

2017 Data summary

Raptor Persecution (see also Appendix 2, Appendix 3)

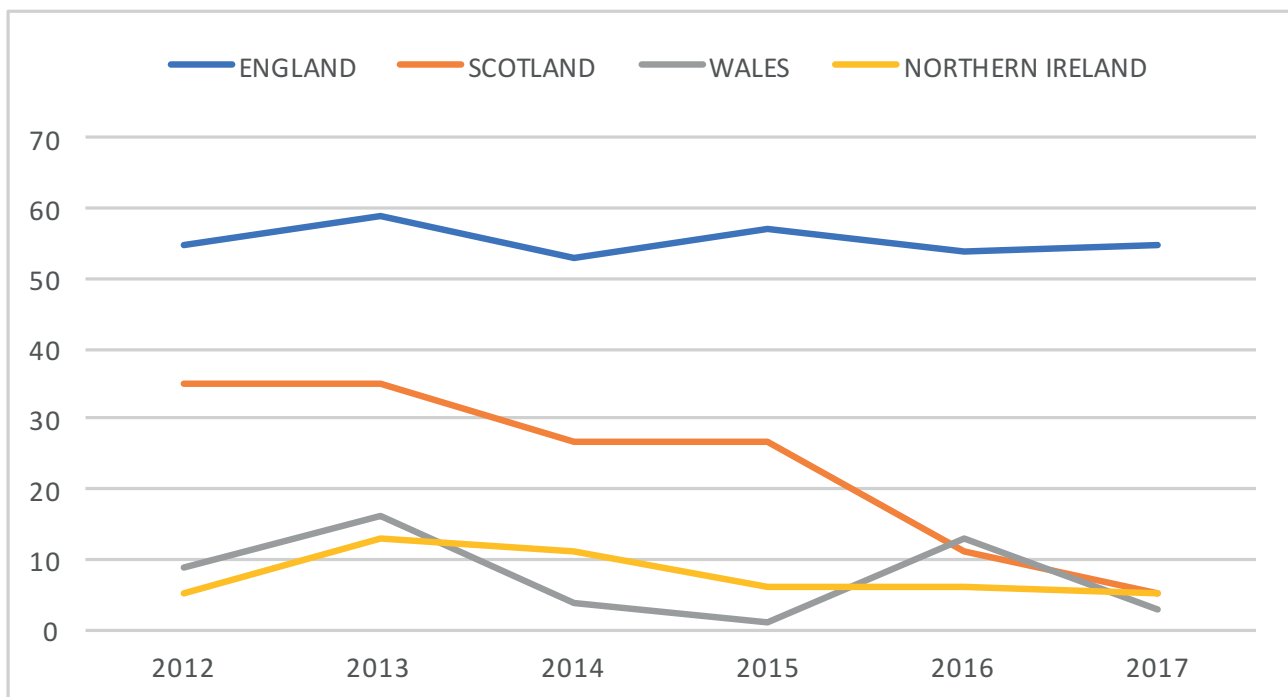
In 2017, the RSPB Investigations team recorded a total of 68 confirmed raptor persecution incidents. These are mapped to an Ordnance Survey 10km grid square (see Appendix 4 and also rspb.org.uk/raptormap) and can be broken down further into the following incident types:

- 48 confirmed shooting/attempted shooting incidents. Victims included 1 hen harrier, 3 marsh harriers, 8 peregrines, 3 short-eared owls, 7 red kites, 22 buzzards, 4 sparrowhawks, 1 little owl and 1 kestrel
- 9 confirmed poison (pesticide) abuse incidents. Victims included 4 peregrines, 3 red kites and 4 buzzards
- 3 confirmed trapping incidents. Victims included 1 tawny owl
- 4 confirmed nest destruction/attempted nest destruction incidents, involving marsh harrier, osprey, merlin and goshawk nests
- 4 confirmed “other” persecution incidents.

UK breakdown of 2017 confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents:

- 55 (81%) of bird of prey persecution incidents occurred in England (in line with the previous five-year average of 56)
- 3 (5%) occurred in Wales (lower than the previous five-year average of 9)
- 5 (7%) occurred in Scotland (significantly lower than the previous five-year average of 27)
- 5 (7%) occurred in Northern Ireland (slightly lower than the previous five-year average of 8).

Confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents 2012-2017 split into UK countries



To see the most complete, centralised set of known confirmed raptor persecution incidents in the UK, including 2017 data, see our interactive Raptor Persecution Map Hub: rspb.org.uk/raptormap

Wild bird poisoning (see also Appendix 3)

32 reports of wild bird poisoning and related offences. There were 10 confirmed incidents, and nine of these involved raptors (see Appendix 3).

Other offences:

Trade in wild birds and taxidermy.

- 36 reports of illegal taking, possession or sale of wild birds other than birds of prey (predominantly finches)
- 7 reports of illegal taxidermy
- 11 reports of illegal taking, possession or sale of birds of prey.

Egg collecting and nest robberies.

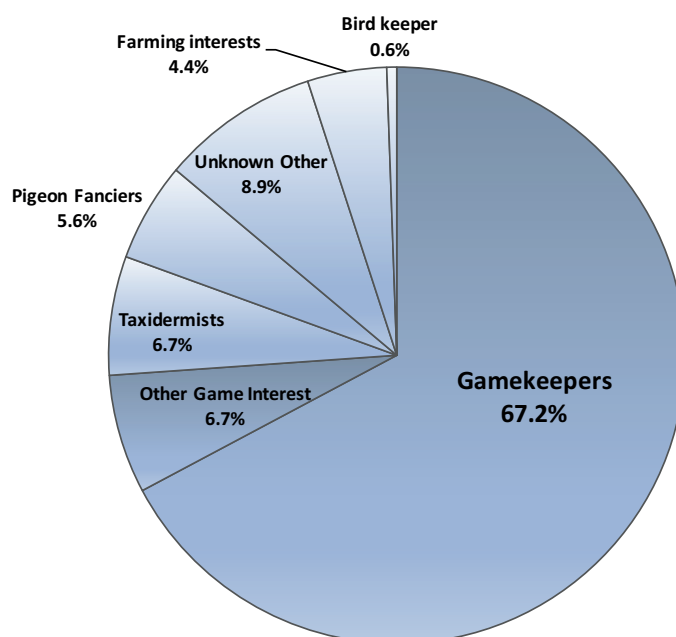
- 10 reported incidents of egg collecting and egg thefts. In relation to Schedule 1 species these included: 1 confirmed egg robbery involving 4 little tern nests, and 3 probable incidents of egg or chick robberies from individual nests of golden eagle, peregrine and barn owl
- 12 reports of eggs being illegally sold.

Note that figures featured in this report were accurate at time of extraction but are constantly being updated and may be subject to change.

Prosecutions

There were 25 reports of bird crime prosecutions (see also Appendix 4). These involved a total of 53 charges; 42 (79%) of these resulted in a guilty outcome. Fines for the year amounted to £10,790 and 8 individuals were given a prison sentence for their crimes (all were suspended sentences). In 2017 there were just four bird of prey persecution-related prosecutions. Three of these were discontinued, controversially, and only one was successful.

The occupations/interests of the 179 individuals convicted of bird of prey persecution-related offences 1990-2017



Appendix 1

Overview - Incidents reported to the RSPB 2012-2017

The table shows the number of incidents reported to the RSPB each year, for the categories specified. These incidents are those classified by RSPB as “confirmed”, “probable” and “unconfirmed”. To see which of these incidents are classed as confirmed raptor persecution incidents, see Appendix 2 and 3.

In 2009, the RSPB ceased recording certain categories of incidents, such as the shooting and destruction of non-bird of prey species. The figures supplied do not therefore give a total figure for wild bird crime in the UK and are not comparable with figures provided for years prior to 2009.

Note that the 2017 figures do not include the full annual data set usually included from RSPCA (data from 2013 onwards has been delayed but may be included retrospectively). As a result, the figures for 2017 will be lower, in particular for categories involving taking, sale and possession of non bird of prey species.

Report type	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Shooting and destruction of birds of prey	212	179	192	198	168	199
Taking, sale and possession of birds of prey	26	30	16	28	26	11
Poisoning and use of poisoned baits	79	79	73	51	55	32
Import and export of live or dead birds	3	1	1	2	1	3
Taking, sale and possession of non-bird of prey species	65	36	44	28	36	36
Taxidermy and possession of dead wild birds	6	8	5	4	4	7
Egg collecting and egg thefts	27	18	29	22	27	10
Sale of eggs	7	3	11	12	7	12
Photography and disturbance	26	14	17	17	22	24
Total	451	368	388	362	346	334

UK breakdown for above incident types in 2017	Count
England	285
Scotland	24
Wales	15
Northern Ireland	9
United Kingdom (country unspecified)	1
Total	334

The data above were extracted on 14 August 2018 and were accurate at the time of extraction. However, the data is constantly being updated, so reported incident totals for previous years may have changed due to a number of belated reports or additional information received after the publishing date for *Birdcrime* of that year.

Appendix 2

Confirmed bird of prey and owl persecution during 2017

Persecution type	Month	Species	Number	County	RSPB region
Shooting / attempted shooting	Jan	Buzzard	1	Devon	South West England
	Jan	Buzzard	1	Bedfordshire	Eastern England
	Jan	Buzzard	1	County Tyrone	Northern Ireland
	Feb	Buzzard	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	Feb	Peregrine	1	Lancashire	Northern England
	Feb	Red kite	1	Bedfordshire	Eastern England
	Feb	Buzzard	1	Hertfordshire	Eastern England
	Mar	Buzzard	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	Mar	Buzzard	1	West Sussex	South East England
	Mar	Peregrine	1	Cumbria	Northern England
	Mar	Peregrine	1	Hampshire	South East England
	Mar	Peregrine	1	Devon	South West England
	Mar	Red kite	1	Hertfordshire	Eastern England
	Mar	Red kite	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	Apr	Short-eared owl	1	Cumbria	Northern England
	Apr	Short-eared owl	1	Cumbria	Northern England
	Apr	Sparrowhawk	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	Apr	Buzzard	1	Hertfordshire	Eastern England
	Apr	Buzzard	1	Powys	Wales
	Apr	Buzzard	1	Suffolk	Eastern England
	May	Buzzard	1	Cumbria	Northern England
	May	Buzzard	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	May	Buzzard	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	May	Peregrine	1	East Sussex	South East England
	May	Marsh harrier	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	May	Marsh harrier	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	May	Short-eared owl	1	South Lanarkshire	South and West Scotland
	May	Hen harrier	1	South Lanarkshire	South and West Scotland
	Jun	Little owl	1	Kent	South East England
	Jul	Peregrine	1	Suffolk	Eastern England
	Aug	Buzzard	1	South Yorkshire	Northern England
	Aug	Buzzard	1	Bedfordshire	Eastern England
	Aug	Red Kite	1	County Down	Northern Ireland
	Aug	Buzzard	1	Leicestershire	Central England
Aug	Peregrine	1	County Antrim	Northern Ireland	
Sep	Buzzard	1	Hertfordshire	Eastern England	
Sep	Peregrine	1	Cambridgeshire	Eastern England	
Sep	Buzzard	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England	
Sep	Sparrowhawk	1	Bristol City	South West England	
Sep	Sparrowhawk	1	County Londonderry	Northern Ireland	
Sep	Buzzard	2	County Londonderry	Northern Ireland	

Persecution type	Month	Species	Number	County	RSPB region
	Oct	Sparrowhawk	1	East Riding of Yorkshire	Northern England
	Oct	Buzzard	1	Worcestershire	Central England
	Oct	Buzzard	1	Worcestershire	Central England
	Nov	Buzzard	1	Essex	Eastern England
	Nov	Red kite	1	Carmarthenshire	Wales
	Nov	Red kite	1	Bedfordshire	Eastern England
	Dec	Marsh harrier	1	Lancashire	Northern England
	Dec	Kestrel	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
Number of birds			50		
Nest destruction/ attempted nest destruction	Apr	Osprey	?	Derbyshire	Northern England
	Apr	Goshawk	?	Highland	North Scotland
	May	Marsh harrier	2	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	Jun	Merlin	?	Midlothian	South and West Scotland
Number of birds			>2		
Illegal pole/ spring trapping	Aug	Tawny owl	1	Bedfordshire	Eastern England
Number of birds			1		
Illegal trapping (other)	Jul	Birds of prey (other than owls)	?	Warwickshire	Central England
	Jul	Birds of prey (other than owls)	?	Warwickshire	Central England
Number of birds			2		
Other	Mar	Birds of prey (other than owls)	?	East Lothian	South and West Scotland
	Apr	Birds of prey (other than owls)	?	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	May	Goshawk	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
	May	Goshawk	1	North Yorkshire	Northern England
Number of birds			>2		

The data above were extracted on 14 August 2018 and were accurate at time of extraction. Further incidents may have occurred, to be added retrospectively pending release from statutory agencies.

? Indicates no bird was found but the known target species is listed.

Rows grouped by grey shading are to show one incident involving more than one species or offence type/category, which span more than one row in the table.

For a definition of “confirmed” please see Explanatory Notes at the end of these Appendices.

Explore our UK map of confirmed raptor persecution incidents at [rspb.org.uk/raptormap](https://www.rspb.org.uk/raptormap)

Appendix 3

Confirmed poison abuse incidents during 2017 (Raptor Persecution incidents are shown in a separate table for clarity)

Confirmed poison abuse incidents - Raptor Persecution (cases where raptors were victims/targeted/vulnerable).

Month	Victim	Number	Poison	Bait	County	RSPB region
Feb	Buzzard	1	Aldicarb	-	Lincolnshire	Eastern England
March	Buzzard	1	Aldicarb	-	Lincolnshire	Eastern England
May	Peregrine	2	Bendiocarb, Diazinon/Dimpylate	Pigeon bait x 1	Shropshire	Central England
May	Red kite	1	Alphachloralose	-	Lincolnshire	Eastern England
July	Peregrine	1	Carbofuran	-	County Antrim	Northern Ireland
Oct	Peregrine	1	Bendiocarb	Pigeon bait x 1	Conwy	Wales
Oct	Red kite	1	Carbofuran, Bendiocarb	-	Norfolk	Eastern England
Nov	Buzzard	2	Aldicarb	-	East Riding Of Yorkshire	Northern England
Dec	Red kite	1	Alphachloralose	-	North Yorkshire	Northern England
Number of victims		11				

Confirmed poison abuse incidents - other species

Month	Victim	Number	Poison	Bait	County	RSPB region
March	Black-headed gull	1	Alphachloralose, Carbofuran	Unknown	Greater London – Redbridge	South East England
March	<i>Columbidae</i> (pigeons)	1	Alphachloralose, Carbofuran	Unknown	Greater London – Redbridge	South East England
March	Common gull	10	Alphachloralose, Carbofuran	Unknown	Greater London – Redbridge	South East England
Number of victims		12				

The data above were extracted on 14 August 2018 and were accurate at time of extraction. Further incidents may have occurred, to be added retrospectively pending release from statutory agencies.

Rows grouped by grey shading are to show one incident involving more than one species or offence type/category, which span more than one row in the table.

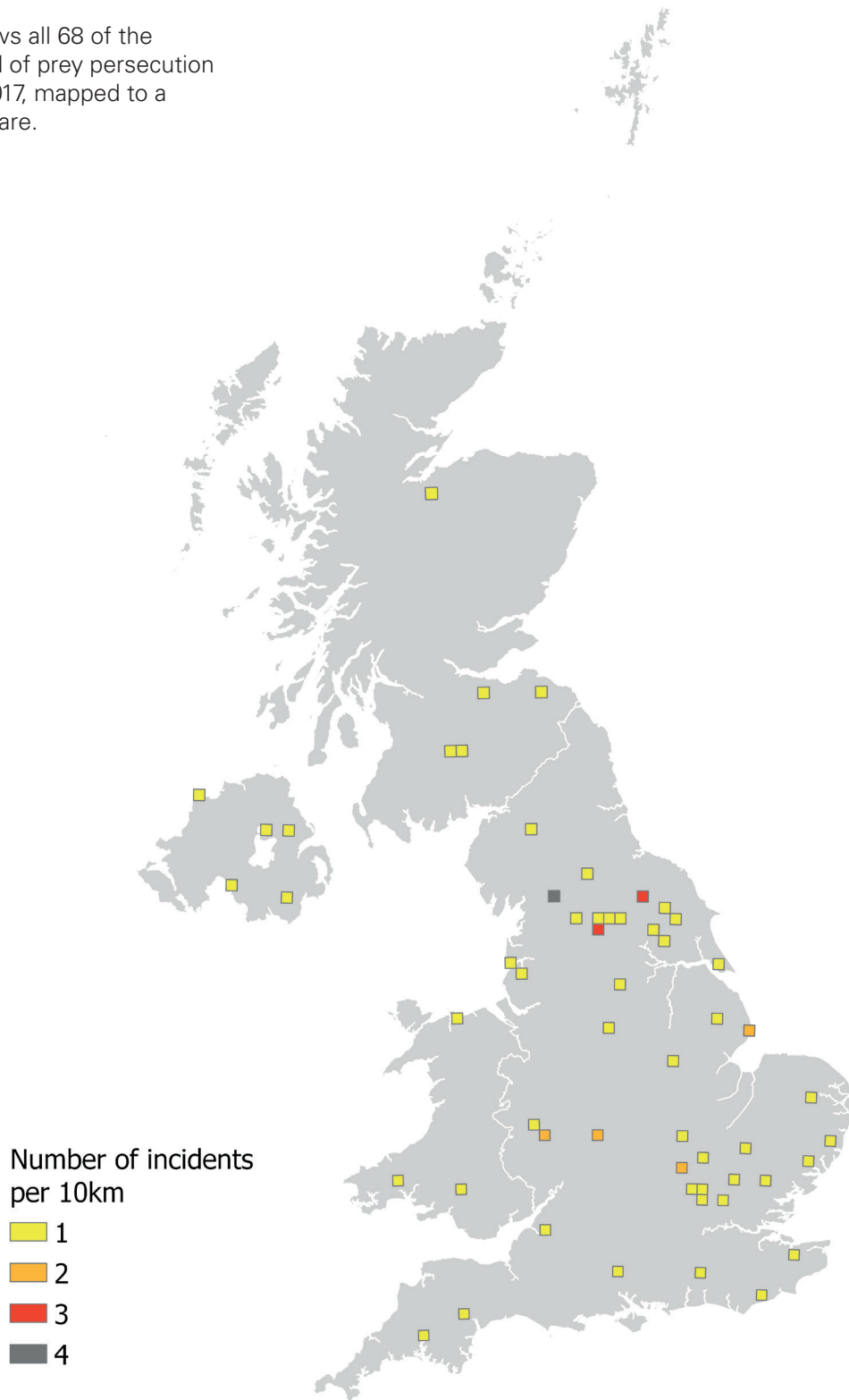
For definition of “confirmed” please see Explanatory Notes at the end of these Appendices.

Explore our UK map of confirmed raptor persecution incidents at rspb.org.uk/raptormap

Appendix 4

Confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents in 2017 – UK map

This map shows all 68 of the confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents in 2017, mapped to a 10km grid square.



To see an interactive version of this map, including more years' worth of data, visit our Raptor Persecution Map Hub: rspb.org.uk/raptormap

Appendix 5

Bird crime prosecutions in 2017

Date	Act	Section/Reg	Charges	Prosecutor	Court	Surname	Plea	Outcome	Penalty Type	Penalty	Penalty Type 2	Penalty 2	Details
17/01/2017	Customs And Excise Management Act 1979	170(1)(B)	2	CPS	Exeter Crown	Stocks	G	G	Jail	6 months (Concurrent)			Defendant pleaded guilty to four charges relating to trade and smuggling of specimens: two charges were contrary to the control of Trade in Endangered Species (Enforcement) Regulations 1997 (COTES), relating to the sale and keeping for sale of items and derivatives of numerous species including wreathed hornbills (all listed on Annex B of the EU Trade Regulations); two charges contrary to Section 170(1)(b) of the Customs & Excise Management Act 1979, relating to the fraudulent evasion of a restriction on import and export of many of the specimens.
	Control Of Trade In Endangered Species (Enforcement) Reg. 1985/1997	8 (2)	2	CPS	Exeter Crown	Stocks	G	G					
10/02/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	Wimbledon Magistrates	Muir	NG	G	Jail	12 weeks suspended for 12 months	CO	20 days	Defendant was found guilty of intentionally killing a wild bird (a mallard) by ringing its neck. Sentenced to 12 weeks in prison suspended for 12 months, and a 20-day rehabilitation activity requirement. Ordered to pay £300 court costs and £115 victim surcharge.
24/02/2017	Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985	4(2)(A)	1	CPS	Coleraine Magistrates	McAleese	G	G	Fine	£750			Defendant pleaded guilty to possession of three unringed barn owls, contrary to the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985. Fined £750.
14/03/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Phillips	G	G	Jail	4 months suspended for 12 months	CO	150 hours	One of four defendants. Defendant pleaded guilty to possession of a loaded air rifle in a public place, and intentionally killing a mute swan, jointly with three others. Four mute swans involved. Sentenced to four months in prison suspended for 12 months, 150 hours of unpaid work and a 15-day rehabilitation activity requirement. Ordered to pay £85 court costs and £115 victim surcharge.
	Firearms Act 1968	19	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Phillips	G	G	Jail				
14/03/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Lawson	G	G	Jail	4 months suspended for 12 months	CO	25 days rehab activity	One of four defendants. Defendant pleaded guilty to possession of a loaded air rifle in a public place, and intentionally killing a mute swan, jointly with three others. Four mute swans involved. Sentenced to four months in prison suspended for 12 months, and a 25-day rehabilitation activity requirement. Ordered to pay £85 court costs, £60 compensation and £115 victim surcharge.
	Firearms Act 1968	19	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Lawson	G	G	Jail				
14/03/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Juvenile (un-named)	G	G	YRO	12 months			One of four defendants. Defendant pleaded guilty to possession of a loaded air rifle in a public place, and intentionally killing a mute swan, jointly with three others. Four mute swans involved. Given a 12-month referral order. Ordered to pay £105 court costs.
	Firearms Act 1968	19	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Juvenile (un-named)	G	G	YRO				
(20/04/2017)	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Mattson	G	G	Jail	5 months suspended for 12 months	CO	150 hours	One of four defendants. Defendant pleaded not guilty, then changed plea to guilty before trial, to possession of a loaded air rifle in a public place, and intentionally killing a swan, jointly with three others. Four mute swans involved. Sentenced to five months in prison suspended for 12 months, and 150 hours of unpaid work. Ordered to pay £350 court costs, £60 compensation and £115 victim surcharge.
	Firearms Act 1968	19	1	CPS	Haverfordwest Magistrates	Mattson	G	G	Jail				

Appendix 5 (continued)

Bird crime prosecutions in 2017

Date	Act	Section/Reg	Charges	Prosecutor	Court	Surname	Plea	Outcome	Penalty Type	Penalty	Penalty Type 2	Penalty 2	Details
20/03/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	West London Magistrates	Juvenile (un-named)	NG	G	CD	6 months			Defendant (juvenile) was found guilty of intentionally killing a wild bird (pigeon) by stamping on it. Sentenced to a six-month conditional discharge and ordered to pay a £15 victim surcharge.
10/04/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(A)	1	CPS	Sheffield Magistrates	Taverner	G	G	CO	12 months total	CO	25 days total	Defendant pleaded guilty to possessing a wild tawny owl and to Animal Welfare Act 2006 offences relating to unnecessary suffering to dogs. A further charge regarding possession of a European eagle owl was withdrawn. Sentenced to a 12-month community penalty and ordered to undertake up to 25 activity days. Ordered to pay £85 costs. Banned from keeping any animal, except domestic fish, for two years. The tawny owl was forfeited. Defendant voluntarily signed a disclaimer for the European eagle owl that had been seized by police.
	Animal Welfare Act 2006	4(1)	1	CPS	Sheffield Magistrates	Taverner	G	G	CO		CO		
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(A)	1	CPS	Sheffield Magistrates	Taverner	U	D					
13/04/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(A)	2	RSPCA	Luton Magistrates	Parsilyan	G	G	Jail	6 weeks suspended for 12 months	CO	120 hours	Defendant pleaded guilty to two charges of having in his possession or control live wild birds (28 goldfinches and four greenfinches) and pleaded not guilty to one charge of using "birdlime" to kill or capture a wild bird. Defendant was found guilty of both charges of having in his possession or control live wild birds. The charge relating to the "birdlime" was discontinued. Sentenced to six weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months for each charge; sentences to run concurrently. Ordered to carry out 120 hours of supervised unpaid work in the next 12 months and pay £400 court costs.
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(B)	1	RSPCA	Luton Magistrates	Parsilyan	NG	D					
21/04/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	Fiscal	Elgin Sheriff	Gordon	NG	D					Defendant (gamekeeper) was charged with intentionally killing a hen harrier. This followed footage obtained by an RSPB covert camera monitoring a hen harrier nest site, showing a hen harrier being shot. After a number of separate hearings the case was discontinued by Crown Office And Procurator Fiscal Service.
24/04/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	18(A)	1	Fiscal	Dumfries Sheriff	Duncan	U	D					Defendant was charged with being vicariously liable for his employee (gamekeeper) who was convicted of killing a buzzard in 2015. Case discontinued by Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.
10/05/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	Hull Magistrates	Blackburn	G	G	Fine	£120			Defendant pleaded guilty to intentionally killing a wild bird (herring gull) by stamping on it. Fined £120.
25/05/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(A)	3	Fiscal	Forfar Sheriff	Graham	NG	D					Defendant (gamekeeper) was charged with offences relating to the setting of a pole trap on a number of occasions. This followed footage from an RSPB covert camera. After a number of separate hearings the case was discontinued by Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service.
25/05/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	18(1)	3	Fiscal	Forfar Sheriff	Graham	NG	D					
07/08/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	Scarborough Magistrates	Twiddle	G	G	Fine	£8,100			Defendant pleaded guilty to killing a wild bird (three greylag goose goslings). A charge of using a mechanically-propelled vehicle to kill a wild bird was discontinued. Fined £8,100, ordered to pay £85 court costs and £170 victim surcharge.
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(E)	1	CPS	Scarborough Magistrates	Twiddle	G	D					
14/08/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	York Magistrates	Marshall	G	G	CO	12 months			Defendant pleaded guilty to taking and injuring a wild bird (herring gull), which the defendant had been walking on a lead. The injured bird had to be put down due to its injuries. Sentenced to a 12-month community order and prevented from looking after any animals for a year.
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	York Magistrates	Marshall	G	G	CO				

Appendix 5 (continued)

Bird crime prosecutions in 2017

Date	Act	Section/Reg	Charges	Prosecutor	Court	Surname	Plea	Outcome	Penalty Type	Penalty	Penalty Type 2	Penalty 2	Details
30/08/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	18(2)	1	RSPCA	Folkestone Magistrates	Lee	NG	G	Jail	18 Weeks Suspended For 2 Years	CU	18 weeks	Defendant was found guilty of possessing 13 wild birds (12 goldfinches and one redpoll), as well as taking wild birds and possessing equipment for doing so. Also found guilty of causing unnecessary suffering to a dog. Sentenced to 18 weeks in prison suspended for two years, and an 18-week curfew. Ordered to pay £750 costs and £115 victim surcharge.
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(A)	2	RSPCA	Folkestone Magistrates	Lee	NG	G	Jail				
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	RSPCA	Folkestone Magistrates	Lee	NG	G	Jail				
	Animal Welfare Act 2006	4(1)	1	RRSPCA	Folkestone Magistrates	Lee	NG	G	Jail				
06/09/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	18(2)	1	RSPCA	Highbury Corner Magistrates	Yildiz-Coban	G	G	Jail	8 weeks suspended for 2 years			Defendant pleaded guilty to possession of live wild birds (five goldfinches); possessing a clap-net capable of being used for taking wild birds; and failing to meet the welfare needs of wild birds. Sentenced to eight weeks in prison suspended for two years. Ordered to pay £200 costs, £115 victim surcharge, and £200 financial penalty requirement (if defendant fails to pay, the sentence is no longer suspended and must be served). Disqualified from keeping all animals for life.
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(A)	1	RSPCA	Highbury Corner Magistrates	Yildiz-Coban	G	G	Jail				
	Animal Welfare Act 2006	9	1	RSPCA	Highbury Corner Magistrates	Yildiz-Coban	G	G	Jail				
22/09/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	York Magistrates	Smith J	G	G	Fine	£120			Defendant pleaded guilty to taking a wild bird (four goldfinches). Fined £120, ordered to pay £85 costs plus a £30 victim surcharge. The bird trap was confiscated. All birds were released back to the wild.
22/09/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	CPS	York Magistrates	Smith S	G	G	Fine	£120			Defendant pleaded guilty to taking a wild bird (four goldfinches). Fined £120, ordered to pay £85 costs plus a £30 victim surcharge. The bird trap was confiscated. All birds were released back to the wild.
06/10/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	RSPCA	Oxford Magistrates	Lister	NG	G	Fine	£500			Defendant was found guilty of killing a wild bird (a woodpigeon) by shooting it with an air rifle. Fined £500 and ordered to pay £750 costs and £50 victim surcharge. Magistrates also issued a forfeiture order on the air rifle used to shoot the pigeon.
23/10/2017	Animal Welfare Act 2006	4(1)	1	CPS	South Derbyshire Magistrates	Juvenile (un-named)	G	G	YRO	12 months			Defendant (juvenile) pleaded guilty to causing unnecessary suffering to a carrion crow after setting fire to it. Sentenced to a 12-month youth referral order, and to pay £220 costs.
22/11/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(A)	1	RSPCA	Highbury Corner Magistrates	Metin	G	G	Fine	£80			Defendant pleaded guilty to possessing live wild birds (18 goldfinches). Fined £80. Ordered to pay £300 costs. Birds and cages were confiscated.
11/12/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(A)	3	RSPCA	Chatham Magistrates	Fercak	G	G	Fine	£500 total			Defendant pleaded guilty to five charges relating to taking and possessing wild birds, using articles to take wild birds, and possessing items capable of being used to commit an offence. Birds included 13 goldfinches, one siskin, and a dead goldfinch. Fined £500, ordered to pay £300 court costs and £50 victim surcharge.
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	18(2)	1	RSPCA	Chatham Magistrates	Fercak	G	G	Fine				
	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(B)	1	RSPCA	Chatham Magistrates	Fercak	G	G	Fine				
11/12/2017	Wildlife And Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(A)	1	Fiscal	Inverness Sheriff	Riddoch	U	G	Fine	£500			Defendant was found guilty of intentionally killing a buzzard by shooting it during an organised pheasant shoot. Fined £500.

Key to Appendix 5

CD	Conditional Discharge	CBO	Criminal Behaviour Order	CU	Curfew Order
D	Discontinued	G	Guilty	NCA	No Case to Answer
NG	Not Guilty	NP	Not Proven	NSP	No Separate Penalty
U	Unknown	YRO	Youth Referral Order		

Note that the 2017 prosecution figures will be lower than the true figure, in particular for categories involving the taking, sale and possession of non bird of prey species. This is due to the delay in obtaining a full list of RSPCA wild bird related prosecutions. The data were extracted on 17 August 2017 and were accurate at time of extraction.

Explanatory notes

The RSPB's *Birdcrime* report summarises offences against wild bird legislation that are reported to the RSPB each year. We have published the report annually since 1990: it is the only centralised source of incident data for UK wild bird crime.

The report focuses on crimes of higher conservation concern, such as bird of prey persecution and threats to rare breeding birds. The data is gathered by the RSPB Investigations Team, a specialist unit set up to assist the statutory agencies with the investigation and prosecution of crimes against wild birds. The team also undertake their own investigations regarding offences against wild birds of conservation concern.

Incidents of bird crime are recorded in three categories:

Confirmed: where circumstances indicate that an illegal act has taken place. These incidents are typically substantiated by evidence such as post-mortem or toxicological analysis, or reliable eyewitness evidence.

Probable: the circumstances indicate that by far the most likely explanation is that an illegal act has taken place.

Unconfirmed: the circumstances indicate that an illegal act has possibly taken place.

Sadly, we believe that the figures in our report represent only a fraction of the number of wild bird crime incidents that take place. Many remain undetected and unreported, particularly those that occur in remote and private areas.

The RSPB has been recording wildlife crime consistently for several decades. The figures in annual Birdcrime reports may vary from other published reports, because data sets compiled for different purposes, using very different methods, are unlikely to be directly comparable.

Toxicology results from the government's Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS) form the primary source of wildlife poisoning data included in Birdcrime reports. In isolated cases toxicology results may be obtained by other routes. The RSPB is the only organisation to present pesticide analysis data in a standardised format to reflect actual wildlife crime incidents.

Conclusions that can be drawn from annual crime figures alone are limited. A more complete picture of the severe effect that illegal killing is having on national populations of wild birds can be gauged through long-term, systematic study of bird populations themselves, such as the rigorous Conservation Framework reports by Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) on golden eagles (snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/193.pdf) and hen harriers (jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/jncc441.pdf). There are also a range of peer-reviewed scientific publications that demonstrate the impacts of persecution on golden eagles, hen harriers, red kites (snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/904.pdf) and peregrines (sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0006320711003831).

For the SNH review published May 2017 which showed that almost a third of golden eagles fitted with satellite tags disappeared in suspicious circumstances, see: snh.org.uk/pdfs/publications/commissioned_reports/982.pdf

For the *British Birds* paper showing the link between raptor persecution and land managed for driven grouse shooting in the Peak District National Park see britishbirds.co.uk/raptor-persecution/

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