



# POACHING PRIORITY DELIVERY GROUP NEWSLETTER



## **What is the Poaching Priority Delivery Group?**

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the PPDG newsletter.

The last edition can be found here:

<http://www.nwcu.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/PPDG-Newsletter-Apr-2017.pdf>

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) and comprises representatives from the National Wildlife Crime Unit, Crown Prosecution Service, The Angling Trust, British Deer Society (BDS), Countryside Alliance (CA), Country Land and Business Association (CLA), Deer Initiative (DI), Environment Agency (EA), Food Standards Agency (FSA), NGO, Natural Resources Wales (NRW) and National Farmers Union (NFU). Our work is driven by our 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 (England & Wales).*

## **Project Poacher Update**

The Project Poacher app has been updated to include more specific information for Police Officers and PCSO's when dealing with reported poaching incidents. Also in the update were new partner organisations logos. So don't forget to update your apps and, for any feedback or advice, email Alex Farrell on [alex.farrell@basc.org.uk](mailto:alex.farrell@basc.org.uk)

Project Poacher 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 a series of posters which police forces can use for their own anti-poaching publicity campaigns. You can download the posters here:

[www.nwcu.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Poaching-Poster.pdf](http://www.nwcu.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Poaching-Poster.pdf)

## **Fisheries Enforcement Support Service submits nearly 130 reports in five months**

Nearly 130 reports of suspected fisheries crime, illegal fishing or other incidents have been submitted to the Environment Agency by the Angling Trust's Fisheries Enforcement Support Service (FESS) in five months.

The FESS is funded by the Environment Agency from fishing licence income and includes the Voluntary Bailiff Service (VBS), which was formed to support the Agency and police in the hard job of enforcing fishing licence compliance and protecting fish and fisheries. With nearly 500 trained Volunteer Bailiffs across England reporting incidents and information to a high-evidential standard, it was necessary to establish a legitimate and formal system to record and share incoming information with partners.

Former West Mercia Police Detective Inspector, Gary Thomas, was appointed as the FESS's first Intelligence Manager earlier this year and has since set up those systems and arranged an Information Sharing Agreement with the UK National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) which went 'live' on 1 June.



### **NFU launch Combatting Rural Crime Report**

On 17 July the *Combatting Rural Crime* report produced by the NFU was launched at the House of Commons with the event seeing a good turnout from members, MPs and other stakeholders.

There are currently four inserts that have been produced covering hare coursing, fly tipping, livestock worrying and fly-grazing. Further inserts highlighting other crimes such as poaching will be developed in the coming months.

The inserts are available as pdfs and can be printed as required, thus giving flexibility to update content and to print as required. For more information, see:  
[www.nfuonline.com/news/featured-article/nfu-launches-combatting-rural-crime-report/](http://www.nfuonline.com/news/featured-article/nfu-launches-combatting-rural-crime-report/)

### **Wiltshire Police launch Operation Artemis**

A significant rise in poaching related incidents resulting in assaults and criminal damage has prompted the launch of Operation Artemis.

All officers in Wiltshire have now been issued with BASC's *Poaching of Game, Deer and Fish* booklets and have Project Poacher app on their mobiles. Social media posts are being made as well to raise awareness of the impacts of poaching and the links to Organised Crime Groups.

A closed Facebook page with over 250 farmers/keepers participating is seeing the sharing of photographs and information on rural crime activity with the majority being in relation to poaching incidents.

More information about Operation Artemis can be found here:  
[http://upavonpc.co.uk/images/police/Wiltshire\\_Police\\_Op\\_ARTEMIS\\_Flyer\\_FINAL.pdf](http://upavonpc.co.uk/images/police/Wiltshire_Police_Op_ARTEMIS_Flyer_FINAL.pdf)

## Goodbye, Hello and Congratulations

After being in post as Head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit, for the past 3 years and with 31 years Police service Chief inspector Martin Sims is retiring in December. Chief Inspector Louise Hubble from Hampshire Police will be taking over.



Chief Inspector Hubble, who has 20 years policing service with Hampshire Constabulary, has been instrumental in developing and delivering the rural policing strategy, which has led to a huge increase in public confidence in the force's ability to successfully tackle rural criminality.

She has always had an interest in wildlife, and became a Wildlife Crime Officer as a Police Constable in 1999. As a Sergeant in 2006, following a series of hare coursing incidents in the Test Valley area, she became aware of concerns being raised by the rural community about the police's ability to deal with crimes of this type. Inspector Hubble successfully lobbied for a dedicated rural crime team to be set up.

Chief Inspector Hubble has been recognised for policing services provided to the rural communities of Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and was awarded an OBE in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours.

## Dorset Police continues to run and take part in cross-border and local anti-poaching operations throughout the Autumn and Winter

Dorset Police Rural Crime Team focus on serious and impactful crimes upon farming and agriculture, wildlife, the environment and heritage crime. Their core work is building intelligence, providing bespoke advice to police staff and victims and targeting those offenders causing the most harm via a tactical 'PCG' process.

This year has seen an unusual spike in the thefts of tractors, quad bikes and trailers. Such items are not only of high value but their loss impacts on the time-critical business of farming and caring for livestock. In 2015 such organised crime has cost the South West region £6.1 million. The team regularly speak and meet with their cross-border counterparts to help tackle this.

Representatives from partner organisations and the rural community have joined Dorset Police's Rural Crime Team to launch a new partnership designed to combat rural crime. The new partnership was launched in September.

Recent investigation successes include:

- Poaching and Breach of CBO- In September 2017 Scott Cochrane of Poole changed his plea to guilty regards hunting a wild mammal with a dog on 9/9/16 at Gussage St Michael and breach of CBO. Total fines £315.
- Section 59 & CR for criminal damage – poaching related. Edward Stevenson from Cambridgeshire has admitted driving and causing damage at Wimborne on 20 September.
- CR Community Resolution for criminal damage – An estate near Dorchester had suffered repeated criminal damage to pheasant pens and signs but the use of trail cameras caught the offender who admitted causing the damage and offered full payment as part of the CR.

- CR for livestock ‘worrying’ – male in charge of a dog that chased sheep received a CR whereby he paid £475 towards the vet fees and loss of sheep and dog is now subject to a Dog Behavioural Contract.
- Proactive stop on suspected poaching vehicle seen in town in Shaftesbury – The driver, who is well known to police, informed the officer he enjoyed hare coursing with his dogs. He was advised it was illegal. Vehicle, which was covered in mud, had a smashed windscreen, bald tyres and poor brakes so was seized and male reported for summons!

### **Criminal behaviour order for hare courser from Surrey**

A man who travelled from Surrey to Cambridgeshire in pursuit of hare coursing has been issued with a Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO).

Arron Smith, 23, of Redhill, Surrey, was given the order following incidents of hare coursing across the county in October last year.

He appeared at Cambridge Magistrate’s Court on 27 September after he was summoned for poaching, failing to stop and driving without insurance.

The court heard how officers from the Rural Crime Action Team (RCAT) were on patrol on 19 October last year when they were alerted to a green Subaru being used for hare coursing in Peterborough.

The vehicle was located in Thorney but failed to stop for officers. As it travelled towards Crowland the occupants threw a dead hare from the window into the road.

Officers stopped the pursuit because of the dangerous way the Subaru was being driven but it was later spotted in Littleport, Coveney and finally Swaffham Bulbeck.

Smith and other men, who have not been identified, could be seen with three Lurcher dogs hare coursing in a field but once again made off when they spotted the officers. In their haste they left the dogs behind and they were seized by the RCAT.

On December 2 2016, Smith was reported for failing to stop and driving without insurance after further reports of hare coursing in Thorney.

Smith was identified as the driver of the vehicle during an identity parade. Sergeant Richard Jackson said: “We are committed to driving hare coursing out of Cambridgeshire and I hope this result goes some way to show that every reported incident is taken seriously and we will do all we can to bring these people before the courts.” The indefinite CBO stipulates that Smith is prohibited from trespassing on any land in Cambridgeshire whilst in possession of a Lurcher or Lurcher type dog while in company of another person with a Lurcher.

Smith was ordered to forfeit his Subaru and three dogs. He was ordered to pay £250 compensation to three farmers, £5,535 in kennel costs, a £200 fine for poaching, £400 fine for no insurance as well as £145 in costs and surcharges.

Finally Smith was also disqualified from driving for 12 months.

## **Vehicle crushed after owner causes crop damage in Topcliffe, North Yorkshire from reckless driving**

On the 12 November 2016 a land rover discovery was driven onto a field where it got stuck and buried into the mud to axle depth. The field was due to be replanted in the near future, but as the vehicle had driven over it, it could no longer be planted due to the risk of contaminants.



On 25 August 2017 at Northallerton Magistrates Court it was ordered the vehicle was to be seized and crushed after the driver was found guilty of criminal damage. The owner was also ordered to pay £1,000 compensation and was disqualified from driving for six months.

### **Three successful cases in three weeks at Northallerton Magistrates court**

There has been three successful cases and prosecutions at Northallerton Magistrates court under the Hunting Act.

The first was at court on the 11 August 2017 with the two defendants both being found guilty of hunting a wild mammal with dogs. Between the pair they were fined £685 and given 80 hours of unpaid work.

On the 18 August, for the same offence under the same Act, another defendant was fined over £400 and given six points on his licence for driving offences as part of the same incident. The vehicle used in the incident was also seized and the court granted a forfeiture order.

Finally on the 1 September a defendant was fined over £600 for offences under the Hunting Act and for breaching an animal disqualification order under Section 34 of The Animal Welfare Act. A second defendant was also fined over £300 for offences under the Hunting Act.

All three incidents took place in the Hambleton Area of North Yorkshire and were investigated by The Rural Task Force.

**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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