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The RSPB's investigations newsletter

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# Legal Eagle

## Gamekeeper jailed

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Mutch was convicted of illegally taking this goshawk in a cage trap

## Gamekeeper jailed

An Aberdeenshire gamekeeper has become the first individual to be imprisoned for raptor persecution.

On 12 January 2015, at Aberdeen Sheriff Court, following an earlier trial, George Mutch, 48, a gamekeeper on the Kildrummy Estate, Aberdeenshire, was sentenced on four charges contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These related to the illegal use of two cage traps and the taking and killing of two goshawks and the taking of a buzzard. He received a four-month prison sentence to run concurrently on each charge.

The offences came to light during the review of footage captured by RSPB video cameras deployed on the Kildrummy Estate in August 2012. The cameras were being used by the RSPB Scotland Investigations team as part of a long-term project monitoring the use of cage traps in Scotland, as part of evidence-gathering in response to a Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) consultation on the general licences that permit the use of such traps. RSPB Scotland has, for many years, voiced concerns to the Scottish Government and SNH about the potential impacts of cage trapping, both legal and illegal, on wild bird populations.

During the trial at Aberdeen Sheriff Court, from 8 to 10 December 2014, the court heard that Mutch was filmed placing a jay as a decoy bird in a Larsen-type trap, though the general licences do not permit use of this species. Further footage showed him killing a goshawk that

was subsequently caught in this trap, and failing to immediately release a buzzard that was also caught in this trap. A video camera on a second cage trap showed the taking of a goshawk, that Mutch again failed to release immediately. Mutch had been a gamekeeper on the estate for 12 years, and was a member of the Scottish Gamekeepers Association at the time of the offences.

Despite a challenge by the defence agent that the video evidence should be deemed inadmissible, Sheriff Noel McPartlin ruled that the footage illustrating the offences had been obtained as a by-product of a legitimate research project, and could be used as evidence in the trial.

Subsequently, while maintaining his not guilty plea, Mutch accepted that the film showed him using the jay as a decoy, killing the first goshawk, and bagging and removing the second trapped goshawk and the

buzzard. He claimed he had used the jay decoy in a bid to catch jays that were eating food placed out for pheasants. He added that he had euthanased the goshawk because it had an injury to its beak, and that he had taken the second goshawk and the buzzard and released them some distance away from his pheasant pens.

Sheriff McPartlin, in announcing his verdict, said that Mutch was not a credible witness, and described his attempt to justify the killing of the goshawk as “a convenient lie” and added that that he was “far from

convinced about the fate of the buzzard and the second goshawk”.

Sentence was deferred for a social enquiry report. At the subsequent hearing Sheriff McPartlin said: “Raptor persecution is a huge problem and offending is difficult to detect.” He added that: “a deterrent approach was appropriate.”

Ian Thomson, Head of Investigations at RSPB Scotland, said: “This sentence sends a very loud and clear message that those who continue to flout our laws and kill protected species face the prospects of a prison term.

“We are heartened by the acceptance of the video evidence, and we are grateful for the work carried out by WCO PC Steve Lafferty, the Scottish SPCA and Procurator Fiscal Tom Dysart in bringing this case to a successful conclusion.

“The video clearly illustrates the effectiveness of these traps in catching protected birds of prey, and adds to an increasing dossier of evidence we have obtained illustrating the widespread failure of trap operators to adhere to the general licence conditions, which are designed to protect our birds.”

## First vicarious liability case

Although vicarious liability legislation was introduced in Scotland on 1 January 2012, this law has not been tested in the courts – until now.

On 23 December 2014, Galloway landowner Ninian Johnston Stewart was the first person convicted under vicarious liability legislation. This law came into force in Scotland on 1 January 2012, under the provisions of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011.

When introducing the new legislation, the then Scottish Environment Minister Stewart Stevenson said: “The introduction of vicarious liability highlights the importance of landowners and managers who run shooting businesses taking a proactive role in ensuring that their employees and contractors are aware of the law and their responsibilities for wild birds on the ground they manage.”

Johnston Stewart pleaded guilty at Stranraer Sheriff Court to being vicariously liable for four offences committed by Peter Finley Bell, a gamekeeper employed by him on the Glasserton and Physgill Estate, including the poisoning of a buzzard and possession of prescribed pesticides, contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Johnston Stewart was fined £675.

The court heard that the finding of a poisoned buzzard and bait on the estate in December 2012, and the discovery of a stockpile of illegal pesticides, led to the conviction of estate gamekeeper Bell in June 2013 (see *Legal Eagle* 71).

Johnston Stewart owned the land where the poisoned bait and buzzard were discovered, and where the illegal pesticides were found. He had known Bell for many years. When interviewed, Bell told the police that he had received no training on pest control issues. While there was no suggestion by the prosecution that Johnston Stewart instructed the commission of the crimes carried out by Bell, or that he was aware the offences were taking place, the court heard that he had not acted with due diligence regarding the running of the pheasant shoot on his estate.

The RSPB welcomes this landmark conviction and commends the work of Procurator Fiscal Kate Fleming. RSPB Scotland’s Head of Investigations, Ian Thomson said: “It can only be hoped that verdict this sends a very clear message

that those who continue to allow, by their inaction, the illegal killing of protected birds of prey in Scotland”.

In 2012, Stewart Johnson’s business received nearly £120,000 in Single Farm Payments. Under “cross-compliance” there is a requirement to comply with a number of conditions in order to receive payments. The poisoned bait and buzzard were found on land used for agriculture by the business and consequently he lost nearly £66,000 of the 2012 payment.



**Gamekeeper Bell was convicted in June 2013 after poisoning a buzzard, which led to the discovery of enough illegal chemicals to kill about 10,000 birds of prey. The poisoning was described in court as “shockingly irresponsible”**



Video footage showed a masked Mutch using a stick to put a goshawk into a bag



Norfolk Constabulary and Natural England with the nine poisoned buzzards at Lambert's home

# Shooting estates "wake-up"

Senior Investigations Officer Guy Shorrock reports on England's worst raptor poisoning case.

When sentencing a Norfolk gamekeeper to a suspended jail sentence, a District Judge had some strong words of warning for the shooting community.

On 6 November 2014, at Norwich Magistrates' Court, Allen Charles Lambert, 65, formerly a gamekeeper on the Stody Estate in Norfolk, was sentenced on seven charges. Previously, on 1 October, he was found guilty of two charges relating to the killing of 10 buzzards and a sparrowhawk and possession of pesticides and other items to prepare poisoned baits contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. He had earlier pleaded guilty to five charges relating to the

possession of nine dead buzzards, possession and use of banned pesticides (mevinphos and aldicarb) and the breaching of a firearms certificate. He received a 10-week custodial sentence, suspended for a year, and was ordered to pay £930 costs and a victim surcharge of £80.

The case started late on 3 April 2013, when I received a report of possible dead raptors in a wood on the Stody Estate. Early the following morning, I went to Norfolk and visited the site. I found the remains of buzzards, a sparrowhawk and a tawny owl, which appeared to have been dumped. There were signs of pheasant rearing in the area, and I felt things were looking

very suspicious. I documented the scene and collected the carcasses. My next stop was the East Winch RSPCA centre and I was grateful they could help me at such short notice. Their X-rays showed no signs of shot damage. However, one of the fresher buzzards had food in its crop, which suggested poisoning. Analysis later confirmed at least one buzzard and one sparrowhawk had been poisoned by the banned pesticide mevinphos.

I contacted Dr Ed Blane at Natural England (NE). He quickly contacted Norfolk Constabulary to arrange a follow-up search on the Stody Estate. In these cases there is often considerable benefit in such prompt



The "poisoner's kit" found at Lambert's home

action. After a mad dash to drop off the corpses at the post-mortem laboratory, I made my way to Holt Police Station where Ed had a small posse of police officers already assembled and briefed.

A few minutes after we reached Lambert's home, he arrived in his Land Rover and the search process started. In his vehicle was a small container, later confirmed to hold the banned pesticide aldicarb, and a container of Phosdrin (mevinphos).

We found two further containers of Phosdrin in his unlocked garage. Particularly significant was the presence of a syringe and needles with one container. This "poisoner's kit" is typically used to inject a pesticide into a suitable bait such as eggs or carrion. However, the most shocking find was the contents of a feed bag on his quad bike, parked in a shed.

In total, the corpses of nine buzzards were carefully laid

out in a row. Analysis confirmed that all the birds had been poisoned by mevinphos.

During interview, Lambert accepted possession of the pesticides and the occasional illegal use for "a tricky fox," but denied poisoning any raptors, claiming he had found them on the estate. During his trial it was claimed this was a set-up and that there were insufficient buzzards in the Stody area for so many to be poisoned. Expert evidence from the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) and observations from a local experienced ornithologist were used to counter this.

In sentencing, the District Judge Peter Veits stated: "Those who employ gamekeepers have a strict duty to know what is being done in their name and on their property. They also have a duty to ensure that their gamekeepers are properly trained and capable of keeping abreast of the complex laws relating to the use of poisons. In other

industries, employers as well as the employee could be facing prosecution in such cases and I hope therefore that this case can serve as a wake-up call to all who run estates as to their duties." He added: "It is clear that the buzzard population in Norfolk is increasing and this is something to be applauded and not seen as an inconvenience by those who choose to run shoots."

The case received excellent media coverage. This investigation was a really good team effort with Norfolk Constabulary, well supported by the government agencies involved with the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme and the NWCU. In particular, the RSPB would like to thank DC Richard Moden, Ed Blane (NE), Kevin Eastwick (CPS), Dr Graham Austin (BTO) and Richard Porter.

Visit [youtube.com/watch?v=bL8-1cyH3QY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bL8-1cyH3QY) to watch a video relating to the case.



This mounted leopard was illegally displayed for a commercial purpose

# Wildlife dealer convicted

WCO PC Andy Long reports on a recent CITES conviction.

On 22 September 2014, James Cranfield, 26, of Napier Avenue, Southend, was sentenced at Basildon Crown Court after earlier pleading guilty to six charges contrary to COTES (Control of Trade in Endangered Species Regulations).

These related to the sale and offering for sale of four owl taxidermy specimens, buying a sawfish rostrum and using a mounted leopard for commercial purposes. Cranfield was seen in an advertisement for a radio programme, in which he was pictured next to a mount of a leopard.

Cranfield was also sentenced to 28 days' imprisonment in default, unless the fines were paid in 14 days. He was ordered

to pay a £1,000 fine, with £750 costs and a victim surcharge of £100. The four owls, leopard and swordfish rostrum were forfeited.

The case was brought to the attention of Essex Police by Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) officers. They identified Cranfield's involvement with CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) specimens via Instagram, an online photo sharing and social network platform.

On his Instagram account, Cranfield described himself as a purveyor and collector of taxidermy and displayed photographs of his own taxidermy collection alongside items for sale.

On 29 May 2013, a search warrant was executed by the police at an

address in Westcliff-on-Sea, where Cranfield kept his collection of stuffed animals and curios. Enquiries revealed a number of specimens listed under Annex A of the EU CITES regulations. They were being traded without the necessary Article 10 Certificates.

This case serves as a reminder that if you deal in CITES-listed species then you need to be aware of the law surrounding your business. Failure to do so can result in legal action and the loss of the specimens concerned.

I would like to thank APHA, Dr Andrew Kitchener (National Museums, Scotland), Alison Littlewood (JNCC) and Sylvia Cundell (CPS) for providing support and advice, plus expert and impact statements.

# Fox hunters fined

Three Northumberland Hunt members have been fined for fox hunting. Andy Swinburne of the League Against Cruel Sports (the League) reports.

On 14 October 2014, at Berwick Magistrates' Court, Northumberland, three members of the College Valley and North Northumberland Hunt (CVNNH) were found guilty of illegally hunting a wild mammal with dogs on 27 February 2014, contrary to Section 1 of the Hunting Act 2004.

The Joint Master and Huntsman, Ian McKie, was fined £1,150, with a victim surcharge of £115. Another Joint Master, Timothy Smalley, was fined £2,075, with a victim surcharge of £120. The Kennel Huntsman, Andrew Proe, was fined £480, with a victim surcharge of £48. Each member was ordered to pay costs of £385.

On 27 February 2014, an intelligence-led surveillance operation was carried out by the League's Field Investigation Officers, Andy Swinburne and John Shaw, at an advertised

meet of the College Valley and North Northumberland Hunt at West Kyloe, near Lowick in Northumberland.

During the hunt, a fox emerged from a gorse bush on Kyloe Hill at West Kyloe, close to Timothy Smalley, who was with a number of hounds which were searching the same gorse area. Smalley immediately indicated that a fox had been sighted and he was quickly joined by Andrew Proe, Whipper-in on the day.

The hounds, with encouragement from hunt members, picked up the scent of the fox and took off at speed across open farmland in pursuit of the fox. The hounds were followed by both Proe and Smalley, and were also joined by Huntsman McKie who took over the pursuit.

The evidence obtained by the League was passed to Northumbria

Police. After further investigation, the police referred the case to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), which authorised charges. The case was widely reported in national and local media.

The League is particularly grateful to the work of Northumbria WCOs Mark Lynn, Mick Leybourne and Colin Heath, along with the CPS wildlife crime specialist prosecutor Jonathan Moore, who subsequently authorised proceedings against the defendants and appeared as the prosecuting advocate at the trial.

The latest available Ministry of Justice statistics show there were 343 convictions recorded under the Hunting Act 2004 in England and Wales between 2005 and 2013.



The League filmed the hunt, and footage showed horrific attacks on a fox

# Shot buzzard in freezer

A Devon man has been fined for wildlife and firearms offences.



An X-ray shows air rifle pellets lodged in the buzzard's skull

On 11 September 2014, Saleem Ali, 24, of Coronation Road, Newton Abbot, appeared at Torquay Magistrates' Court and pleaded guilty to the unlawful possession of a dead wild buzzard, contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

A warrant was executed at Ali's home address. During the search, a dead buzzard was found in the freezer.

He claimed the bird had been given to him by a friend for taxidermy, but alleged that his friend had died, so could no longer verify this statement.

The buzzard was taken away and X-rayed. The X-ray image revealed that the buzzard had been shot, as two pellets were still lodged in its skull.

Saleem Ali also pleaded guilty to the possession of a firearm without a certificate, contrary to the Firearms Act 1968.

He was fined £100 for each offence, ordered to pay a victim surcharge and £85 costs, and was ordered to forfeit the firearm. Both the firearm and the buzzard were destroyed.

## Barn conviction

A Lincolnshire man who knocked down a barn, despite warnings that bats and a family of swallows were living there, has been convicted.

On 8 January 2015, Anthony Flinn, 56, of High Street, Wroot, was convicted at Lincoln Magistrates' Court of two offences. He destroyed a swallows' nest while it was still in use, and damaged or destroyed the resting place of *Myotis* bats, contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. He was fined £600 and was ordered to pay an additional £600 costs as well as a £50 victims' surcharge.

Flinn had claimed the outbuilding at his home was in a dangerous condition, but ignored a wildlife expert's advice about delaying the work and became impatient about demolishing the barn.



Ben Andrew (RSPB)

An active swallows' nest and a bat roost were destroyed when the barn was demolished



Metropolitan Police

Carved ivory can only be traded if it pre-dates March 1947

# UK auction house prosecuted for illegal ivory sale

The first prosecution of an auctioneer in the UK for illegally selling ivory has taken place.

On 18 August 2014, Chiswick Auctions of Colville Road, W3, appeared at Ealing Magistrates' Court charged with selling elephant ivory, contrary to COTES Regulations.

On 13 October 2014, a representative of Chiswick Auctions pleaded guilty and the company was ordered to pay a £3,000 fine, a £120 victim surcharge and £85 costs.

Information was passed to the Metropolitan Police Service's Wildlife Crime Unit that a carved elephant tusk for sale on a stall in Portobello Road appearing not to pre-date March 1947. Under EU CITES rules, this would make it illegal to be sold.

DC Sarah Bailey seized the tusk from the stall and carbon-dating

revealed that the elephant the ivory tusk had been taken from, had in fact been alive in the mid-1960s.

The Portobello market stall holder had bought the tusk from Chiswick Auctions for £290, believing that it was Edwardian – and had paperwork from the auction house stating this to be the case.

Investigating officer DC Sarah Bailey of the Wildlife Crime Unit said: "Carbon dating is a fairly new technique for the Wildlife Crime Unit and this was only the second time we have used the process. In this case, it was essential in proving that the ivory was not the age the auction house claimed it was.

"We used this technique recently when we seized a full tiger pelt, a case which is still ongoing. The fine

issued to the auction house in this case was quite substantial and I sincerely hope it will make any auction houses which do not carry out thorough due diligence checks more alert. If an auction house – or anyone looking to sell ivory independently, say online – has any doubts about the provenance of a product, they simply should not risk selling it. We are in contact with the Antique Dealers' Association to look at how we can work together to tackle the sale of illegal ivory.

"My advice to anyone who owns genuine antique ivory (that is ivory which pre-dates March 1947) is not to worry. You can legally sell it, but you must be absolutely certain that it pre-dates March 1947 and that it has not been altered since then, as it is also illegal to sell re-worked antique ivory."

# Sacred ibises escape: zoo and its owner fined

South Lakes Wild Animal Park Limited and its owner have been convicted of allowing invasive species to escape.

On 19 November 2014, South Lakes Wild Animal Park Ltd (SLWAP) of Dalton-in-Furness, and its owner David Stanley Gill, 53, were both convicted at Kendal Magistrates' Court of three counts of "allowing to escape into the wild a species that is not ordinarily resident or a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state", contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

SLWAP Ltd was fined £5,000 plus £370, and owner David Gill was fined £2,000 plus £870 costs. The maximum sentence for this triable either way offence is two years' imprisonment.

Sacred ibises were spotted on the Cumbrian coast around Dalton-in-Furness in July 2013. They don't naturally occur in Great Britain and pose such a significant threat to our natural wildlife that they are one of only a handful of species that the government has put an action plan in place to deal with. In France, about 30 sacred ibises escaped from zoos and during a 10-year period they established huge colonies, with a population of about 3,000.

An expert ornithologist working for the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) established that the sacred ibises in Cumbria were originating from SLWAP and the matter was referred to the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCUC) and Cumbria Constabulary. On 30 October 2013, officers from Cumbria Constabulary, NWCUC and APHA executed a search warrant at the zoo. Officers found a large open enclosure with 27 sacred ibises, but zoo records showed 36 birds. Officers filmed birds flying out of the park. The zoo owner David Gill explained that he was aware of the problem and was trying to resolve the situation. He indicated that the problem related to birds that had hatched in 2013, but had not had their wings clipped. However, zoo records showed no breeding in 2013.

Using ring identification of the wild sacred ibises, it was possible to show that some of the escaped birds had hatched in 2009. After Gill was interviewed, he returned to the zoo and shot 13 free-flying sacred ibises. A former member of staff who gave evidence in court confirmed that sacred ibises had

been flying around the park ever since she worked there, which had been more than 12 months. Gill denied knowledge of the free-flying birds and said that as soon as he was aware, he had instructed his staff to resolve the problem.

In sentencing, District Judge Daniel Chalk stated: "Some of the birds that were flying out of the park were four years old and it appears over a third of the zoo's sacred ibises were capable of flight. I find it inconceivable that you and your staff were unaware". He added that there was a serious risk to the British countryside if the birds became established.

Following the case, Andy McWilliam from NWCUC, who assisted Cumbria Constabulary, said: "The threat to our natural wildlife from sacred ibises is very real. They could inflict serious damage on the likes of ground-nesting birds. It is imperative that people keeping any potentially invasive species ensure that they are secure and there is no risk of escape. Having free-flying sacred ibises housed in open enclosures was simply unacceptable".

Cumbria Constabulary Wildlife Officer, PC Helen Branthwaite, who led the investigation said: "This was an unusual and often challenging investigation for us to deal with and I am grateful to all those who assisted throughout. I am satisfied with the outcome and others should note not only the potential risk to our wildlife, but also the potential penalties if they allow this situation to occur".

Thanks to Helen Branthwaite (Cumbria Constabulary), Dr Niall Moore (APHA), Dr Geoff Mawson OBE (Wildlife Consultant) and Peter Kelly CPS.



Two of the free-ranging sacred ibises on Roanhead Beach, Cumbria

J J Smith

# Bird shootings in Beds

PC Pete Charles, a WCO with Bedfordshire Police, reports on a case where he mapped incidents of bird shootings to find the culprit.

A report had been received in July 2014 that birds were being shot in Leighton Buzzard. A variety of birds had been found injured or dead in gardens or roads and on rooftops in a street leading out of the town. The birds included pigeons, collared doves, blackbirds and starlings.

I plotted the locations on a map. The locations formed a near perfect circle of about 40 yards. This was confirmed by firearms licensing to be the average killing range of a low powered air rifle, such as a .22. This narrowed the search area to fewer than 30 houses.

I enlisted the support of Special Constable, Martin White, who is a lawyer, and has good local knowledge of the area.

Further enquiries suggested premises where the shots may have come from, which was right in the middle of my search area. By talking to neighbours, we found six witnesses saying they had heard what they believed to be air rifle shots.

The occupier of the premises confirmed he had a shooting range in his garden, but claimed he only

shot at targets and not outside his fence line. He added that he did shoot a few birds in his garden such as doves and pigeons. He was cautioned and questioned further, claiming he was unaware that it was an offence to shoot these birds.

The suspect volunteered his brand new £700 air rifle to be seized and destroyed, and the incident was brought to a close by Restorative Justice. This was reported back to the witnesses and informants who were all happy in the outcome. The person involved later joined a legal registered shooting club.

# Queen's birds shot at in royal county

A man from Berkshire who filmed himself shooting at swans with an air pistol has been handed a suspended prison sentence.

On 22 September 2014, Redouane Flissi, 22, of Gosforth Place, Brook Path, Slough, pleaded guilty at Slough Magistrates' Court to committing an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and one charge of criminal damage. He was sentenced to 16 weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months, and an £85 fine. He was also handed another four-week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months, to run concurrently, for the criminal damage offence.

On 8 May 2014, Flissi filmed himself shooting an air pistol at a number of swans on the River Thames in Bath Island, Windsor. He then posted the video on Facebook, which was seen by members of the public.

Flissi was arrested on 13 May and whilst in custody destroyed a book belonging to Thames Valley Police. Investigating officer, PC Robin

Nickless, said: "This offender was so brazen as to put a video of the act on Facebook, and to write that the act was committed against a swan, in Windsor. This conviction

shows it is completely unacceptable to injure any animal on the River Thames, especially a bird belonging to the Queen. Any offenders caught will swiftly be brought to justice."



The offender filmed a wildlife crime and posted it on Facebook

Guy Shorrocks (RSPB)



Medicines containing seahorses were seized

# Fine for seahorse extract sale

A Chinese medicine trader sold “sexual enhancement pills” containing seahorse extracts.

The trader was fined after a keen-eyed detective spotted her selling the illegal products in south London.

On 2 September 2014, Lu Yao, 46, who owned a shop and stall in Deptford High Street, pleaded guilty at Bromley Magistrates’ Court to five counts contrary to the Control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 (COTES). She was sentenced to a £200 fine on each count, £85 prosecution costs and a £100 victim surcharge – a total of £1,185.

DC Louise Morris, of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Wildlife Crime Unit (WCU), was walking through the Elephant and Castle Shopping Centre on her way to work in July 2013 when she spotted the stall run by Lu Yao, from Mongolia.

Perturbed by the pills on display, which she suspected contained

endangered species derivatives, DC Morris and her colleagues began investigating.

On 29 August 2013 they executed search warrants at the stall and at a shop owned by Yao on Deptford High Street.

They seized approximately 100 pills. The ingredients of the products were translated from Chinese and it was discovered that the pills contained extracts of seahorse, which is protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). This legislation protects more than 5,600 animals and 30,000 plants.

DC Sarah Bailey, of the MPS Wildlife Crime Unit, said: “Most traditional Chinese medicines are generally legal, but Yao’s contained extracts of a protected species. The illegal trade in endangered species threatens the existence

of some of our most iconic and well-loved animals and plants. We continue to work closely with the Chinese medicine industry to tackle this issue. I also urge anyone who has suspicions about products they have seen on sale to contact the police.”

Alyx Elliott, Wildlife Campaign Manager at World Animal Protection, said: “Detectives of the WCU are at the forefront of the wider battle against wildlife crime, and it is heartening that their enforcement efforts are being backed up by prosecutions and sentences. This case emphasises the sheer diversity of wildlife crime in the UK and London, and also the continuing threat it poses. In this regard the public can play a key role supporting the WCU’s huge efforts to tackle the trade by similarly reporting anything suspicious that they might see for sale to their local force.”

# Damage to wildlife site proves costly

A landowner was fined for failing to maintain a County Wildlife Site in the Lake District.

The owner installed a number of underground pipes on the Miller Beck County Wildlife Site in Cumbria, damaging an area important for wildlife.

On 31 March 2014, Richard Whitton, a farmer from Allithwaite, Grange-over-Sands, pleaded guilty at Kendal Magistrates’ Court for failing to comply with the terms of a land Remediation Notice issued under the Environmental Impact Agriculture Regulations 2006. He was fined £2,500 and ordered to pay £10,250 costs.

The Miller Beck County Wildlife Site, near Newby Bridge, Ulverston, is one of the most important Wildlife Sites in Cumbria. This area is noted for its lowland grasslands that have not been subject to agricultural improvement. Such sites are now exceptionally rare in Cumbria and nationally.

Richard Whitton installed a number of underground pipes on the land which drained water into Miller Beck.

Natural England (NE) was alerted and when staff visited the site they discovered the pipes. He was served a legal notice to remove them but failed to do so.

Janette Ward, NE’s Regulation Director, said: “We are always disappointed by having to bring prosecutions, as it means that some of England’s most important wildlife has been damaged.

“We hope that the affected area will now be able to recover as far as possible and look forward to working closely with Mr Whitton so that the land can be returned to its original condition”.



One of Cumbria’s most important Wildlife Sites was damaged



The unimproved lowland grassland suffered extensive damage due to installation of drainage pipes

All images by Martin Findlow (Natural England)

# LIFE for hen harriers

The RSPB has launched a new cross-border project, which aims to secure a future for one of the UK's most threatened, beautiful and spectacular birds of prey, the hen harrier.

The new project, funded through the EU's LIFE+ programme, focuses on seven regions of southern and eastern Scotland and northern England, known as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) that have been designated for breeding hen harriers under the European Birds Directive. Running until 2019, this five-year project is unique in being the first truly joint Scottish-English initiative for this species.



Hen harriers nest on the ground on upland moors. Their diet can include red grouse, which brings them into conflict with intensive grouse rearing for shooting practices.

Hen harriers had been persecuted to extinction as a breeding bird on mainland Britain by 1900, but managed to recover their population naturally. However, ongoing illegal killing and disturbance threatens to drive the birds to the brink once more. In 2013, hen harriers failed to breed successfully in England for the first time in almost half a century and in Scotland, their numbers fell by 20% between 2004 and 2010.

The Hen Harrier LIFE+ Project has employed two new Assistant Investigations Officers, and will be satellite tagging birds and carrying out nest protection, and population monitoring. Community

engagement and awareness-raising activities are also planned alongside work with landowners to protect hen harriers for the future. In particular, the project is going to work closely with the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF) and Scottish Raptor Study Group (SRSG) as specialist contractors to monitor key hen harrier areas throughout the breeding and wintering seasons.

David Raw, Secretary of NERF, said: "The plight of the hen harrier is uppermost in the minds of raptor field workers in northern England so our members look forward to contributing to this important and much-needed project".

This sentiment was echoed by Patrick Stirling-Aird, Chair of SRSRG, who said: "We are very excited by the potential of this new project and look forward to working alongside the RSPB to secure a better future for hen harriers in Scotland."

worked as a warden with various Wildlife Trusts and with Birdwatch Ireland, and as an ecological consultant, carrying out vantage point surveys of raptors, black grouse and other moorland species.

David is based in the north of England and can be contacted on 07796 611954.

John is at Scottish headquarters and can be reached on 07525 617601.

David has vast knowledge of the UK uplands, having previously been employed as an ornithologist for an ecological consultancy in West Yorkshire. He recently conducted a comprehensive breeding bird survey of the South Pennines SSSI.

John is from County Clare, and has experience with the Investigations team in northern England, where he helped to secure the conviction of a gamekeeper for bird of prey persecution offences. He has

# Welcome to new hen harrier officers

Two new Assistant Investigations Officers have joined us as a result of the successful EU LIFE+ bid.

We were delighted to welcome David Hunt and John McMahon in November 2014. David and John both have five-year contracts and will cover north England and southern and eastern Scotland.

They will be liaising with other raptor workers, working closely on monitoring and protecting the species, while investigating issues concerning other birds of prey in the uplands.



And: How/when images.com)

## The English population of hen harriers remains perilously low

# No Sky and no Hope

Two young female hen harriers that were fitted with satellite tracking technology disappeared in the space of a few days in the Forest of Bowland in September 2014.

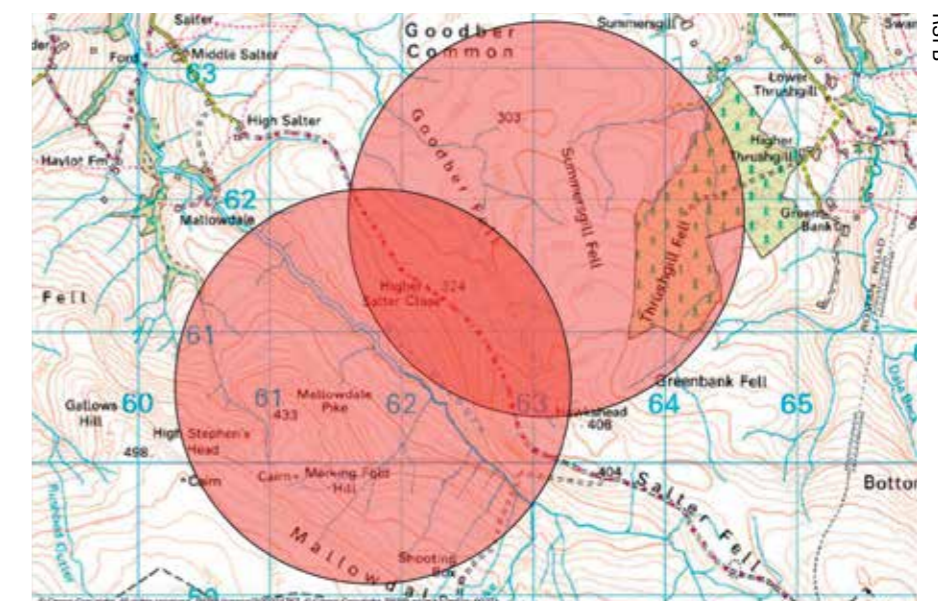
The birds, named Sky and Hope by local children, each came from hen harrier nests on United Utilities' Bowland Estate in Lancashire. In total, there were just four known hen harrier nests in the whole of England in 2014. The two Bowland nests had been given 24-hour nest protection by the RSPB in partnership with United Utilities, due to the fragile breeding status of the species and its vulnerability to illegal persecution.

Both birds' signals had been transmitting reliably before giving last known satellite fixes within a small area in north Bowland, off United Utilities land. Sky's last known fix was at 19.31 pm on 10 September with a sudden loss of transmission early into her 10 hour data-cycle, suggesting a catastrophic event had happened to the tag whilst she was at roost.

Hope last transmitted at 10.51 am  
on 13 September and failed to

transmit on 15 September when expected. Hope had remained faithful to Bowland since fledging in June, so it is anticipated that she also disappeared in this area.

The disappearance of two hen harriers was reported to Lancashire constabulary. The RSPB issued an appeal for information, and is still keen to hear from anyone who might be able to shed some light on these disappearances.



### The tags stopped transmitting in these upland areas in Lancashire



The new CPS lead against wildlife crime feels “passionate” about wildlife and conservation

## Sue Hemming – the new CPS Wildlife Champion

The CPS Senior Wildlife Champion, Sue Hemming, gives us some insight into her background, thoughts, and aims for the future of her new role, and the way she intends to tackle wildlife crime in England and Wales.

I am the Head of Special Crime and Counter Terrorism at the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS).

From 1988 to 2000, I was a prosecutor in Cambridgeshire, where I dealt with wildlife crime at all levels. This included prosecuting the first case of conspiring to sell rhino horn in this jurisdiction and successfully obtain convictions against four individuals.

I was delighted to be asked to take on the role of Senior Wildlife Champion at the CPS earlier this year.

It is something that I am personally passionate about, having had an interest in wildlife and conservation for many years. I am glad to have

the opportunity to be re-engaged with such important work.

Since I was appointed, significant progress has been made in ensuring a consistent approach to the prosecution of wildlife crime. We have Wildlife Co-ordinators in offices across England and Wales. They all have a keen interest in the subject and many have built up a great deal of expertise over a long period.

Together, we are updating our guidance and developing training to give everyone in the CPS the tools they need to prosecute these cases well, and properly inform the court of the issues so that the judiciary can use the full range of powers available.

I have met with other specialists across the criminal justice system to discuss how we might work collectively to improve our joint response and I have invited NGOs and charities to scrutinise and support our work at roundtable meetings. I am confident that through this work we can bring greater consistency and rigour to the prosecution of wildlife crime, which goes to the heart of society's attitude to the communities and environment in which we live.

**Editor's note:** The RSPB welcomes Sue back into the wildlife crime enforcement arena and we look forward to working in partnership with the CPS in the future.

## New head of National Wildlife Crime Unit appointed

Chief Inspector Martin Sims has been appointed as the new Head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit.

Martin is a serving Sussex Police Officer with more than 27 years' experience.

In 2009, he became Head of Profession for Wildlife Crime and in his spare time he is studying for a degree in Countryside Management.

Martin said: “I feel very honoured to have been given the appointment and feel very lucky to be given the chance to do some aspects of my hobby, as a full-time job.

“I recognise the way Nevin Hunter has moved things forward for tackling wildlife crime over the past two and a half years with the team and I have a responsibility for keeping that momentum going.

“I know they are a big pair of shoes to fill! I really look forward to working with many of the partner agencies with whom I have built up relationships over the past five years on a regional basis and now move that to a national level.”



Chief Inspector Martin Sims

The RSPB echoes that sentiment and looks forward to a productive working relationship with Martin and his team.

## Kent Police reducing rural crime

PC Michael Laidlow introduces a new initiative in Kent to tackle rural crime.

Kent Police's Rural Liaison Team is a proactive rural policing team with six officers, one Sergeant and an Inspector.

The team is responsible for reducing rural crime and is specially trained in wildlife crime and prosecuting offenders involved in rural crime. They also specialise in wildlife, heritage and environmental crimes.

It's an integral part of a monthly Policing Operation called Op Nonagon, a rural crime initiative set up two years ago, with a day of policing activities in rural areas to help prevent crime and reassure vulnerable communities.

Results speak for themselves: 52 arrests ranging from burglary, theft, firearms offences, and the poaching of more than 200 pheasants. Sixty-eight items of stolen property, including tractors, trailers and

ride-on mowers were recovered, and 16 people were prosecuted.

On 28 March 2014, the team arrested two people for burglary, as they were in possession of stolen items from an overnight rural burglary. The same day saw the team recover ornate metal gates worth £2,000 which had been stolen from a local stately home. The team also charged a man

responsible for beheading a swan and killing geese in Tonbridge. He was later convicted.

Team members have helped set up Poacher Watch, to allow farmers and gamekeepers to communicate easily with police. Oil theft has fallen by 44% in a year, and a “Shutting the gate on rural crime” initiative has made good facts and advice available to help prevent farm crime.



Kent's Rural Liaison Team is having a positive impact

# Open General Licences to be restricted in areas of wildlife crime

Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) introduced measures in July 2014 that mean, where there is evidence of wildlife crime, landholdings can now be excluded from the provisions of three Open General Licences (OGLs). The measures are backdated, so that exclusion can be triggered by evidence found after 1 January 2014.

OGLs are available to anyone who abides by their conditions, negating the need for an individual to apply for a specific licence.

They permit operations that would otherwise be illegal, in this case killing or taking certain bird species, for 1) the conservation of wild birds, 2) for the purpose of preventing serious damage to livestock, food for livestock, crops and vegetables, and 3) for the preservation of public health and safety and preventing the spread of disease. Permitted methods include shooting and cage traps.

Decisions, on a civil standard of proof, will be made by SNH on the basis of evidence provided by Police Scotland, including:

- illegally killed or trapped birds, poisons and poisoned baits
- vicarious liability convictions
- breaches of the OGLs, and
- cross-compliance decisions where subsidies have been withdrawn as a result of wildlife crime.

Assessment criteria include:

- the strength of evidence that owners or managers were responsible
- the number or frequency of incidents
- actual/potential conservation impact
- age of evidence, and
- history of similar instances.

Exclusions will be published on the SNH website, and will last three years, with potential extension if further evidence is discovered.

There is an appeals procedure and individuals in a restricted area may still apply for a specific licence.

Announcing the changes, the former Scottish Minister for the Environment and Climate Change, Paul Wheelhouse, said: "I am confident these new measures will be a powerful new weapon in our armoury in the fight against those perpetrating raptor persecution in Scotland and hopefully will deter those who might be tempted to commit such a selfish criminal act that stains Scotland's reputation and potentially damages the rural economy."

Welcoming the announcement, Duncan Orr-Ewing, Head of Species and Land Management at RSPB Scotland, said: "To be an effective deterrent, this power to remove the OGL will need to be used by SNH when required. They will also need to be bold in defending their action against likely legal challenges.

"We believe these SNH powers will have the widespread support of the Scottish public and equally no law abiding landowner should have anything to fear.

"SNH will also need the consistent support of the police and other Scottish Government agencies that may be called upon to help provide supporting evidence.

"We will judge the impact of this measure by the performance of the populations of key indicator species such as hen harriers, which remain absent due to human killing from most driven grouse moors in the central and eastern Highlands and Southern Uplands."

Ian Ross, SNH's chairman, said: "Because of the remote locations where most wildlife crime takes place, it's often difficult to prove. So we need every tool we can to fight against those who persecute raptors in Scotland."

You can see details online at: [snh.gov.uk/docs/A1417398.pdf](http://snh.gov.uk/docs/A1417398.pdf)



Cage traps have been used illegally to take raptors

RSPB

# Wildlife Crime Enforcers meet at Ashorne Hill

The 26th annual Wildlife Crime Enforcers' Conference was held at Ashorne Hill in Warwickshire on 21–23 November 2014. Delegates included Police and Border Force officers, Defra, statutory agencies, CPS, NGOs and other enforcement and environmental specialists.

Chief Constable Simon Prince, ACPO lead on wildlife crime, opened the conference by describing the landscape of wildlife crime enforcement going forward against a background of further government cuts. He warned delegates that things could get more difficult before they got better. However, the number of attendees at the conference was a good indication of the enthusiasm and commitment there was among the enforcement community to tackle the problems.

The conference was able to welcome two important delegates into their new roles. Chief Inspector Martin Sims introduced himself as the new Head of the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU) following Nevin Hunter's retirement (see page 17). He outlined the work currently ongoing in the Unit, including the drawing up of Standard Operating Procedures and work to identify Organised Crime Groups in each Wildlife Crime Priority area to submit to the Organised Crime Command of the National Crime Agency. He confirmed that a number of targets had been identified in the Raptor Persecution Priority area. Sue Hemming also introduced herself as the new "wildlife champion" at the CPS and impressed delegates with her obvious passion for wildlife (see page 16).

One of the pleasures of the conference is to be able to recognise the sterling work undertaken by colleagues in the fight against wildlife crime. This year the WWF-sponsored WCO of the year award was won by Nick Willey of Lincolnshire Police whilst the

Border Force and National Crime Agency won the Wildlife Crime Operation of the Year award for an operation that led to prison sentences for two people for smuggling critically-endangered rock iguanas from the Bahamas (see *Legal Eagle* 74). Lifetime achievement awards went to Ian Long of Fife Police and to Nevin Hunter, formerly of the NWCU.

The remainder of the conference was the usual interesting mix of case studies and workshops with some lively discussion thrown in for good measure, not least in the bar. Big thanks go to Craig Fellowes of the Wildlife Training Consultancy for organising the event and making things run so smoothly.

See you all in November!



CC Simon Prince, PC Nick Willey and WWF's Sarah Goddard

Guy Shorrocks (RSPB)



Delegates enjoying the weather at the forensic workshop

Guy Shorrocks (RSPB)

# NERF Conference 2014

Raptors were in the spotlight at the Northern England Raptor Forum (NERF) conference, which was hosted by the Peak District Raptor Monitoring Group (PDRMG) and the South Peak Raptor Study Group (SPRSG).

The conference, held in Bakewell, Derbyshire, in November, brought together an eclectic mix of individuals, all passionate about raptor conservation, to listen to the

knowledgeable speakers. Wildlife crime, and in particular the hot potato issue of raptor persecution, proved to be a constant topic all day.

Alan Fielding spoke about the hen harrier conservation framework, which is being updated. Alan Charles, Derbyshire police chief constable and crime commissioner, spoke of wildlife crime and raptor persecution in the Peak District.

Trevor Grimshaw of the SPRSG and Mike Price of the PDRMG highlighted the disparity of bird of prey populations in their respective study areas, as persecution is a major driver for population suppression in the PDRMG area. Mark Thomas, from the RSPB

Investigations team, spoke about the monitoring of Britain's rarest bird of prey, the Montagu's harrier. He outlined the positive role that satellite tagging has regarding improving the understanding of the UK's breeding birds.

There was plenty of lively debate and discussion. This year's conference will be at Rishworth School, West Yorkshire, hosted by Calderdale Raptor Study Group on Saturday 21 November. Contact Steve Downing (throstlebower@hotmail.com) for more information.

The NERF annual report for 2013 is now available priced at £8. Please e-mail [ajudithsmith@gmail.com](mailto:ajudithsmith@gmail.com) to purchase a copy.

Guy Shorrocks (RSPB)



Alan Charles, PCC of Derbyshire Constabulary

## Birdcrime 2013 report out now

The RSPB's 2013 Birdcrime report is now available.

The report is a unique publication that is the only centralised source of incident data for wild bird crime in the UK. Its focus is on recording crimes that affect the conservation status of species, such as bird of prey persecution and threats to rare breeding birds.

In 2013, there were 164 reports of the shooting and destruction of birds of prey, which included the confirmed shooting of at least 49 individual birds of prey. These birds included two hen harriers, two marsh harriers and five peregrines.

The link between driven grouse shooting and bird of prey persecution is explored in the report. The RSPB is urging political parties to introduce licensing of driven grouse shoots after the General Election in May 2015, to improve the condition of our uplands and protect birds of prey.

RSPB Conservation Director Martin Harper said: "We look forward to uniting with the organisations that are opposed to illegal persecution, and bringing forward the changes needed to ensure legitimate businesses are free from association with this dark shadow that hangs over the shooting community. Together, we can finally consign bird of prey persecution to the history books."

Birdcrime 2013 is available online at [rspb.org.uk/Images/birdcrime\\_2013\\_tcm9-384665.pdf](http://rspb.org.uk/Images/birdcrime_2013_tcm9-384665.pdf)



There were 74 reports of poisoning incidents, including 48 confirmed incidents of pesticide abuse involving the poisoning of at least 76 individual birds or mammals. This included 30 buzzards, 20 red kites, a golden eagle and a white-tailed eagle.

The number of thefts from the nests of specially-protected birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 remains encouragingly low, but did include one robbery involving at least 50 little tern nests.



CABS

Snap traps are indiscriminate, but robins are targeted

## The Italian job

Alice Tribe, Investigations Co-ordinator for the RSPB, reports on how robins are being illegally trapped to be eaten in Brescia, Italy. She volunteered for the Committee against Bird Slaughter (CABS) in October 2014, to help with their work.

For years, it's been known that in the region around Brescia, a city and commune in northern Italy, there have been problems with illegal bird poaching. I decided that I wanted to go out there to see the situation first-hand. Robins are the main target and are wanted for food.

Two traps, known as archetti (bow) traps and snap traps are mainly used, as well as mist nets.

The archetti traps are particularly cruel, as they catch the robins by their legs, breaking them in the process, and leaving them hanging upside down. These traps are illegal. They used to be widely used throughout Europe, but are now only used in this region of Italy.

The snap traps generally kill the robins quickly, by breaking their necks, but I found one robin during the week that had been caught by

the wing and died a rather slow and painful death as a consequence.

Of course, neither of these types of traps is discriminate, so over the years other animals have been found in them, including hedgehogs, tits, squirrels, mice and thrushes.

The traps are usually hidden away in private gardens or in the forests, quite often in areas hard to access in the Alps.

It is a secretive and undercover practice. The work undertaken to find these traps can take a lot of time, patience and motivation.

Although it's still not great, the situation has improved greatly over the past 30 years or so that CABS has been working there.

Since 1997, an anti-poaching police force – the "forest police" – which

is usually based in Rome, has been hired to cover the main migration period. These officers have been working closely with CABS ever since. I was very impressed by them and they're clearly dedicated to catching poachers.

During the autumn camp alone, which ran for three weeks, CABS helped the authorities to prosecute 41 poachers.

### For more information

Visit [komitee.de](http://komitee.de) to watch the film *Emptying the Skies* for a good overview of the work CABS does across the Mediterranean. Click on the Union flag to view the website in English.



A BSBP officer at the site where a griffon vulture egg was taken by Ross in 2011

## Bedlam in Bulgaria

An English egg collector, previously convicted three times in the UK, has been convicted in a Bulgarian court, following a lengthy investigation. RSPB Senior Investigations Officer Guy Shorrock reports.

On 22 October 2014, Jan Frederick Ross, 60, pleaded guilty at a court in Burgas to two charges relating to the unlawful possession of 16 birds' eggs and three taxidermy specimens. He received a six month sentence suspended for three years and a fine of around £2,000.

We first dealt with Ross in 1998 shortly after the start of his egg collecting career. A search warrant at his home in Bury, Greater Manchester, found recently-taken eggs including those of an osprey, red kite and Slavonian grebe, for which he was later fined £4,800. That seemed to be no deterrent and he was convicted on two further occasions after being caught with an associate in Scotland in 1999 and 2003.

All seemed to go quiet until we received information in 2008 that he was now living in Bulgaria and back up to his old tricks. The NWCUC sent an intelligence report to the Bulgarian authorities. However, with wildlife crime not really on the agenda there, it was not surprising that no enquiry followed.

Fortunately, in 2009 the RSPB was working with the Bulgarian BirdLife partner, BSBP, on an EU LIFE project on saker falcon and imperial eagle conservation.

I had been asked to help improve the ability of the Bulgarian authorities to tackle wildlife crime (see *Legal Eagle 74*). BSBP had a good contact with a senior police officer in Burgas who took the

matter seriously. After considerable effort, in December 2011, I was with the police and BSBP when Ross' modern apartment was raided.

In a small study room, we found 16 birds' eggs, which had all been taken in 2011. These included a griffon vulture egg – a species given additional protection. There was also a selection of egg-collecting equipment.

However, a key discovery was made tucked away behind some artwork on the lounge wall. There were diaries and photographs showing what Ross had been up to since he moved to Bulgaria in 2004. These detailed the taking of more than 1,000 eggs, including many rare species. This included a clutch from



Diaries indicated Ross had also taken two Egyptian vulture eggs

the globally-endangered Egyptian vulture, the population of which is fewer than 30 pairs in Bulgaria.

Despite the ongoing work on imperial eagles, and efforts to guard some of the nests, it appeared Ross had managed to take three clutches.

His records of eggs taken in the UK were also found, and it is suspected his collection remains hidden somewhere in Bulgaria.

Having been through all the records, I returned to Bulgaria a few months later to make field enquiries to locate nest sites raided by Ross and match them to his photographs.

Unfortunately, unlike the UK, it appeared that without possession of the actual eggs, he could not be charged with taking eggs based solely on the detailed diaries.

While the police were very helpful, it was difficult to assess what the Bulgarian prosecutors were up to and I was not confident that Ross would ever appear in court.

After a series of long delays, the RSPB wrote letters of concern to the Bulgarian authorities emphasising the conservation

importance and the international media interest. This seemed to do the trick and finally the matter proceeded to court.

The RSPB would like to thank the Burgas Police for their efforts, particularly Deputy Director Kaloyan Kaloyanov, Dimitar Gradinarov and

his BSBP colleagues, several UK Interns at Eurojust Brussels, Glenda Jackson at Bury & Rochdale Magistrates' Court, and the NWCUC.

You can see a video relating to the case at [youtube.com/watch?v=kMAa0BFgMgo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kMAa0BFgMgo)



The 16 eggs seized from Ross' home

and finally...

# See you, Jimmy

Guy Shorrocks (RSPB)



After nine years with the RSPB Investigations team, working in northern England, and Scotland, James Leonard left the RSPB to seek new challenges in the fight against wildlife crime, taking up a post with the Scottish SPCA.

James has been a key member of the team, covering raptor monitoring and fieldwork, technological developments, including fitting and monitoring of satellite transmitters

to raptors. He has been a key witness in several prosecutions. He is a real bird of prey enthusiast. He is also a cani-cross (running with dogs) and ultra marathon devotee, and has raised a lot of money for St Andrews hospice in Airdie.

Ian Thomson, Head of Investigations at RSPB Scotland, said: "It has been a pleasure working with James. His dedication, experience, knowledge and somewhat cheeky sense of humour will be sorely missed. It is good that he is remaining part of a partnership of those determined to take practical steps to detect and prosecute the criminals who continue to target our protected wildlife. We look forward to continuing to work with James, perhaps no longer as a work colleague, but very much as a partner in the fight.

## Welcome, Will

Will Hayward has recently joined RSPB Scotland as an Investigations Officer.

Originally from Cheltenham, Will has considerable experience in surveying and monitoring bird populations, having worked as a

warden at the Calf of Man Bird Observatory, and as a Research Assistant with the Edward Grey Institute of Field Ornithology at Wytham Woods. He was also previously employed by the RSPB on the Gordonbush Golden Plover project, monitoring the impact of wind farm construction on upland wading birds.

## PAW

**PAW is The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime, a multi-agency body of organisations involved in wildlife law enforcement in the UK.**

PAW provides opportunities for statutory and non-governmental organisations to work together to combat wildlife crime, and to promote the enforcement of wildlife conservation legislation, particularly through supporting the networks of Police Wildlife Crime Officers and officers from HM Revenue and Customs and the UK Border Agency.

## Want more info?

Visit [defra.gov.uk/paw](http://defra.gov.uk/paw)



**PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION AGAINST**  
**wildlife crime**

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**KEEPING**  
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## Write to be read

We welcome contributions to *Legal Eagle*. Please let us know about wildlife crime initiatives, news, events and prosecutions in your force. Send your articles and mailing list updates to the Editor, The RSPB, Investigations Section, The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL, by e-mail to [alice.tribe@rspb.org.uk](mailto:alice.tribe@rspb.org.uk) or by fax to 01767 693078. The views expressed in *Legal Eagle* are not necessarily those of the RSPB or PAW.

The RSPB is the country's largest nature conservation charity, inspiring everyone to give nature a home.

The RSPB is a member of BirdLife International, a partnership to give nature a home around the world.

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For more information on wild birds and the law, visit [rspb.org.uk/birdlaw](http://rspb.org.uk/birdlaw)