to be delivered at the border across a range of commodities and species.

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

To monitor the enforcement response to the UK national CITES priorities, ensuring they are fit for purpose following consultation with the WCCAG.

To promote increased collaboration between enforcement partners on training and operational issues.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments made.

Cyber Enabled Wildlife Crime Priority Delivery Group

Plan Owner Update

Plan Owner Update:	Cyber Enabled Wildlife Crime Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	NWCU

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.

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?
N/A (objectives to be set with ratified delivery plan and prevention strategy).

What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:
The Cyber Enabled Wildlife Crime Prevention Strategy and delivery plan is currently in draft form and is under review. Targets and objectives are currently being reviewed by all members of the group and hope to be ratified at the next meeting.

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

Fresh Water Pearl Mussels

Summary of Intelligence

- 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

Plan Owner Update:	Freshwater Pearl Mussel Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	SNH

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?
<p>During 2019 the PDG has been undertaking a number of important tasks. Funding was secured to continue hidden camera surveillance and deterrent signage at two key pearl mussel rivers throughout the spring, summer and early autumn 2019. The work was a success, with no further wildlife crime detected during 2019 (as in 2018) – particularly important given the scale of previous damage inflicted at both these locations.</p> <p>Funding was also secured to install deterrent signage. A site visit has taken place, Transport Scotland have agreed to the signage and plans are underway to install the signage this winter.</p> <p>As reported in our last update to TCG, discussions have taken place with SASA about the potential for future forensic tool development. But these seem very limited, unlikely to be successful and will not be pursued.</p> <p>Training of Scottish Fishery Staff took place in summer 2019.</p> <p>Since the last update there have been two reported incidents of pearl fishing. Both were recorded on rivers designated as internationally important conservation sites (Special Areas of Conservation).</p>

What are your 3 year targets? Evidence how you are meeting them:
<p>The PDG has maintained the 3 year targets as they remain directly relevant to our work (targets in bold)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 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. <p>During 2019, the PDG’s work featured in 2 news releases to date. Both included partner organisations and featured on a surprising array of press, from national radio and newspapers, to local papers from Irvine (Ayrshire) to Bolton and Aberdeenshire.</p>

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 2019, all suspected criminal activity was reported directly to the police.

3. Enforcement: **Over 3 years from 2019, at least 8 pro-active operations to be initiated and actioned by the police, in collaboration with key partners.**

During 2019, 2 pro-active patrols/operations have been led by the police, in collaboration with fishery boards/bailiffs.

Other Issues:

During 2018, an exceptional episode of dry weather placed a considerable number of pearl mussel populations under stress. A project is ongoing to evaluate the impact on particularly sensitive populations and is due to report in early 2020. Publication of this work will be used to remind others of the PDG's group as we are addressing one of several conservation issues the species experiences.

Using funds from Scottish Government, SNH is also managing a project to identify the source of fine sediments within 3 river catchments that support pearl mussel populations. This project will finish in late 2020 and is refining a technique called 'sediment fingerprinting' and should be able to identify and track sediment sources – which can often arise from unauthorised activity polluting pearl mussels.

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 and no health checks are being carried out.
- Shooting is the most prevalent method of poaching, with or without a firearms licence and during ‘closed season’.
- There are still reports of persons engaged in Deer Coursing with images posted on social media

Fish Poaching

- Illegal fishing (including fishing without a licence on riverbanks where prohibited) continues.

Hare Coursing

A report was released as part of a national project looking at identifying the scale of hare coursing across the UK.

Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales

Plan Owner Update:	England and Wales Poaching Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	BASC

Your objectives:

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?

All members of the PPDG are required to provide an update at meetings, regarding their actions to progress the above objective.

There was wide engagement and support of the NPCC’s rural crime week of action (6-13 October) including operational activities (by enforcement partners) and wider promotion (other partners).

Template interview forms (MG15’s) have been completed and are available to police forces both electronically and as hard copies via the NWCUC.

The next edition (5th) of the Project Poacher newsletter will be released at the end of October. We plan to make it triannual (currently it is biannual).

Members continue to raise awareness around poaching in a number of ways; via publications and communications (both in house and wider) across a number of platforms including print, broadcast and electronic mediums, presence at shows and events and providing support to other events such as the National Wildlife Enforcers Conference (sponsorship by BASC).

Members of the group (BASC) continue to engage with the PAW training group representatives and have delivered training to a number of police forces at ten events.

New three-year targets and objectives have been produced.

A base line regarding the level of poaching has been set using data with six police forces/enforcement agencies, which will enable ongoing annual monitoring to help measure impact of initiatives.

We (BASC) have employed a part time Poaching Prevention Officer. This role will help to ensure targets and objectives are met.

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

At the last PPDG meeting (2/10/19) we set new three-year targets (appendix).

- A consistent approach, following established best practice in tackling poaching and hare coursing across England & Wales.
- A measurable reduction in poaching and hare coursing
- Advice on methods readily available to help deter and prevent poaching and hare coursing
- Measurable increase in awareness and recognition of the issues associated with poaching and hare coursing

It should be noted that under these overarching three-year targets there are a number of SMART objectives/actions to deliver them. These objectives are also aligned to those contained within the delivery plan for the NPCC National Wildlife Crime Policing Strategy.

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments made.

Plan Owner Update ~ Scotland

Plan Owner Update:	Scottish Poaching & Coursing Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	NWCU

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:

- PAW Scotland presence at Royal Highland Show, Game Fair and numerous local shows.
- Fisheries Management Scotland provided information regarding the status of pink salmon and what to do if one is landed.
- Several media articles regarding hare coursing, deer and salmon poaching.

To continue building working relations, communications and information sharing:

- Incident notebooks
- Information leaflet on poaching and freshwater pearl mussel crime to be re-distributed to identified organisations.
- Fisheries Management Scotland Enforcement Conference to be held in December 2019.
- Salmon poaching training provided by Fisheries Management Scotland to COPFS staff and Police officers in spring 2019.
- SNH ran a Sharing Good Practice event on Forestry Wildlife Crime in October 2019 with a workshop covering deer issues and crime.

To increase prevention activity and enforcement:

- Closer working with Rural Crime policing over shared issues (e.g. hare coursing).

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments made.

Raptor Persecution

The UK National Wildlife Crime Unit have undertaken a variety of investigations, intelligence work and analysis over the last year, to assist in the prevention, detection and enforcement of crime against raptors.

On 19th August at Jedburgh Sheriff Court Alan Wilson was convicted of shooting and trapping offences by Police Scotland in relation to badgers, otters and birds of prey. He was sentenced to 225 hours unpaid work, imposed night time curfew for 10 months and firearms confiscated.

Plan Owner Update ~ England & Wales

Plan Owner Update:	Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	Chair

Your objectives:

Aim

To reduce the scale and impact of all raptor persecution* in England and Wales.

Strategic Objectives

These will be tracked through the RPPDG Tactical Action Plan and are:

1. To increase awareness of raptor persecution
2. To prevent people from becoming involved in raptor persecution
3. To develop / identify and communicate best practice on preventing raptor persecution
4. To promote intelligence-sharing
5. To promote a coordinated response to raptor persecution in England & Wales and, where relevant Scotland and Northern Ireland
6. To promote enforcement opportunities against those identified as being involved in persecution offences
7. To identify, gather and analyse appropriate evidence to support policy development

*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).

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

National launch of Operation Owl across weekend of 21st & 22nd September.

Welsh Minister `Raptor Persecution` Round Table being planned for Feb 2020.

Media interviews, presentations and events attended highlighting the work of PDG and Op Owl, including Game Fair & Bird Fair. Hen Harrier Day 2019 attend by up to 2000 people

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

The PDG has now agreed its Prevention, Intelligence & Enforcement Delivery Plan and this will form the basis of the three year plan for the PDG to focus on.

The overarching target of the group is to improve the conservation status of the 6 key raptor species, but have widened the remit to include prevention of all raptor persecution.

Other Issues:

Hen Harrier Action Plan

- Broad Management Plan Appeals have been lodged- watching brief currently

Wildlife Crime Conservation Advisory Group (WCCAG) Comments:

No comments made.

Plan Owner Update ~ Scotland

Plan Owner Update:	Scottish Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group
Submitted By:	Police Scotland

Your objectives:

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

How have you progressed your objectives since the last UKTCG?

Raising trust and awareness
 2019 has seen increased and positive engagement with land managers, Scottish Land and Estates and Scottish Gamekeepers Association, data tag holders and other key partners. Much work has been done to gain a better understanding of satellite tagging and its data.

Prevention/Enforcement activity
 Police Scotland was an active participant in OP OWL in 2019. A number of public engagement events were held across Scotland involving key partners. A number of officers engaged in targeted patrols in hot spot areas and released social media in show of support. A large number of OP OWL leaflets and flyers were distributed.
 Police Scotland continue to support the South of Scotland Golden Eagles project and Heads Up for Harriers.
 Police Scotland continue to assist Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) in consideration of imposing General Licence restrictions on estates causing concern and will continue to do so.

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

No targets set.

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 seven 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 **1st May – 31st October 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 the 'OFFICIAL – PUBLIC VERSION'. It will be published on the NWCUC website.