

Rural Crime **Team** NEWSLETTER

Derbyshire Police RCT Seasonal Round Up

Autumn 2022

DNA evidence secures conviction

Following the theft of a John Deere Gator all-terrain vehicle in September 2021 Steven LEARY of Edenhall Road, Sheffield was recently found guilty at Southern Derbyshire Magistrates Court of Handling Stolen Goods and was sentenced to, electronic tag with curfew between the hours of 1900 and 0700 for 12 weeks. Community order, Compensation £500, Costs £85 and Victim Surcharge £95.

The John Deere Gator was recovered a short distance from the location from which it was stolen having become stuck on a large log.

The prosecution was obtained on forensic evidence.



Livestock worrying conviction

Christian Kent of Dronfield has been convicted at Chesterfield Magistrates Court of being the owner / person in charge of a dog dangerously out of control (2 counts) and also being the person in charge of a dog worrying livestock (2 counts). He received a dog destruction order, disqualification from owning dogs plus £1500 compensated and £85 costs.

This incident is one of many where irresponsible dog owners fail to control their dogs resulting in the worrying, injury and often, as was the case here, the death of livestock. This can be a traumatic and costly event for all parties involved and is easily prevented by ensuring your dog is kept securely on a lead whilst near to or likely to come into contact with farm animals.



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 101 non-emergency, in an emergency always call 999

www.derbyshire.police.uk



Making Derbyshire Safer **Together**

Peregrine Project – Egg Theft Prevention

Over the Spring and Summer seasons we are faced with organised criminals targeting Peregrine falcon nesting sites in an attempt to steal the eggs or newly fledged chicks and ultimately causing the nests to fail. This impacts on conservation and is illegal. Despite the risks associated with the location of these nest sites – often on cliff or quarry faces, determined individuals continue to engage in this criminality.

This season the Rural Crime Team tested a new crime prevention method to protect our wildlife. Working in partnership with PID Systems Ltd, a company specialising in the monitoring of remote and vulnerable sites. A number of their VideoGuard 360 units were installed at a Derbyshire Peregrine nesting site that has historically been targeted by criminals. The cameras offer a 360-degree 24hr monitored service which will detect activations, prompting an immediate Police response to the location.

We also worked closely with the RSPB who have provided expert advice regarding the positioning of these units to ensure there is no disturbance of the nesting bird.

As a result, following 4 failed seasons this year 3 healthy Peregrine Falcon chicks fledged from the site.



Crime against wild birds

In May, Police received reports from Derby College that bird eggs had been stolen from a bird box inhabited by Blue Tits at their Broomfield Hall Campus in Ilkeston. RCT officers secured CCTV footage of 2 persons stealing the eggs and enquiries with the college identified the pair as students. Both suspects were formally interviewed and working with the college and the suspect's parents, an RJ was agreed. The suspects constructed and put up bird boxes at both the college and their homes. It was recognised that criminalising the youths was unnecessary but the use of RJ to ensure a positive outcome with regard to the investigation but also an opportunity to educate the youths regarding the impact of crime against wild birds and our wildlife generally was the best possible outcome for everyone involved.



Rural Crime Action Week

The beginning of October saw the team heavily involved with Derbyshire Rural Crime Awareness Week. The week was intended to raise the profile of issues affecting the Rural Communities of Derbyshire and shine a light on the work done by the Rural Crime Team in relation to our 4 priority areas; Agriculture, Wildlife, Heritage and Equine.

As part of Operation Logrey, the Rural Crime Team, working with officers from Ops division, the local SNT and also Datatag, conducted roadside vehicle checks on any plant or farm machinery, 4X4's, caravans etc. It was a successful day with one suspect stolen van seized and a number of driving offences dealt with. The Rural Crime Team will be running similar events on a regular basis throughout the county.

To raise awareness about the impact of trading in Ivory and also ensure dealers are trading in line with new legislation, the Rural Crime Team visited a number of antique dealers throughout the county as part of the wider national operation Thunder aimed at combating the illegal trade in endangered species. A large number of Ivory items were seized and investigations are ongoing.

Hare coursing and poaching patrols. The team are committed to reducing this seasonal problem that generally affects the flatter more expansive farms in the South of the County.

During Rural Crime Awareness Week the team attended the 71st British National Ploughing championships.

This kind of engagement is vital to the team's work given that the anyone attending the event is the target audience in terms of raising awareness and crime prevention.



Autumn Feature – Poaching, Hare & Deer Coursing

Coursing and Poaching

Hunting any wild mammal with a dog has been illegal since the introduction of the Hunting Act in 2004.

Fortunately, Derbyshire doesn't experience the same level of hare coursing incidents as some of our neighbouring counties. It's important to note however that some of those involved, live in our urban and city communities, and will travel across borders to engage in organised criminal activity.

So, what is Hare Coursing?

Hare coursing involves the use of long dogs such as lurchers, grey hounds, salukis and other "sight" hounds. At organised events the dogs compete against each other in pursuit of a live hare, they are judged on which dog is quickest to turn and eventually catch the hare. It's not unusual however to see smaller groups hare coursing independently. Coursing usually occurs on farmland or moorland. Derbyshire has a lot of both, but due to not being particularly flat, a lot of this land isn't suitable for coursing. The south of the county and areas of north east Derbyshire and the High Peak do at times suffer from coursing. Offenders often trespass and may be hostile and aggressive to landowners if challenged.

How to spot Hare Coursing

Coursing typically starts after harvest time, so the end of summer into the start of autumn, it can occur at any time of day however the prime times are early morning or dusk. As mentioned above it will occur on Moorland or more commonly on farmland which is either pasture or recently cleared of crops. Offenders will often park near to the location they intent to course, this may be in gateways to farmland or grass verges, they will typically use older 4x4 vehicles, or vans. They also need to be of a suitable size to carry multiple dogs. Offenders tend to be male and will be in groups of 2 or more and may have multiple dogs, they will tend to walk along the edges of fields in the hope of flushing a hare from cover and will use slip leads on the dogs so they can be released quickly if a hare goes up. They will often wear camouflage clothing and may also carry lamps in order to hunt at night if they are out late evening.

To summarise, groups of men in areas where you wouldn't expect to see dog walkers, with lurcher type dogs should not be ignored as they may be coursing or poaching.



What is Deer Coursing/Hunting?

Deer coursing is similar to hare coursing in so much as groups of men use dogs to hunt their chosen quarry. Deer Coursing/hunting is however quite different to hare coursing in its method.

The purpose of deer coursing/hunting is to use a group of dogs to bring down and kill a deer, the dogs used will often be bull lurcher type dogs, this being a cross between a bully breed such as bull terriers, pit bulls and Staffordshire bull terriers and a lurcher type dogs. The result of cross breeding offers hunters a fast long-legged dog which is also big enough and powerful enough to bring down deer or indeed tackle and kill badgers and foxes.

The aim of those involved is to find a deer and bring it down and kill it. The deer is often left at the scene, but it is not uncommon for the animal to be taken home and butchered in the back garden, the meat is then either used for the dogs or sold on for human consumption.

How to spot Deer Coursing/Hunting.

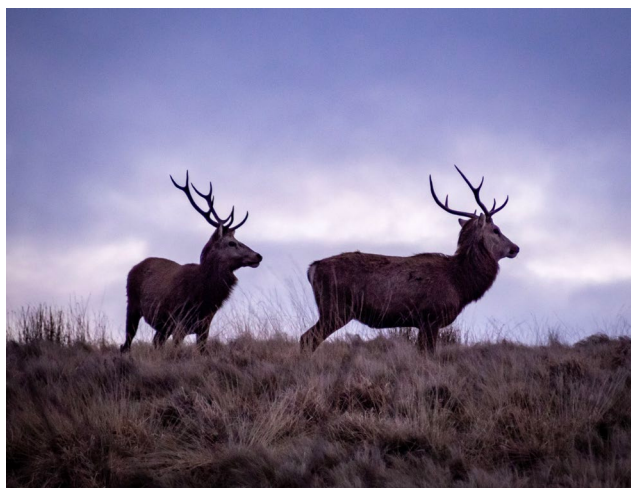
Derbyshire is heavily populated with deer, namely Fallow Deer, Red Deer, Roe Deer and rarely Muntjac Deer in the very south of the county. All these species are fair game for offenders although there is more "sport" in the larger species.

There are 2 distinctive methods, the first being similar to hare coursing in so much that individuals will park up and take their dogs out on foot and hope to flush a deer from cover and then release the dogs to bring it down and kill it. This will occur most often at dawn or dusk and during the hours of darkness with the assistance of a lamp. The things to look out for are groups of males with dogs capable of bringing down deer, they will often be wearing camouflage clothing and may be in possession of lamps and possibly thermal equipment. Also, vehicles parked up at night, that are capable of housing numerous large dogs, a look in the vehicle may show evidence of dogs being housed in there, lamps and may even have had the back seats removed to allow for more dogs to be carried.

What to do if you suspect Hare or Deer coursing or poaching.

Think carefully before challenging people who you suspect may be involved in illegal activity. It is better to stand off and observe and make an early call to the Police.

If the activity is happening at the time, then you should Call **999** and ask for the Police.



If you are calling to report activity at a later time, please use **101** or online reporting on the Derbyshire Constabulary website – www.derbyshire.police.uk

Where possible obtain photographs or video footage of the offenders and their dogs and any vehicles, but only if it is safe for you to do so.

Take a note of physical descriptions of people and the registration numbers of any vehicles present.

To reiterate, think of your own security first and do not get drawn into conflict. Getting the Police on their way at the earliest opportunity should be the priority. If the offenders leave whilst you are still in the area, take note of their direction of travel and pass that on to the Police.



Autumn Feature - Farm & Agricultural Security

As the darker nights approach it's a good time to take a fresh look at the security of your property and premises.

- Theft of valuable vehicles, machinery, tools and fuel is on the increase.
- Your property may be at risk from thieves. Please consider your security.
- Always report suspicious visitors or behaviour on, at, or around your property to the police at the earliest opportunity.

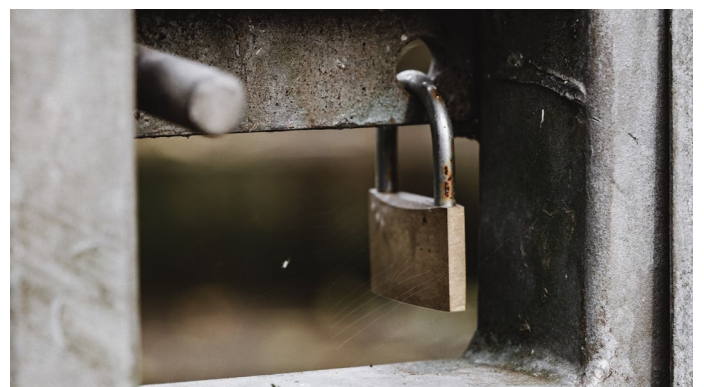
Try to develop the security habit during your work. It takes a conscious effort over time. Thieves depend on poor security habits and vulnerable premises and property.

Locks and Security

- Use British Standard locks, good quality locking bars and high security close shackle padlocks.
- Windows can be protected with metal bars.
- Lock outbuildings when they are not in use. Where possible keep gates closed/locked.

Vehicles, machinery and boundaries

- Try to secure or immobilise vehicles or equipment when not in use.
- If possible, remove machinery from fields especially near roads.



- If possible, keep vehicles/machinery in a lockable building or garage.
- Keep a record of vehicle or machinery identification/serial numbers.
- Consider – CESAR/DATA TAG schemes/ fit a Tracker.
- Keep keys away from windows or doors.
- Consider regular checks of your boundaries and access points – gates, fences, walls provide physical security.

Lighting and CCTV

- Thieves don't like well-lit areas so fit outside security lights controlled by either automatic time switches or PIR.
- You can install CCTV which can be monitored remotely, and which will trigger an alert on a mobile phone.
- Consider audible movement alarms that trigger CCTV.
- Consider fitting CCTV warning signage.

Storage of Tools and valuable equipment

- Tools, chainsaws, power tools and fuel should all be stored in a locked building. Internal metal cages can also slow intruders down.
- Consider engraving or marking your property to make it identifiable and more difficult to sell on.
- Keep a list of tools and their serial numbers.
- Consider photographing items for your records too.

Livestock

- Grazing animals are an easy target for thieves.
- Check stock and boundaries regularly if possible.
- Consider physical security like gates, posts or rocks at vulnerable gaps or access points.
- If livestock is stolen accurate descriptions are important.
- Ear tags/horn brands/post code tattooing assists identification.
- Take photographs of particularly valuable animals.
- Consider CCTV in yards/barns.



Fuel tank and heating oil security

With the recent rise in fuel prices, security of fuel stores or heating oil should also be a consideration.

- Fit a lock on the tank.
- Consider an alarm padlock or a level monitor.
- Consider security lighting or CCTV at the tank/fuel storage location

Finally....

The Rural Crime Team are dedicated to provide an effective policing service to tackle rural and wildlife crime in all its forms and to offer reassurance and advice to the rural community.

For more information or if you have any questions on any of the issues discussed in this newsletter, please don't hesitate to contact us.



Instagram – Derbyshire Rural Crime Team
Facebook – Derbyshire Rural Crime Team
Twitter @DerbyshireRCT
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