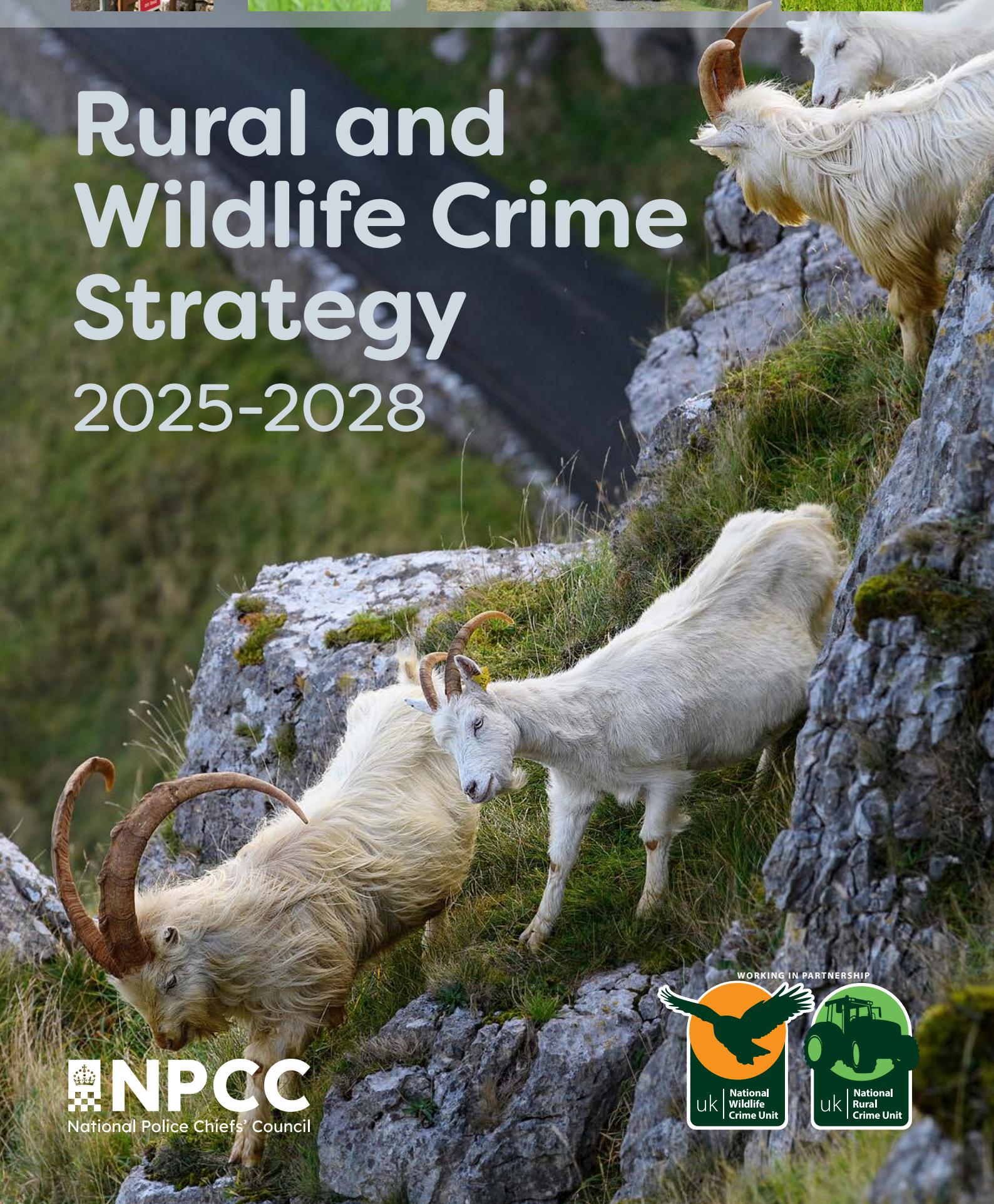




# Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy

## 2025-2028







# Foreword

**DCC Nigel Harrison**

**As the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) lead for Rural and Wildlife crime I am extremely proud of what has been achieved by officers, staff and key partners over the last strategic cycle.**

This strategy aims to provide strategic direction for policing in the areas of both Rural crime and Wildlife crime. Whilst there are some elements distinctly different for both strands, I recognise that for many forces, the actual delivery of these areas of business is through dedicated Rural Crime teams, rather than separate resources. This strengthens the need for both strands of work to sit under the same strategy.

Rural crime has many different facets for many different people, often depending on the nature of the work, the individual police force, or which agency or Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO).

The reality is that many crime types that are experienced across the UK can be evident in both urban and rural areas.

It is my aim as the policing lead for Rural and Wildlife crime to set out a strategy to tackle crime types predominately specific to rural areas, rather than to provide a guide to police forces for delivering policing services in rural communities, which is the clear remit of each individual force's Chief Constable.

Rural and Wildlife crime not only devastate species and ecosystems, but also fuels organised crime, generates illicit finances, destroys livelihoods and undermines the safety of our communities. Examples of this were clear over the previous cycle, with the growth in our knowledge of the Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT), the threats of organised animal cruelty and exploitation, the large-scale thefts of vital farming equipment and Organised Crime Group enabled acquisitive theft and criminal activities.



Building on the success of the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), a dedicated and passionate team managing wildlife crime nationally, we have seen further key developments and successes, with the National Rural Crime Unit (NRCU) formed in January of 2023, and within it, the National Construction and Agricultural Theft Team (NCATT). Both new teams have delivered exceptional results and have helped shape and improve rural policing nationally.

This strategy will be driven by the NWCU, NRCU and UK police forces, and underpinned by a robust partnership framework and a community support network. It seeks to empower police officers and enforcers to take decisive action against those who exploit and harm wildlife and rural communities.

In previous years, we have seen the stark reality that there is an intrinsic link between criminals targeting our rural communities and serious, organised crime groups. We have also seen that those who harm animals often harm people.

As enforcers, we need to be fully alive to the fact that Rural and Wildlife crime does not exist in isolation, it is linked to serious and organised crime, destroying habitats and targeting the vulnerable.

Addressing it is not just about protecting nature or the countryside—it is about protecting our communities and ensuring justice is served.

In the fight against wildlife crime, we will strengthen prevention and detection measures, and we will challenge the criminals who profit from the illegal wildlife trade - one of the largest crime types globally - and safeguard the UK's rarest and most iconic species.



This strategy reflects the public expectation that the police will take a strong stand against Rural and Wildlife crime. It is a vision of partnership and determination, aimed at removing opportunities for criminals, disrupting and dismantling criminal networks, and protecting the natural world and the rural way of life for future generations.

Over this strategic cycle, it is my intention that U.K policing provides dedicated and tailored support for our rural communities and those who live and work within them, ensuring that they receive the best possible policing service for both prevention, detection and reassurance. I recognise that the decision on dedicated Rural Crime Teams is for individual Chief Constables, but I would welcome a commitment for Rural Crime teams to be embedded in each force, across the UK, working in partnership with the national teams to deliver policing in these areas.

I recognise that there are many passionate people working in the world of Rural and Wildlife crime, providing support to many different areas, all across the country. Whilst some of these specific areas may not be mentioned as priorities, both myself as national lead, and both specialist national teams are committed to working with other policing leads, units and partner agencies to deliver results as we work to make our countryside and wildlife safer.

Together, we will prevent, detect, and reduce Rural and Wildlife crime, demonstrating that we stand united in this aim.

# Foreword

**Sarah Jones MP**

**Minister for Policing and Crime Prevention, Home Office**

**Dame Angela Eagle DBE MP**

**Minister for Food Security and Rural Affairs**

**Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**

We are delighted to be showing our support for the NPCC's new Rural and Wildlife Crime Strategy. This is a crucial tool in providing direction for policing when it comes to tackling rural and wildlife crime.

Rural crime is unacceptable and has devastating consequences for our countryside communities and the agricultural sector. The Government is committed to protecting our rural communities, as well as tackling crimes that predominantly affect these communities, such as machinery theft. The strategy is a key step in ensuring that the Government's mission to deliver safer streets applies to all communities across the country.

To support the police in their efforts to keep our rural communities safe we have included provisions in the Crime and Policing Bill to give the police and local authorities new powers to tackle crime. This includes new warrantless powers of entry for police to enter premises where stolen goods are identified by electronic mapping - giving officers a valuable tool to tackle quickly stolen equipment and machinery from farms and agricultural businesses. There are new measures to enable statutory guidance to be issued to local authorities to support them to make full and proper use of their fly-tipping enforcement powers.

Agricultural machinery theft is also a huge concern for farmers, which is why we are committed to introducing secondary legislation which will implement the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act and help to fend off the theft and re-sale of high-value equipment.

Neighbourhood policing is the bedrock of the British policing model. Every

community deserves visible, proactive and accessible neighbourhood policing with officers tackling the issues that matter to them. Through the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee we have committed to restoring neighbourhood policing to all communities, rural and urban, by doubling the funding available for neighbourhood policing to a total of £200 million in this financial year to support the first steps of delivering 13,000 more neighbourhood personnel. All communities – including our rural communities - will also have named, contactable officers to tackle local issues.

Improving the links between citizens and local police forces is also key, as seen by the fantastic work of volunteer rural crime watch groups that spend thousands of hours of manpower in their spare time coordinating with farms and the police to improve the tracking of criminals across the more isolated parts of the United Kingdom. We have

seen examples of good practice where improved communication has enabled a quicker police response and built trust in policing.

We would like to acknowledge the vital roles the National Rural Crime Unit (NRCU) and National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) have in tackling crimes affecting our rural areas, which can pose unique challenges for policing given the scale and isolation of rural areas.

The units play a valuable role in assisting police forces across the UK in disrupting serious and organised crime and by lending their expertise.

This Government welcomes the commitment from the NPCC that the police will take a strong and consistent stand against rural and wildlife crime. We are pleased to say that for this financial year 2025/26 the Home Office will be providing the first funding since 2023 for the National Rural Crime Unit as well as continuing funding for the National Wildlife Crime Unit. The funding boost of over £800,000 will help the units provide invaluable support to local forces in their efforts to deal with crimes that beset rural communities.

Funding to the National Rural Crime Unit enables the unit to continue to increase collaboration across police forces, harnessing the latest technology and data to target the serious organised crime groups involved in crimes like equipment theft from farms.

The NWCU helps prevent and detect wildlife crime in this country. Where our wildlife is harmed illegally the full force of the law should apply to proven perpetrators of the crime, whether they have killed a bird of prey, killed or inflicted injuries through the horrific act of badger baiting, or committed any of the other unacceptable crimes against wildlife that are regrettably still

seen in this country. The NWCU will also strengthen its ability to disrupt criminal networks exploiting endangered species both in the UK and internationally with enhanced data analysis and financial investigation helping the unit track illegal wildlife profits and ensure offenders face justice. The NWCU provides comprehensive training to wildlife crime officers across England and Wales, on all wildlife crime priorities and we understand NWCU support was provided to all UK police forces in 2024-25.

The law should be there to provide protection to our wild animals, not only from an ethical standpoint but because the protection of wildlife is a crucial part of our approach to meeting our nature recovery ambitions.

The priorities set out by the NPCC on wildlife crime reflect the work underway in government to tackle illegal activities against animals.

Crimes such as hare coursing demonstrate the need for a strategy that considers the impacts both on wildlife and rural communities. Hare coursing is an abhorrent activity which can quickly shatter rural communities' sense of safety and security, carried out by organised criminal gangs that threaten victims and damage land.

The serious nature of rural crime and the involvement of organised criminal gangs has been a long-standing issue that affects not just the safety and security of our countryside, but also the livelihoods of the people who live and work there.

We wanted to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who have contributed to this strategy, and to the broader mission of delivering safer streets. Together, we can build confidence in policing, protect rural communities to ensure the country is a safer place for all.



# Strategy Development

The creation of the **National Rural and Wildlife Crime Policing Strategy (2025-2028)** has been a meticulous and collaborative process, designed to ensure that it is both robust and effective in addressing the ever-evolving challenges of Rural and Wildlife crime. We have taken a comprehensive approach to develop this strategy, emphasising evidence-based decision-making, stakeholder engagement and strategic alignment with national and international priorities.

As an NPCC strategy, this document is designed to provide strategic direction for the priorities and aims of UK policing, with due

respect to the operational independence of individual Chief Constable, and on thematic areas within the scope of this portfolio. We recognise that Rural crime has differing meanings to differing groups and individuals, and this strategy is not designed to set the strategic direction for policing in rural areas of the UK, but rather to provide direction on specific crime types commonly seen in rural areas.

## **Evidence-Based Assessments**

There are two strands to this strategy, encompassing the two portfolio areas of Rural crime and Wildlife crime.

During development, and to inform this strategy, we conducted both strategic and tactical assessments.

In relation to Rural Crime, partnership data has provided an evidence base for our strategic assessment, clearly showing the harm that certain crimes have upon rural communities. There is clear evidence of the rise in organised crime related acquisitive theft of key agricultural and farming equipment, livestock theft which has a financial as well as emotional impact, and dog attacks on livestock which have a profound impact upon both farmers and dog owners.



In relation to Wildlife Crime, our assessments critically evaluated the performance of the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU), police forces across the UK, and the UK Wildlife Crime Priority Delivery Groups (PDGs). Through this review, we identified successes, challenges, and areas for improvement in combating wildlife crime.

### **Stakeholder Consultations**

Recognising the importance of collaboration, we held a series of in-person and online consultation events. These sessions brought together key stakeholders, including law enforcement

agencies, environmental organisations, community representatives, and international partners. Their insights and expertise have been invaluable in shaping the strategy, ensuring it reflects the realities of frontline enforcement and the needs of those working to protect wildlife and rural areas.

### **MORiLE Scoring and Wildlife Crime**

The Management of Risk in Law Enforcement (MORiLE) scoring process has been used to evaluate previous and current wildlife crime issues. This evidence-based method allowed us to identify and prioritise the areas of

highest risk to UK wildlife, ensuring that our strategic focus is directed where it will have the greatest impact.

The MORiLE scoring process and our consultation findings have guided the identification of the following priority areas for action. These priorities represent the greatest risks to UK wildlife and from the illegal trade in wildlife. They include crimes and activities that pose significant harm to biodiversity, ecosystems, and community well-being. By focusing on these high-risk areas, we aim to direct resources and efforts effectively to reduce demand, risk, and crime.

# 2025 – 2028 Wildlife and Rural Crime Priorities

These nine strategic priorities represent the greatest areas of threat, risk and harm to rural communities and wildlife from a policing perspective.



## Rural Crime

The importance of rural policing cannot be understated. Our rural communities need to see and feel a police presence just as much as anywhere else in the country, and need to feel supported, with their specific needs listened to, and addressed.

This strategy recognises the high harm that rural crime causes, and our four strategic priorities relating specifically to rural crime represent the issues that cause the highest harm to our rural communities.



### Organised Acquisitive Rural Crime and Machinery Theft

Organised Crime Group (OCG) enabled acquisitive crime manifests itself in the theft of critical agricultural equipment, GPS systems, farm machinery, quad bikes and All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs).

These crimes cause high harm to rural farming communities, leading to severe delays and disruptions to working practices, increase feelings of isolation, and have wide ranging financial implications. The NRCU and NCATT have seen profound success so far in

<sup>1</sup>Convention on the International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna



combatting this area, with the recovery of stolen plant and machinery totalling millions of pounds. The formation of NCATT has vastly improved coordination between forces, has markedly increased recoveries, and has allowed for national training programmes to be rolled out to equip officers with the skills needed to tackle machinery thefts. Additionally, the NRCU has driven preventative measures on the Equipment Theft Prevention Act, which will prevent the theft and resale of agricultural equipment by ensuring immobilisers and forensic marking is fitted as standard.

The planned warrantless entry powers under the Crime and Policing Bill are welcomed, which will allow officers to quickly search for stolen equipment if it is indicating as being in a specific location, without requiring a warrant. As we look to tackle, disrupt and dismantle the OCG threat to rural communities, this prevention and detection work will continue, expertly led by the NRCU.



### Livestock Worrying

Livestock crimes have significant financial and emotional impacts upon our farming communities. Under this strategy, livestock offences are categorised into worrying by dogs and theft offences; recognising that offenders, police tactics, enforcement and appropriate partnerships will differ greatly between these areas.

Livestock worrying is a Rural Crime priority for this strategic cycle, building on the strong progress and foundations we have established. We have produced partnership training, and clear success has been seen in prevention and reduction, with NFU mutual reporting that claims across the UK for livestock attacks by dogs have reduced by 26% in 2024, and within Wales by an impressive 64%. However, livestock worrying offences continue to pose an issue for farmers. We will continue to support policing areas to respond robustly to

livestock-worrying through Operation Recall, which has seen forces strengthen their approach to these incidents through the use of anti-social behaviour laws, close partnership working, social media awareness, and the delivery of responsible dog ownership training, which is being successfully trialled in Wales.



We will continue our support for a new revised law through Parliament, which will increase our investigative capacity and enable adequate enforcement in relation to these offences. Our support for the DNA analysis project, which is used to aid investigations following a livestock attack, will continue with Liverpool University to bolster our investigative capability.



### Livestock Theft

Livestock theft continues to pose a problem across the UK and presents an enduring threat to national food safety and security. The rising incidence of livestock theft relates to increased demand driven by fluctuations in supply chains and the wider cost of living crisis. The appointment of a National Livestock Theft Co-ordinator in 2024 represents a significant development in the national livestock theft portfolio.

The capacity of local forces to respond to thefts has been significantly improved by the dissemination of training and the provision of investigative support. Under Operation Foldyard, a significant piece of work continues to improve data collection and recording procedures nationally and this has greatly enhanced our understanding of the extent of livestock thefts and the modus operandi of offenders.



### Additional Themes

The current strategy is underpinned by an acknowledgement of the complexities of specific rural offences which are cross-border in nature, involve a significant degree of planning and co-ordination, often involve international networks and which have a substantial impact on rural communities. Looking ahead, an understanding of these realities will continue to underpin our approach to tackling rural crime as we continue to develop a policing response capable of meeting these challenges.

Central to the achievement of these outcomes is the greater level of co-ordination between forces facilitated by the establishment of the National Rural Crime Unit.



Under the leadership of the National Rural Crime Coordinator, the primacy of Intelligence-Led Policing will be established to increase proactive operations against organised criminals. The creation of a national Rural Crime Teams Channel will also be used to dismantle barriers to information sharing between forces and allow policing to provide a borderless response to the highly mobile and organised threat that they face.

Whilst this is a policing strategy for tackling crime types predominantly specific to rural areas, we recognise that there are many other areas of concern within rural communities that policing can assist with in prevention, detection and enforcement.



Fly tipping, for example, is an issue which causes a blight on rural communities. Through the Crime and Policing Bill, clear guidance on enforcement will be provided to Local Authorities who are responsible for taking the lead on fly-tippers and persons breaching the household waste duty of care (giving waste to a fly-tipper).

Whilst policing is not the lead agency to deal with fly tipping, we are committed to assisting Local Authorities, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales with investigations, enforcement and prevention.

With Local Authorities given the power to search and seize vehicles linked to fly-tipping offences, the power to issue fixed penalty notices and associated powers of investigation and prosecution, we are confident that with the support of policing where appropriate, clear progress can be made in tackling this issue.

Many individual force Rural Crime teams also commonly deal with Heritage Crime. Whilst setting strategic direction is the remit of the NPCC Heritage Crime Lead, we are committed to supporting training programmes, improving coordination between agencies and the police, and increasing public awareness of Heritage Crime through community outreach and educational campaigns.

Within the world of Rural Policing there are many other topics and themes that have impacts upon rural communities, such as feelings of isolation, mental health and domestic abuse. Whilst these topics aren't referenced as priorities or fall within the scope of this strategy, these challenges within the rural community are recognised. We will ensure that policing enforcers working within Rural Crime Teams are well equipped to connect the community with relevant support services.<sup>2</sup>

During the lifecycle of this strategy undoubtedly further themes and topical areas will emerge. We are committed to working closely through our existing structures, our partners and other NPCC portfolio leads to address any such themes from a policing perspective and to progress work to ensure a safer rural community for all.



# Wildlife Crime

Tackling Wildlife Crime is a national priority for nature and public protection. Wildlife crime is a serious issue that affects not only our natural world but also public safety. In 2024 Wildlife Crime was recognised within the Interpol Top 10 Serious Crimes. This strategy sets out the framework for a coordinated and intelligence-led approach to reducing threats and risks associated with wildlife offences across the UK. This strategy recognises that wildlife crime is no longer simply about protecting animals, it is about confronting serious and organised criminality that exploits our environment and undermines communities.



species such as birds of prey, bats, and badgers continue to suffer at the hands of offenders who operate with perceived impunity in some areas. These crimes erode public confidence, particularly in rural areas, and threaten to derail national and international commitments to biodiversity conservation.

There is growing recognition of the overlap between those who commit wildlife crime and those involved in other forms of harm.

Offenders engaged in wildlife crime and animal cruelty have been linked to domestic violence, weapons offences, and antisocial behaviour.

## The Importance of Wildlife Crime Policing

The illegal persecution of wildlife has devastating consequences for nature, biodiversity, and the UK's broader environmental goals, including nature recovery and climate resilience. Iconic

Organised crime groups are increasingly involved in the illegal wildlife trade and the laundering of illicit profits through crime networks. This is not just about protecting animals, it's about disrupting serious, organised, and harmful criminality.



This strategy sets out priority areas where wildlife crime poses the greatest risk to species, habitats, and community safety.



### Illegal Hunting, Poaching and Hare Coursing

Threats in this area are crosscutting between both Rural and Wildlife Crime. Illegal hunting, poaching and hare coursing can have a profound effect upon rural communities, with associated anti-social behaviour (ASB) causing damage, disruption and dismay. We recognise

the strong backing of the government to tackle ASB in rural areas through the new legislative measures proposed in the forthcoming Crime and Policing Bill. We will support forces to implement strong rural policing through training, engagement and advice, and are able to consult with forces on dedicated Action Plans to ensure Neighbourhood Policing extends to rural communities.

Poaching and Hare Coursing are often linked to organised criminality. These activities cause significant harm to wildlife, damage rural communities, and are frequently associated with violence, intimidation, and other criminal behaviour.

Illegal hunting practices continue to take place despite the Hunting Act 2004 (England and Wales) and the Protection of Wild Mammals (Scotland) Act 2002. At the time of this strategies' publication, these laws do not apply to Northern Ireland.



Enforcement is critical to uphold the law, coupled with a fair, balanced and consistent policing style. We recognise that there is differing legislation across the UK in this area, and we will tailor our response accordingly in relevant jurisdictions.



### Bat Crime

Bats and their roosts are protected due to their ecological importance and vulnerability to habitat loss. Many offences in this area continue to occur in association with development work. A proactive approach is integral to preventing offences and protecting bats and their roosts. Enforcement agencies and partners must be prepared to respond to incidents and pursue individuals or businesses that have breached legislation.



### Bird of Prey Crime

Birds of Prey continue to be illegally killed by being poisoned, shot, and trapped, and their habitats destroyed. Advanced data analytics and problem profiling techniques are key to understanding where illegal action take place, and which species are targeted. Despite recent successes in prevention and enforcement, these crimes are still occurring and the risk to certain species is unsustainable. Additionally, iconic bird species are taken from the wild, fuelling the illegal wildlife trade in the UK and overseas. These crimes are a key barrier to the recovery of vulnerable bird species.



### Badger Crime

Badgers are a protected species, but are still the target of baiting, illegal killing, and cruelty. Badger habitats continue to be damaged and disturbed resulting from individual, agricultural or development activity.



### Illegal Wildlife Trade and CITES Offences

The Illegal Wildlife Trade is the 4th largest crime type in the world,<sup>2</sup> and the global trade in endangered species drives illegal imports and exports through UK borders. These crimes are frequently orchestrated by organised crime groups with transnational outreach, and involve fraud, document falsification and smuggling. These crimes impact on the most vulnerable species and people in the world.

### Conclusion

This strategy reflects a modern understanding of wildlife crime as a threat not just to animals, but to our ecosystems, economy, and public safety. Effective enforcement requires partnership working between policing, statutory agencies, conservation Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), border authorities, and local communities. By prioritising prevention, intelligence-sharing, and the disruption of organised offenders, this strategy aims to protect both our natural environment and the people who live within it.

Wildlife crime is serious crime.  
Protecting nature means tackling the criminals who exploit it.

<sup>2</sup>Estimates of the illegal trade in wildlife are generally around 7-23 billion USD annually – The Rise of Environmental Crime, a UNEP-INTERPOL Rapid Response Assessment.



# Strategic Aims

Supporting the nine priorities, the below strategic aims will form the foundation of our plan to combat wildlife and rural crime over the next four years.

## Enhanced Co-Ordination



### Intelligence Sharing:

Enhanced focus on identifying high risk areas, and ensuring information sharing between forces, external agencies and partners where appropriate. We will build upon the current PARC structure to establish partnerships in all regions and establish methods of information sharing between partners. To ensure regional collaboration we will expand the use of Teams Channels to all Force Rural Policing Teams or single points of contact in their stead to enhance coordination and data sharing.



### International Co-operation:

Build on our strong partnerships with international law enforcement agencies to enhance global cooperation, intelligence exchange and the dismantling of transnational Organised Crime Groups.



### Data Gathering and Sharing:

Establish best practice guidelines regarding collection, collation and analysis of rural crime data to allow forces to review and effectively respond to present and emerging threats and trends both locally and nationally. Work to ensure the full breadth and depth of wildlife and rural crime is recorded accurately.



### Partnerships:

Identify and invest in relationships with partners that share our values and that can help meet our strategic aims.



## Disrupt and Dismantle Criminal Networks

- **Intelligence-led Operations:**  
Utilise intelligence and advanced policing tactics to identify and target criminal networks who pose the greatest threat.
- **Disruption Tactics:**  
Utilise a range of disruption tactics, such as Respect Orders and ASB reduction powers contained within the Crime and Policing Bill, alongside existing powers such as CBOs and CPN/Ws.<sup>3</sup>
- **Targeted Enforcement:**  
Conduct targeted enforcement operations regionally, nationally and internationally
- **Financial Investigations:**  
Target financial infrastructures, identifying trade-based money laundering and overt criminal financing by seizing assets and disrupting operations.



## Reducing Risk and Vulnerability

- **Identify Harm:**  
Enhanced police crime statistics will allow targeted identification of areas of greatest vulnerability.
- **Reduce Vulnerability:**  
Safeguard the most vulnerable, by highlighting crossovers with mainstream criminality and serious, organised crime.

- **Reduce Isolation:**

Rural communities can often feel isolated and vulnerable. We will embed and strengthen policing within rural communities, backed by the government's commitment to delivering the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, those living and working in rural areas should feel as safe as those within towns and cities.



## Enhance Prevention and Detection Capabilities

- **Prevent Crime:**  
Focus on prevention as the cornerstone of our policing model. Using crime analysis data, we will focus resources on high crime areas and hot spots, to prevent, deter, educate and reduce opportunities for crime.
- **Neighbourhood Policing:**  
Neighbourhood policing extends to rural communities, and we will empower and support neighbourhood police officers and regional force rural crime teams to deliver policing in their communities.
- **Enhance Investigations:**  
Build the capacity and ability within both the National Teams and within regional force rural crime teams for investigation, evidence gathering and analysis.
- **Innovation:**  
Identify and implement the best use of innovative techniques in preventing, investigating and enforcing crime.
- **Regular Training:**  
Enhance investigations by providing specialist regular training to improve skills in preventing and investigating Wildlife and Rural crime.



## Secure Successful Prosecutions and hold Offenders Accountable

- **Expert Advice:**

Ensure that when required, police investigators can access expert advice via our National Teams. Work closely with the Crown Prosecution Service from an early stage to strengthen prosecution cases.

- **Modern Legislation:**

Engage with key partners, stakeholders and the government to achieve practical and appropriate legislation fit to address specific challenges in Rural and Wildlife Crime.

- **Support Prosecutors:**

Provide regular specialist training to the judiciary to improve prosecutions in this complex area.



## Raise Awareness

- **Public Awareness Campaigns:**

Raise public awareness about the impacts of wildlife and rural crime on ecosystems, human health and community well-being.

- **Community Engagement:**

Empower communities to play an active role in wildlife protection and rural crime reduction through education and crime prevention, making the best use of media and social media to achieve our aim.



## Governance and Professionalism

- **Add Value:**

Maintain our governance regime, providing value to the public, stakeholders and funders.

- **Drive performance:**

Develop specific performance metrics relating to Rural and Wildlife crime, allowing for oversight and scrutiny of performance.

- **Unbiased Professionalism:**

We recognise that there are competing and differing views in our area of work from all aspects of society. We will demonstrate an impartial service by ensuring policing activities are data-led. We will remain professional in areas of polarity.

By integrating these strategic aims the UK can effectively combat Wildlife and Rural crime and ensure a sustainable future for both wildlife and people.

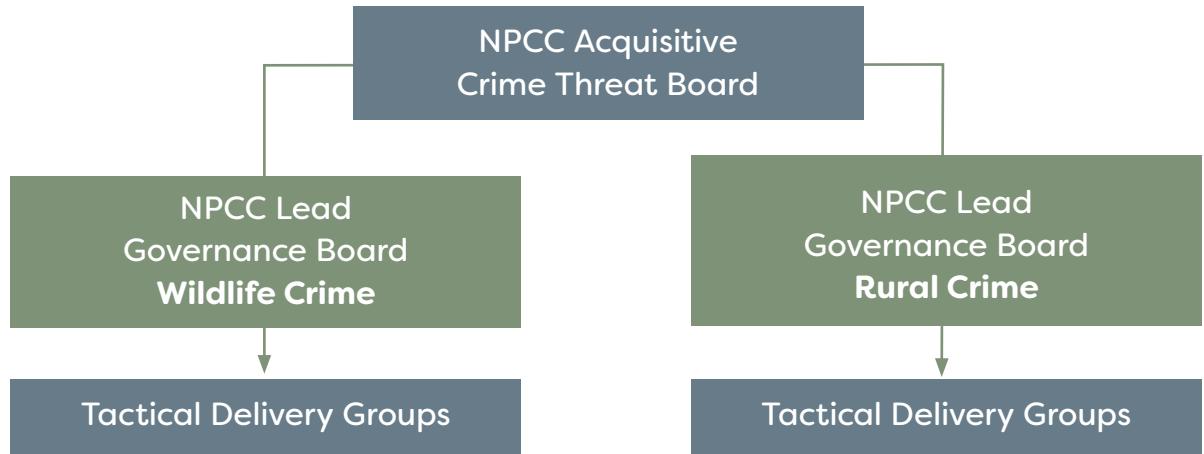


# Method of Delivery

Falling within the governance structure of the NPCC Serious Organised Acquisitive Crime Portfolio, this Rural and Wildlife Crime strategy complements other policing strategies and national policing aims. Implementing our method of delivery plan will ensure that current national policing priorities are working in harmony to achieve the best for UK Policing.

Our previous strategic cycles have seen the origination and successful work of several Priority Delivery Groups (PDGs) driving forward work in key areas relating to Rural and Wildlife crime. For this cycle, these groups will be renamed as Tactical Delivery Groups (TDGs) and their work will fall under one of the nine umbrella priorities. This recognises that some groups will be progressing tactical strands of work relevant to the rural or wildlife portfolio, but not specifically referenced as a priority for UK policing in this cycle.





# 4

## PREPARE PROTECT PURSUE PREVENT

The work of the TDGs will centre on the delivery of the '4P' approach which was embedded during the previous strategic cycle.

This approach consists of the following strands:

- 1. Prepare.** Prepare for when wildlife and rural crime will occur, ensuring the right people, with the right training, equipment and skills are ready to respond. Analyse data to interpret and map existing and emerging threats, to ensure our policing approach is ready.
- 2. Prevent.** Prevent and deter people and OCGs from engaging in Rural and Wildlife crime through effective partnerships, problem-oriented, evidence-based policing, media and communication strategies.
- 3. Pursue.** Relentlessly pursue offenders with a particular focus on serious, organised criminality, using the full range of partnership work to prosecute, disrupt and deter offending through enforcement.

- 4. Protect.** Protect rural communities and wildlife from the impact and harm of crime through coordinated national effort.

Each TDG will receive a mandate from either the National Wildlife Crime Unit or the National Rural Crime Unit that will be taken from this strategy and translated into deliverable objectives. Members will then be able to evidence their commitment to deliver on their 4P plan.

With the new strategic cycle, each TDG will comprise the current chair, and they will either transfer the membership (if suitable) or re-constitute as required.

Membership within these groups should be drawn from police and partners from respective regions, or with experience or expertise in the area. This will include, as a non-exhaustive list, governmental and non-governmental organisations, charities and civil society organisations. Members of the group will further the strategic policing aim of the TDG and will be reserved for those organisations and charities with complimentary values, aims and objectives.

Members of the TDG support their respective Chair. The Chair will report to either the head of the NWCU or the NRCU as appropriate, who will support the chair and help with governance and accountability via the tactical and strategic assessment cycles. The heads of the NWCU and NRCU are directly accountable to the NPCC Police Chief Officer lead for this portfolio, who in turn reports into the NPCC Acquisitive Crime Threat Board.



# Closing

This strategy represents a unified commitment to protecting the UK's wildlife and rural communities. By aligning our efforts with these priorities, we will enhance enforcement capabilities, build stronger partnerships, and work collaboratively.

Our approach is proactive, evidence-based, and designed to deliver meaningful and measurable outcomes that protect biodiversity and reduce the harm caused by wildlife and rural crime.

It is with great thanks to the NWCU and NRCU team members, UK Policing and our partners for the strategic thinking and collaborative efforts that underpin this strategy, ensuring that it is not only aspirational but also practical and achievable. Through this rigorous approach, we are setting the stage for sustained progress in the fight against wildlife and rural crime through to 2028/9.

# Support Services:

In many ways the industry is very self-reliant and that there are many groups offering genuine help demonstrates this. This ranges from assistance in filling in government forms to help with buying much needed bits of equipment, providing forage to feed stock, housing when all else fails as well as opportunities to train and encourage the next generation into the industry.

In addition to these it is worth being aware of a podcast series by Adam Henson called “Keeping on Track”. 15 in the series, it is deemed excellent by experts in the field and worthy of recommendation.

## Mens Health Forum

Fit For Farming - men's health made easy. Revised and completely redesigned, the latest edition of Fit For Farming. Order an individual copy or bulk copies of Fit For Farming from the Men's Health Forum shop.

- [www.menshealthforum.org.uk/fit-farming](http://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/fit-farming)
- (+44) 0330 097 0654

## The Gamekeepers Welfare Trust

GWT provides financial grants for gamekeepers, stalkers and ghillies and their families in times of hardship, ill health and retirement. Small grants are available for young people making gamekeeping their career. The helpline is a key part of the service providing a confidential listening service with information and support on a wide variety of issues including health, retirement, redundancy, housing and employment issues.

- [www.thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com](http://www.thegamekeeperswelfaretrust.com)
- Call: 0300 1233088

## The Farming Help Partnership

The Farming Help partnership is a collaboration between Addington Fund, The Farming Community Network and Forage Aid. Struggling and not sure where to turn? Times can get hard for everyone, but help is at hand.

Through just one phone call, farmers in need can access free, impartial and confidential support from all three charities.

- [www.farminghelp.co.uk](http://www.farminghelp.co.uk)
- Call: 03000 111 999

## Addington Fund

We exist to support you when you need help the most. By providing housing, and disaster relief in the form of animal feed or services to farmers in need across England and Wales, we stand by your side and help you get back on your feet.

- [www.addingtonfund.org.uk](http://www.addingtonfund.org.uk)
- 01926 620135 and online form

## RABI - The farmers charity

RABI continues to work tirelessly to uplift and support farming people through practical, financial and emotional assistance, touching the lives of thousands of people every year.

At the core of RABI's mission is the commitment to address the individual needs of farming people. We offer one-to-one, expert support, advice and guidance, tailored to every unique circumstance. Whether it's giving expert advice on benefits potentially available to farming people or accessing mental health support, RABI offers a beacon of hope.

Our 24/7 freephone helpline 0800 188 4444 ensures we are available at any time of the day or year to give farming people the right type of support.

## Farming Community Network

FCN is a voluntary organisation and charity founded on Christian principles. We walk with farmers and members of the farming community in times of difficulty. We are here to support and work with everyone who seeks the help of FCN.

- Helpline: 03000 111 999

## Yellow Wellies

As a mutual insurer that has cared about the countryside, farmers and their families for over a century, NFU Mutual took the decision in 2014 to establish the Farm Safety Foundation, an independent charity to help young farmers challenge their behaviours and change their attitude to farm safety. The ultimate aim of the Foundation is to have zero avoidable deaths on our farms. To achieve this, the Foundation works closely with partners in the industry to engage, educate and communicate strong and relatable farm safety messages. Page for mental health.

- [www.yellowwellies.org](http://www.yellowwellies.org)

## **Royal Countryside Fund**

The Royal Countryside Fund is inspired by our vision, of thriving family farms and rural communities, encouraged and recognised for their role in creating a sustainable future for the countryside and our whole nation. We are proud to be the only UK-wide charity empowering family farms and rural communities to ensure their future.

The Royal Countryside Fund offers family farms access to immediate, local and practical support and a path to a sustainable future. Contact, various number available online. Initial contact via email: [info@countrysidefund.org.uk](mailto:info@countrysidefund.org.uk)

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

## **Redcross**

The Red Cross is of course extremely well known and operates internationally, but also provides support at home, not specifically within rural areas, but across the UK.

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

There are also a number of regional charity groups as below:

### **Yorkshire Agricultural Society - Farming Charity**

- [www.yas.co.uk/](http://www.yas.co.uk/)

### **Rural Services Network**

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

### **The DPJ Foundation**

A Welsh charity that focuses on mental health in agriculture.

- [www.thedpjfoundation.co.uk](http://www.thedpjfoundation.co.uk)

In addition, it is worth being mindful of charities that work specifically in the equine industry to support their members.

### **British Horse Society**

- [www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding-and-learn/changing-lives-through-horses/](http://www.bhs.org.uk/go-riding-and-learn/changing-lives-through-horses/)

### **Racing Welfare - Supporting Racing's Workforce**

- [www.racingwelfare.co.uk/](http://www.racingwelfare.co.uk/)



