



Operation Randall

tackling rural crime
Newsletter

Issue 41 | January 2024

 @RuralCrimeNfk

Introduction

Welcome to the first newsletter of 2024! Happy new year to you all and I hope you have had a lovely festive period.

This month's newsletter is perhaps a tad shorter than normal as a team we have been supporting our drone team with several deployments over the Christmas period alongside our frontline response colleagues and there is often a slight delay in crimes being reported to us at the end of December.

As always as a team we have been out and about in just about every corner of the county this past month through our various roles including just to name a few Sandringham with royalty protection shifts, King's Lynn for Boxing Day football, Dereham on Christmas day to deal with an injured deer (sadly many others dealt with around the county throughout the month) and of course our whole team was involved in the very sad incident at Wensum Park in the city at the beginning of the month where Gaynor Lord's body was found.

There are many benefits to our roles within the constabulary but one of the biggest for me is being a countywide resource and getting around every corner of our beautiful county meeting people from all walks of life.

Hare Coursing/OP Galileo Update

Whilst numbers of incidents have increased ever so slightly in the last couple months slightly above this time last year, but so have prosecutions.

We are currently in the process of charging four people from the incident back in October this year, whilst another four men were arrested and charged earlier this month with hare coursing. On top of that we have another male currently on bail after reports of hare coursing and being found stuck in a field in his vehicle (we have his vehicle too!). As you can see, we are working hard to make Norfolk a very unwelcoming county to those who wish to commit crime. All this work comes from work as one big team with assistance from local officers, our Op Moonshot team and traffic officers all pulling together to bring those responsible to justice.

Post Box Thefts

We have seen a handful of Royal Mail post boxes stolen in the month of December around the North and West Norfolk. These are all boxes which are in poles and traditional style. If you see anyone interfering with a mail box and it doesn't look right, please contact us immediately and provides as much information as possible including any vehicles involved.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

PC Chris Shelley | christopher.shelley@norfolk.police.uk | 07900 407106

Wildlife Crime Update

Norfolk Police have issued an appeal for information after further tests revealed a Red Kite discovered dead in North Creake had died from suspected insecticide poisoning. Officers from Norfolk Police's Op Randall team have been investigating the death of the protected bird of prey, which was found dead by a member of the public in a field in North Creake in August 2023, and had suffered no obvious physical injuries. Further tests were ordered to establish the cause of death and a post-mortem examination carried out through the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS) at the end of November has subsequently detected a number of pesticides and insecticides, including very high levels of Bendiocarb which has been concluded as the likely cause of death. Searches carried out by police alongside National Wildlife Crime Unit officers and the RSPB investigation team to find the source of the substance have so far proved negative and now officers are keen to speak to anyone with information that may help their investigation or who has witnessed anything similar in the area.

We have been waiting for the results of the toxicological analysis, and now know the levels of Bendiocarb contained within the samples taken from the bird have not come from the approved use of such a product.

I have to conclude that this product has been used illegally in very close proximity to where the bird was recovered. Bendiocarb has been the active ingredient in a number of insecticide products in the past approved to deal with wasps and ants. In more recent years the number of products including this ingredient has reduced and its approved use has been to tackle such species inside buildings. Products containing this ingredient can only be purchased and used by professional pesticide users, and only then can they use the product inside a building to reduce the risk to non-target species.

Red Kites are listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act. We have a zero-tolerance approach to the persecution of birds of prey and I'd appeal to anybody who knows anything that may help get to the bottom of what happened here or indeed has any information about anything similar happening, please get in touch with us.

Anyone with any information is asked to get in touch via the following channels, quoting reference 38/82207/23:

Website: <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/tell-us>

Email: OperationRandall@norfolk.police.uk

Phone: 101

Crimestoppers: Contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111, or via their online form:

www.crimestoppers-uk.org

From a wider wildlife point of view, despite it been a slower time generally for our native wildlife we have dealt with several different and unique reports this past month.

We are currently dealing with some drainage work which has not only caused damage on neighbouring land but has potentially damaged the site of a European Protect Species (EPS) namely Great Crested Newts. This is an interesting job as it involves some incredibly unique water features called 'Pingos' which I have had to do lots of reading on. In the simplest form these are natural water filled pond like features which were left behind after the last ice age by ice being trapped under ground and then thawing. They are incredibly rich in biodiversity due to their uniqueness. Sadly, many have been lost over the years but here in Norfolk and in particular Breckland we still have quite a few. We are currently waiting on survey data to prove presence of such species, but we have already used our drone capabilities to capture the damage caused.

In another job which has taken a little bit of research too, we have been dealing with the potential illegal catching of pheasants. Pheasants are a very strange anomaly in law in such they are a non-native species, and whilst most are reared and released by someone and at that point considered property once released into the wild, they are not owned by anyone nor are they classified as a wild bird due to the fact they are non-native. This causes many confusions throughout policing and the industry. This all said the Wildlife and Countryside Act does define under some sections that game birds are included in such protection. Which is where Section 5 of the act comes in as it makes clear game birds are not allowed to be trapped by any means for the purpose of killing. The only exemptions are at the end of the season those who have released pheasants can catch pheasants back up for the purpose of breeding. So, in short you cannot use any sort of trap or net to catch any wild bird or game bird otherwise you are committing an offence under Section 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act unless acting under a licence.

WhatsApp Group

The Operation Randall WhatsApp group is expanding. At present the group mainly consists of partner agencies, key landowners and administrators of other social media rural groups. I am currently looking at increasing the size of this group so if you meet one or more of the above criteria – work for a partner agency, key landowner or you administer another rural group on social media - or if you think you would benefit or be able to contribute in any way, I want to hear from you. You can contact me on email at christopher.shelley@norfolk.pnn.police.uk

Dogs Worrying Livestock

It's always incredibly frustrating when I have to write about these incidents as they shouldn't be happening. We have had two in the past where dogs have got into fields of sheep causing distress to the livestock, it can also have significant impact on the owners of the livestock. These remain under investigation with all option of prosecution remaining open. Please keep your dog on a lead around livestock at all times, no matter how good your dog is they can change in an instant and it also encourages others to keep their dogs on a lead.

If you're a livestock farmer please do put some signs up to especially in popular dog walking spots/footpaths to encourage people, we can provide some laminated simple signs too if required please get in touch.

January in Countryside

January can be a tough month for us as humans, cold, wet, often windy (already has been!), long dark nights where the sun makes very few appearances. When the sun does appear it's a very welcome visitor often provide some warmth. If it's tough for us its sure to be tough for our wildlife.

The first that come to mind this time of year for me is often our garden birds. Birds like blackbirds, thrushes and robins rely on soft ground with plenty of worms available or berries and seeds from plants. These are often few and far between this time of year so if you can put out a few extra treats out for them to enjoy, it can take birds a little while to work out where a food source is but once they find it you will be rewarded with a daily visit from many of our garden regulars.

Most of our mammals are well into their winter slow down so you shouldn't be seeing hedgehogs out at this time of year and if you do its best to seek expert advice. Likewise, bats shouldn't be about during these cold months. Now is the time to carry out any last-minute pond maintenance before the Great Crested Newts and other aquatic life starts to work its way back by the end of February for the breeding months. Newts will often move to undergrowth,

log piles or even stone walls to avoid frosts. They can travel as far as 500 metres away from a pond to curl up for winter but just be mindful of suitable locations around a pond whilst carrying out work. Great Crested Newts are a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act. On our farms most of our cattle remain inside being fed a winter ration with constant fresh bedding required. Even those that do stay out will have to be supplemented as there is nothing nutritious left in our grass lands. Some will be grazed on stubble turnips however you don't see so much of this in Norfolk. Our stubble turnips which are planted after the winter cereal crops are harvested in the summer are more likely to be grazed by sheep in Norfolk. These provide some great over winter feed which is in short supply naturally. All breeding ewes will hopefully be well in lamb now and some will have even started lambing especially pedigree flocks who prefer to lamb early to provide large lambs for the show ring later in the year or for breed society markets. It is essential over the next few months that pregnant ewes are not put under any stress as this often leads to abortions or other complications. Dogs worrying livestock is a real threat, please always keep dogs on leads around livestock I have seen some shocking images over the past year as a result of dog attacks.

On our fields, sugar beet continues to be lifted this time of year and carted into the factories at Cantley and Wissington where this odd-looking bulb plant which originated hundreds of years ago from the sea is turned into sugar. Sugar beet are one of very few crops grown on large scale which is harvested in the winter months, and this is because of its biology of creating high sugar content. In short, sugar beet needs a mild growing season, but its sugar content is then secured in the bulb from a cold period.

Other field work is often on hold this month with the ground far too wet, it gives a great opportunity for general farm and machinery maintenance to be carried out.



Appeal following burglary in Browston

Police are appealing for witnesses following a burglary in Browston.

The incident occurred between midnight on 30 December and midnight on 31 December 2023 when a quad bike was stolen from an address on Browston Lane. Officers would like to hear from anyone who may have witnessed the incident or any drivers/cyclists who may have any relevant dashcam footage from the 28 December between 10.50am to 11.15am, whilst travelling along Browston Lane.

Anyone with any information is asked to get in touch via the following channels quoting crime reference 36/133/24:

Website: <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/tell-us>

Email: David.moran@norfolk.police.uk

Phone: 101

Crimestoppers: Contact the independent charity Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111, or via their online form: www.crimestoppers-uk.org

Conclusion

Thank you again for taking the time to read through. I am sure many of you like myself are looking forward to a slightly more 'normal' month ahead – fingers crossed. As always, any issues, concerns or questions please don't hesitate to contact us.

The police will never
ask you for cash or
your bank details.

STOP...
this is a scam!

THE
TRAP

