
2021



Birdcrime appendices

To accompany the Birdcrime report 2021

Birdcrime appendices

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Appendix 1

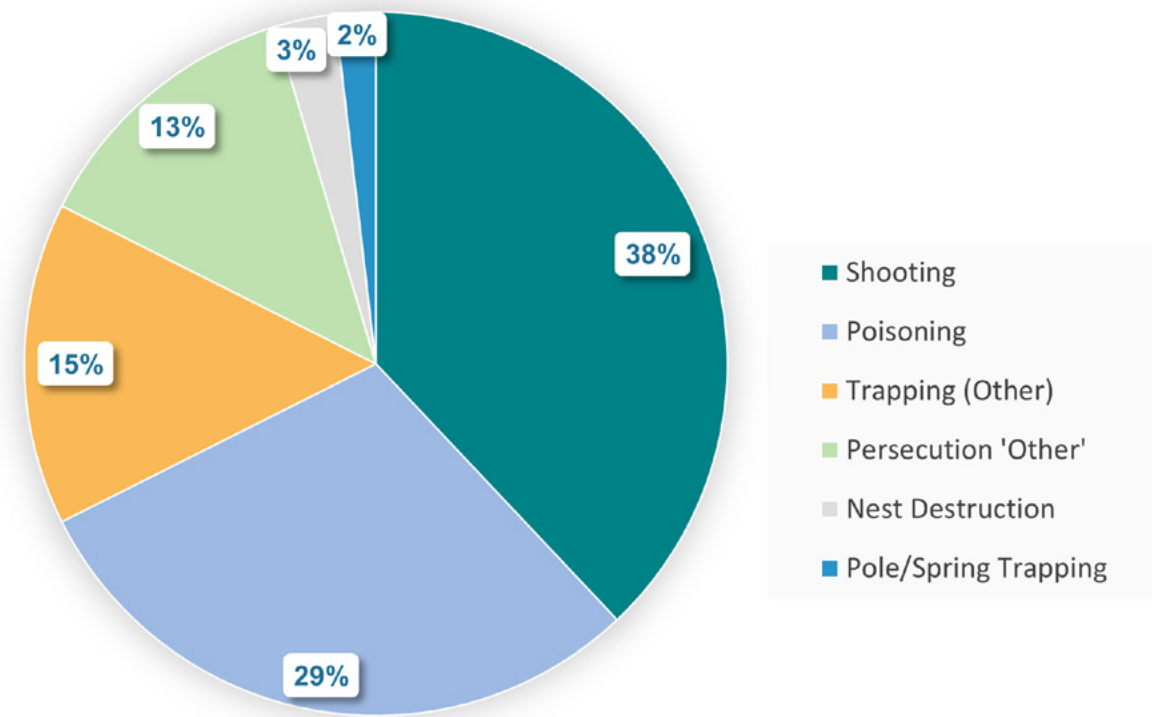
Data summary 2021 Raptor persecution (see also Appendices 2 and 4)

In 2021, the RSPB Investigations Team recorded 108* confirmed raptor persecution incidents. Each is mapped to an Ordnance Survey 10km grid square (see Appendix 4) and can be broken down further into the following incident types:

- 41 confirmed shooting or attempted shooting incidents. Victims included 22 buzzards, six red kites, five peregrines, three goshawks, one barn owl, one sparrowhawk, one tawny owl, one short-eared owl and one falcon (species unspecified).
- 32 confirmed poisoning (pesticide) abuse incidents. Victims included 12 buzzards, 10 red kites, two peregrines, one golden eagle, and one white-tailed eagle.
- 14 confirmed ‘other’ persecution incidents. Victims included three buzzards and one hen harrier.

- 18 confirmed trapping incidents. Victims included 13 buzzards, one sparrowhawk, and one barn owl.
- Three confirmed nest destruction incidents. This involved the destruction of one osprey nest, one goshawk nest and one kestrel nest (victim numbers unknown for all nests).
- Victim total: 91. Species split: 50 buzzards, 16 red kites, 7 peregrines, five ‘birds of prey’ (species withheld), three goshawks, two sparrowhawks, two barn owls, one golden eagle, one white-tailed eagle, one hen harrier, one tawny owl, one short-eared owl, one falcon (species unspecified).

Figure 1: The 108* confirmed raptor persecution incidents in 2021 by % incident type



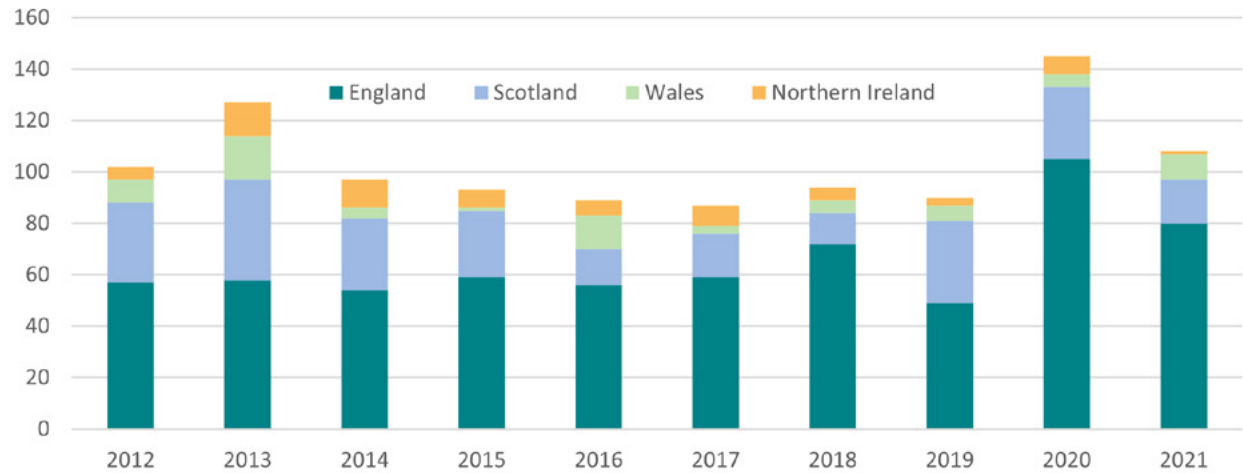
To see the most complete, centralised set of known confirmed raptor persecution incidents in the UK, including 2021 data, see our interactive Raptor Persecution Map Hub: rspb.org.uk/raptormap.

***Note:** that this figure is likely to increase as data backlogs and delays from various sources (including due to Covid-19) result in further incidents or details being added retrospectively.

UK breakdown of 2021 confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents:

- 80 (74%) of confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents occurred in England
- 17 (16%) occurred in Scotland
- 10 (9%) occurred in Wales
- 1 (1%) occurred in Northern Ireland

Figure 2: Confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents 2012–2021 split into UK countries



Note: these incidents represent a fraction of those that occur as many go undetected. Conclusions that can be drawn from these figures in isolation are limited. See 'Explanatory notes' for bigger picture scientific studies.

Figure 3: Confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents 2012–2021: worst 20 UK counties over 10 years

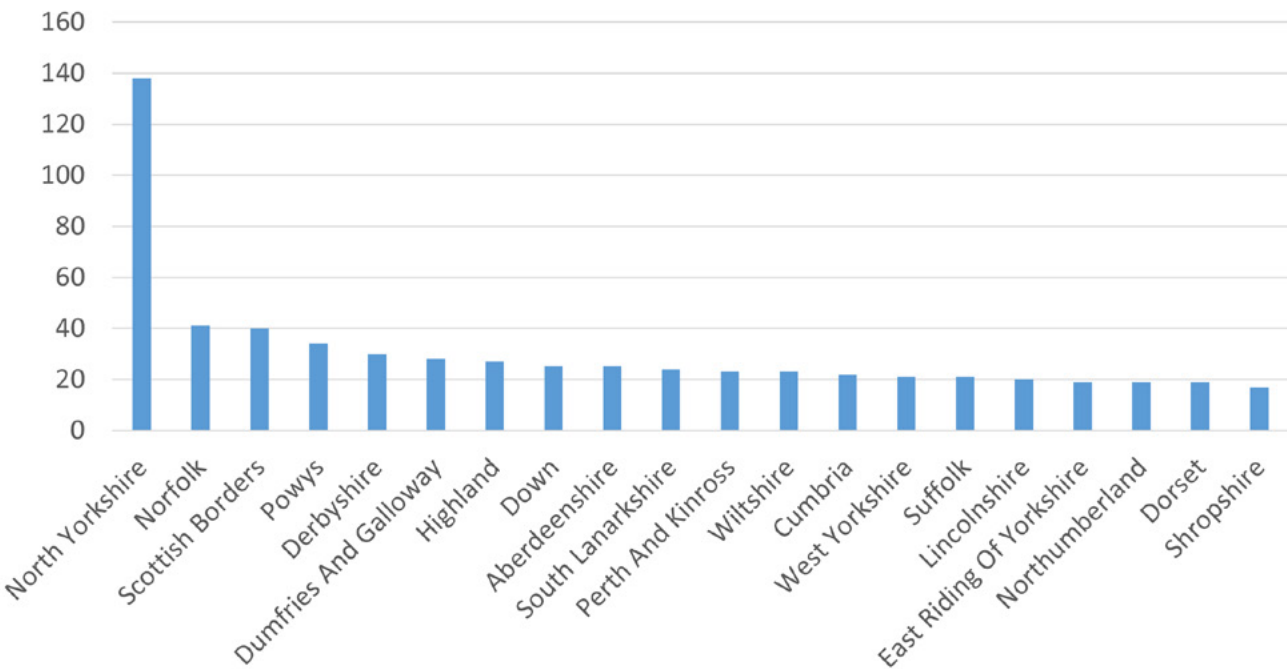
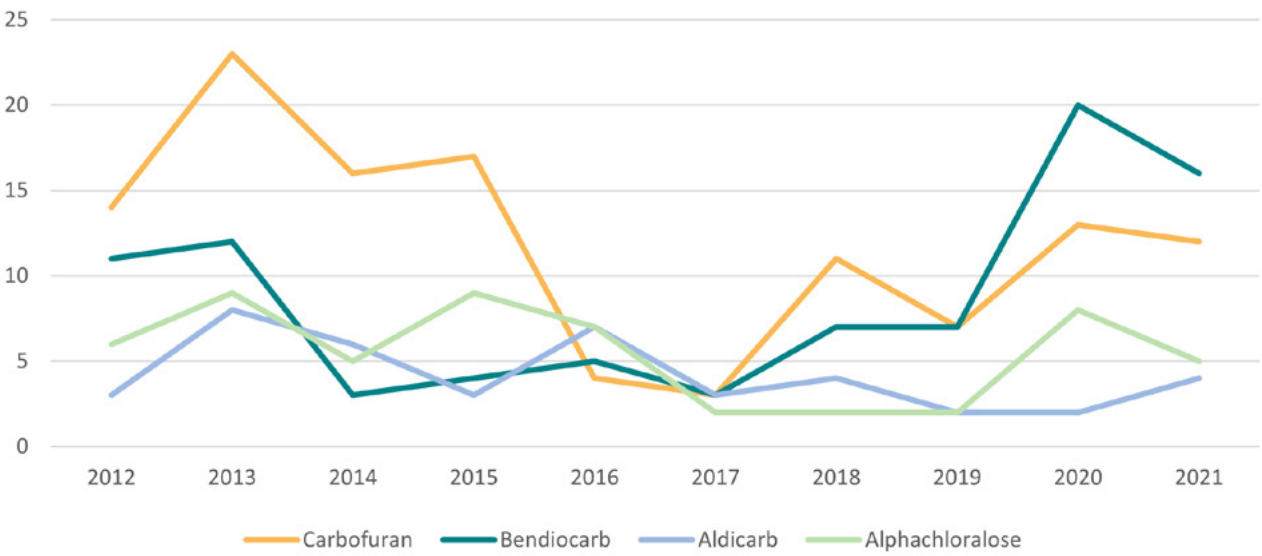
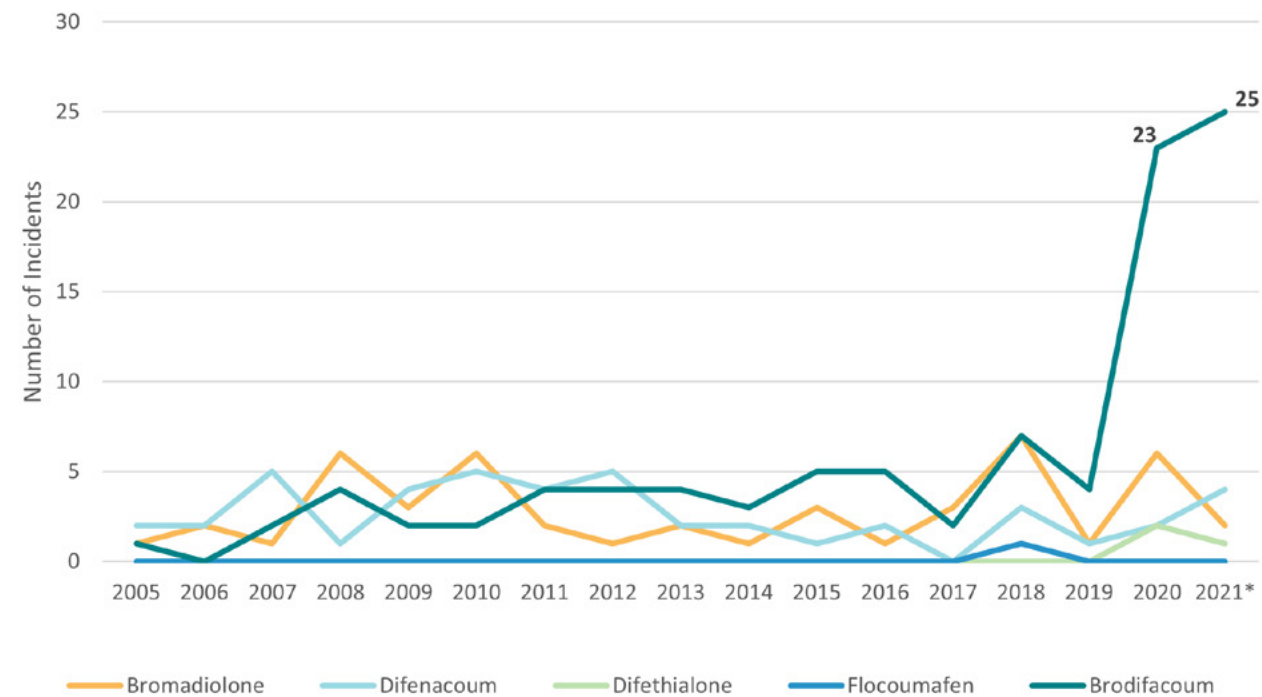


Figure 4: The four most commonly abused pesticides in UK raptor persecution incidents 2012–2021



Since 2020, bendiocarb is the most commonly detected substance in raptor persecution pesticide abuse incidents.

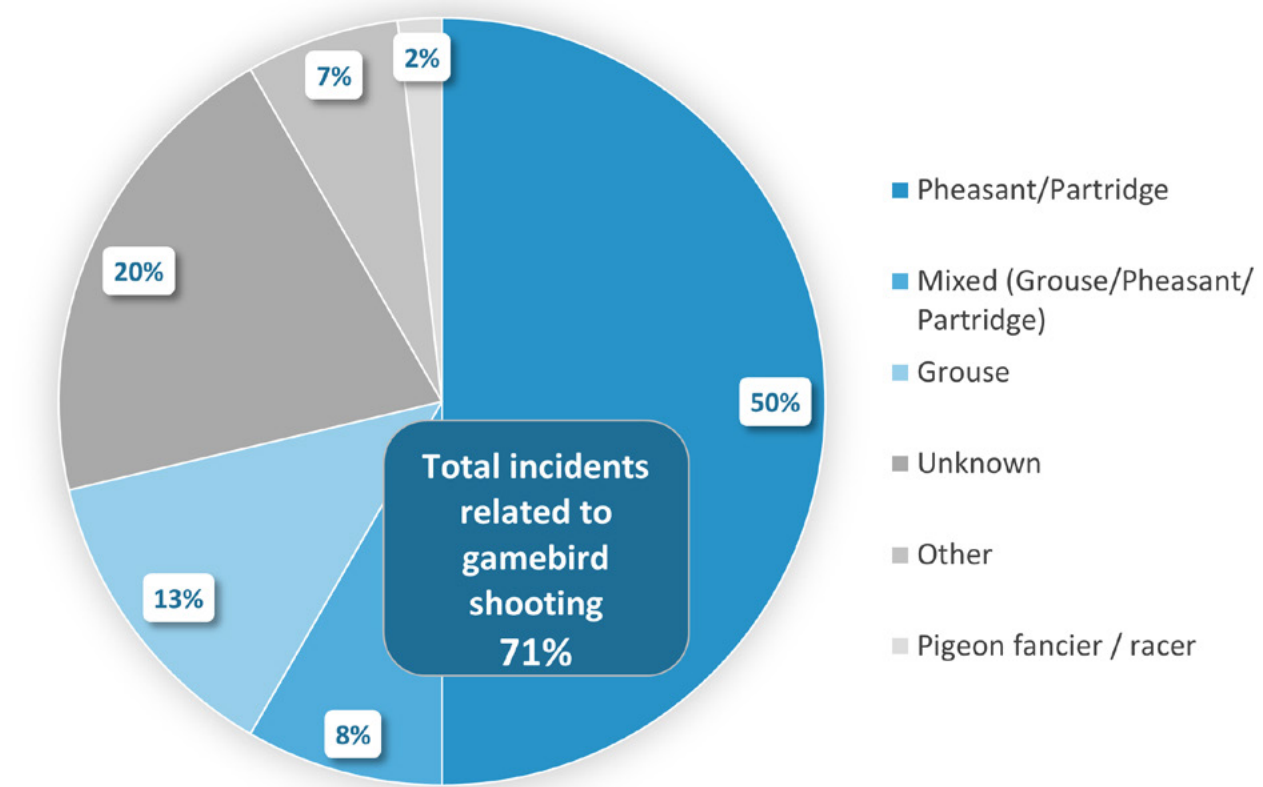
Figure 5: Dominant second-generation anticoagulant rodenticide (SGAR) found in high exposure bird of prey cases in England, 2005–2021



Source: Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme * 2021 data is not a full year - covers period to 31/07/2021

A sharp rise in the rodenticide brodifacoum found at levels contributory to/cause of death since 2019 is of concern.

Figure 6: The 108 confirmed UK raptor persecution incidents 2021 split into likely persecution groups



Confirmed incidents have been classified as connected with main persecution groups (with high or medium confidence) based on evidence and intelligence. The main groups currently are:

- Land managed for and/or connected to individuals or groups managing land for game bird shooting (split into grouse, pheasant/partridge, or mixed pheasant/grouse/partridge);
- Pigeon fanciers/pigeon racing;
- Other (includes a mixture of variable incidents beyond other assigned groups, e.g: aviculturist targeting birds; youths shooting birds with air rifle; farm/livestock related targeting. Additional separate groups may be assigned out of this ‘others’ group in future, as appropriate.
- Unknown (there is currently insufficient intelligence/evidence to assign an incident to a given group with anything more than low confidence).

Other wild bird crimes (non-raptor persecution)

Note that data backlogs and delays from various sources (including due to Covid-19) are likely to result in further incidents or details being added retrospectively.

Wild bird poisoning

There were four confirmed wild bird poisoning incidents (other than raptor persecution incidents) where wild birds were victims or vulnerable. See [Appendix 3](#) for details.

Trade in wild birds and taxidermy

- 26 reports of illegal taking, possession or sale of wild birds other than birds of prey (predominantly finches).
- One report of illegal taxidermy/unlawful possession of dead wild birds.
- 26 reports of illegal taking, possession or sale of birds of prey.

Egg collecting and taking eggs and/or chicks from nests of wild birds.

- Nine reported incidents of egg collecting and taking eggs from nests of wild birds.
- In relation to Schedule 1 species: one confirmed incident of taking chicks from a goshawk nest; and seven probable incidents of taking eggs/chicks from peregrine falcon nests.
- Two reports of eggs of wild birds being illegally sold.

Prosecutions

There were eight* wild bird crime prosecutions in 2021 (see also [Appendix 5](#)). These involved a total of 30 charges, 27 of which resulted in a guilty outcome, and the remaining three charges were discontinued. Fines for the year amounted to £2,220 and three individuals were given a prison sentence for their crimes: all of these were suspended.

*Note that this figure is low but anticipated to increase as data backlogs and delays from various sources (including due to Covid-19) result in further incidents or details being added retrospectively.

In 2021 there were five individuals prosecuted for bird of prey persecution-related offences, all of these were gamekeepers, and four were convicted (see [Appendix 5](#)).

Figure 7: Bird of prey persecution-related convictions per year 1990–2021

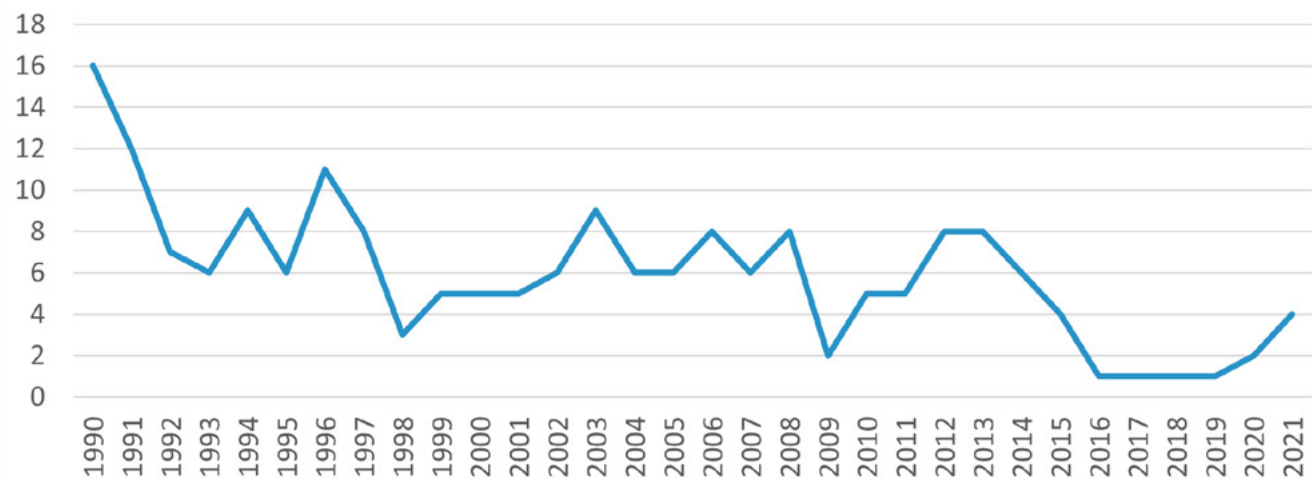


Figure 8: Bird of prey persecution-related convictions

Figure 8(a): The occupations or interests of the 190 individuals convicted of bird of prey persecution-related offences 1990–2021

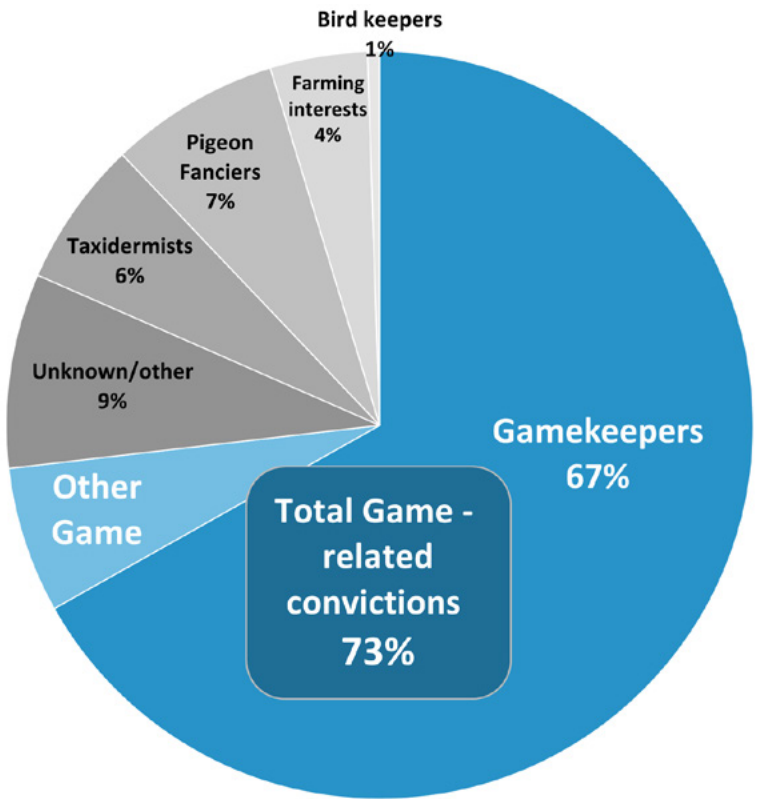
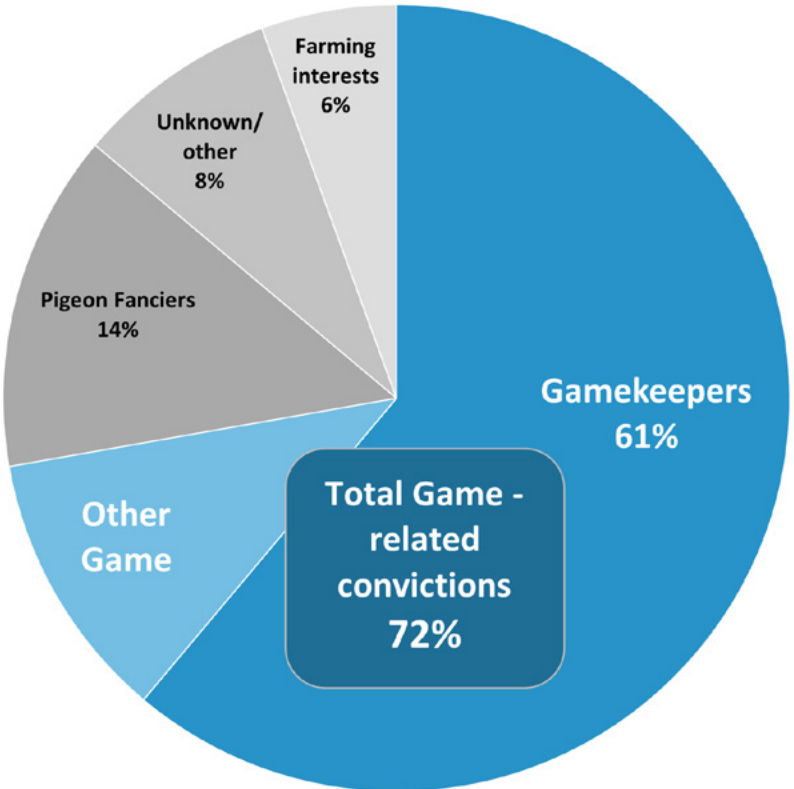


Figure 8(b): The occupations or interests of the 36 individuals convicted of bird of prey persecution-related offences in the last 10 years 2012–2021



Appendix 2

Confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents (including poisoning) 2021

Type	Month	Species	Number	Poison	Bait	County	10km grid ref
Shooting or attempted shooting	Jan	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Cambridgeshire	TL64
	Feb	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Bedfordshire	TL13
	Feb	Tawny owl	1	NA	NA	County Durham	NZ44
	Mar	Red kite	1	NA	NA	Gloucestershire	SP01
	Mar	Barn owl	1	NA	NA	Hampshire	SU46
	Mar	Red kite	1	NA	NA	Powys	SO05
	Mar	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	South Yorkshire	SE10
	Mar	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	South Yorkshire	SE51
	Apr	Short-eared owl	1	NA	NA	County Durham	NY82
	Apr	Red kite	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TF70
	May	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Angus	NO25
	May	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Derbyshire	SK32
	May	Peregrine falcon	1	NA	NA	Leicestershire	SP69
	May	Peregrine falcon	1	NA	NA	North Yorkshire	SE63
	Jul	Peregrine falcon	1	NA	NA	Fife	NT28
	Jul	Goshawk	1	NA	NA	Highland	NH63
	Jul	Goshawk	1	NA	NA	Staffordshire	SK12
	Jul	Peregrine falcon	1	NA	NA	Wiltshire	SU08
	Aug	Peregrine falcon	1	NA	NA	Buckinghamshire	SP72
	Aug	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Aug	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Aug	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Aug	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Aug	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Aug	Goshawk	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Sep	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Sep	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Wrexham	SJ13
	Nov	Red kite	1	NA	NA	Essex	TL70
	Nov	Falcon sp	1	NA	NA	Kent	TQ46
	Nov	Red kite	1	NA	NA	North Yorkshire	SE06
	Dec	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Edinburgh City	NT17
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Sparrowhawk	1	NA	NA	Withheld [Scotland]	Withheld
	Withheld	Red kite	1	NA	NA	Withheld [Scotland]	Withheld
	Number of birds of prey		41				
Illegal pole or spring trapping	Jun	Barn owl	1	NA	NA	Kent	TR06
	Withheld	Birds of prey	1	NA	NA	Highland	NH92
	Number of birds of prey		1				
Illegal trapping (other)	Jan	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Nottinghamshire	SK74
	Jan	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Nottinghamshire	SK74
	Jan	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Nottinghamshire	SK74
	Jan	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Somerset & Avon	ST67
	Feb	Sparrowhawk	1	NA	NA	Cheshire	SJ96

Illegal trapping (other) (continued)	Feb	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Staffordshire	SJ74
	Mar	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Angus	NO26
	Apr	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Conwy	SH85
	Apr	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Perth & Kinross	NN82
	Aug	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Wrexham	SJ24
	Sep	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Shropshire	SO78
	Oct	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Shropshire	SJ20
	Oct	Buzzard	2	NA	NA	Shropshire	SJ20
	Oct	Buzzard	3	NA	NA	Shropshire	SJ20
	Oct	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Shropshire	SO29
	Oct	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Shropshire	SO29
	Number of birds of prey		14				
Nest destruction	Apr	Osprey (nest)	T	NA	NA	Conwy	SH95
	Apr	Kestrel (nest)	T	NA	NA	Somerset	ST75
	Jun	Goshawk (nest)	T	NA	NA	Gloucestershire	SO91
	Number of birds of prey		3 nests				
"Other" Persecution	Jan	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Perth & Kinross	NN83
	Jan	Birds of prey	T	Bendiocarb (possession)	NA	Suffolk	TL78
	Feb	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Perth & Kinross	NN83
	Mar	Birds of prey	T	Withheld (possession)	NA	Lincolnshire	TF22
	Mar	Hen harrier	1	NA	NA	North Yorkshire	SE29
	May	Birds of prey	T	Carbofuran (possession)	NA	North Yorkshire	SE19
	Aug	Birds of prey	T	NA	NA	Herefordshire	SO42
	Sep	Birds of prey	T	Strychnine (possession)	NA	Norfolk	TL78
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Buzzard	1	NA	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Birds of prey	T	Bendiocarb (possession)	NA	Dorset	Withheld
	Withheld	Birds of prey [Withheld]	2	NA	NA	Withheld [Scotland]	Withheld
	Withheld	Birds of prey [Withheld]	3	NA	NA	Withheld [Scotland]	Withheld
	Number of birds of prey		9				
Poisoning	Jan	Birds of prey	T	Strychnine	Unknown	Bedfordshire	SP92
	Jan	Birds of prey	T	Aldicarb	Rabbit	Derbyshire	SK26
	Jan	Buzzard	4	Bendiocarb	Unknown	Gloucestershire	ST79
		Raven	11				
	Jan	Buzzard	1	Alphachloralose, carbofuran, bendiocarb	Unknown	North Yorkshire	SE17
	Jan	Red kite	1	Bendiocarb, carbofuran, isofenphos, alphachloralose, brodifacoum	Unknown	North Yorkshire	SE17
	Feb	Buzzard	1	Aldicarb	Unknown	Cleveland	NZ61
	Feb	Red kite	1	Bendiocarb, carbofuran	Unknown	County Durham	NZ05
	Feb	Red kite	1	Carbofuran	Unknown	Northumberland	NZ06
	Feb	Red kite	1	Bendiocarb	Unknown	Wrexham	SJ13
	Mar	Golden eagle	1	Withheld	Hare	Aberdeenshire	NO29
	Mar	Birds of prey	T	Withheld	Rabbit	Aberdeenshire	NO29
	Mar	Peregrine falcon	1	Carbofuran, aldicarb	Unknown	Belfast County Borough	J37
	Mar	Buzzard	2	Alphachloralose	Unknown	Derbyshire	SK46
	Mar	Red kite	1	Bendiocarb, alphachloralose, brodifacoum, carbofuran, isofenphos	Unknown	North Yorkshire	SE16

Poisoning (continued)	Mar	Red kite	1	Bendiocarb, carbofuran, isofenphos	Unknown	North Yorkshire	SE17
	Apr	Red kite	1	Fenthion	Unknown	Ceredigion	SN69
	Apr	Birds of prey	T	Carbofuran, isofenphos	Unknown	East Lothian	NT46
	May	Red kite	1	Withheld	Withheld	Highland	NJ03
	May	Buzzard	1	Alphachloralose	Unknown	Powys	SO06
	May	Peregrine falcon	1	Aldicarb	Pigeon	Shropshire	SO57
		Fox	1				
	Aug	Buzzard	1	Bendiocarb, carbofuran	Unknown	Herefordshire	SO42
	Aug	Birds of prey	T	Bendiocarb, carbofuran	Pheasant	Herefordshire	SO42
	Aug	Birds of prey	T	Strychnine	Pheasant	Norfolk	TL78
	Sep	Buzzard	1	Strychnine	Unknown	Norfolk	TL78
	Sep	Birds of prey	T	Strychnine	Pheasant	Norfolk	TL78
	Sep	Birds of prey	T	Strychnine	Pheasant	Norfolk	TL78
	Sep	Buzzard	1	Withheld	Unknown	Withheld [Wales]	Withheld
	Oct	White-tailed eagle	1	Bendiocarb	Unknown	West Sussex	SU91
	Oct	Birds of prey	T	Bendiocarb	Unknown	West Sussex	SU91
	Oct	Birds of prey	T	Bendiocarb	Pheasant	Wrexham	SJ13
	Nov	Red kite	1	Bendiocarb	Unknown	North Yorkshire	SE06
	Nov	Red kite	1	Bendiocarb, carbofuran, isofenphos	Unknown	North Yorkshire	SE17
	Number of birds of prey		26				

The above shows confirmed raptor persecution incidents where raptors were victims, targeted or vulnerable eg to a poisoned bait.

‘T’ indicates known target species, victims unknown.

‘B’ indicates that a bait was found, victims unknown.

Grey shading shows one incident spanning more than one row in the table because it involves more than one species, offence type or category.

‘W’ or ‘Withheld’ indicates that details are pending permission from enforcement partner to be released. Once available, they are added retrospectively to rspb.org.uk/raptormap

For a definition of ‘confirmed’ see the ‘Explanatory Notes’ at the end of these Appendices.

‘Other’ persecution captures confirmed persecution incidents that do not fall clearly to the other categories of shooting, trapping, nest destruction or poisoning (or that haven’t been assigned to one of these categories pending release from enforcement partner). For example, this could include: killing or attempted killing using other means; possession of equipment capable of being used to commit an offence (where there is supporting evidence or intelligence of sufficient standard to substantiate that birds of prey are the intended target) eg possession of a banned pesticide for use in poisoned baits; incidents which clearly involve illegally killed birds but where the precise mechanism of death is not determinable to a category (eg multiple dead birds dumped together where decomposition makes it difficult to determine if birds were shot, trapped or poisoned, but where intelligence/evidence substantiates persecution occurred with >95% certainty. See ‘Explanatory Notes’ for details).

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

Appendix 3

Confirmed poison abuse incidents (excluding raptor persecution) 2021

Month	Species	Number	Poison	Bait	County	10km grid ref
Jan	Carrion crow	1	Carbofura, isofenphos	Unknown	Londonderry	H88
	Magpie	1				
May	Pigeon	T	Coumatetralyl	Unknown	Greater London	Unknown
Jun	Magpie	1	Aldicarb	Unknown	East Riding of Yorkshire	TQ14
Jun	Gulls	T	Bromadionlone, difenacoum	Grain	Dorset	Unknown

The above shows confirmed poison abuse incidents involving species other than raptors where wild birds were involved or believed at risk. For raptor persecution poison abuse incidents see **Appendix 2**.

For a definition of ‘confirmed’ please see the explanatory notes at the end of these appendices.

‘T’ indicates known target species, victims unknown.

Grey shading shows one incident spanning more than one row in the table because it involves more than one species, offence type or category.

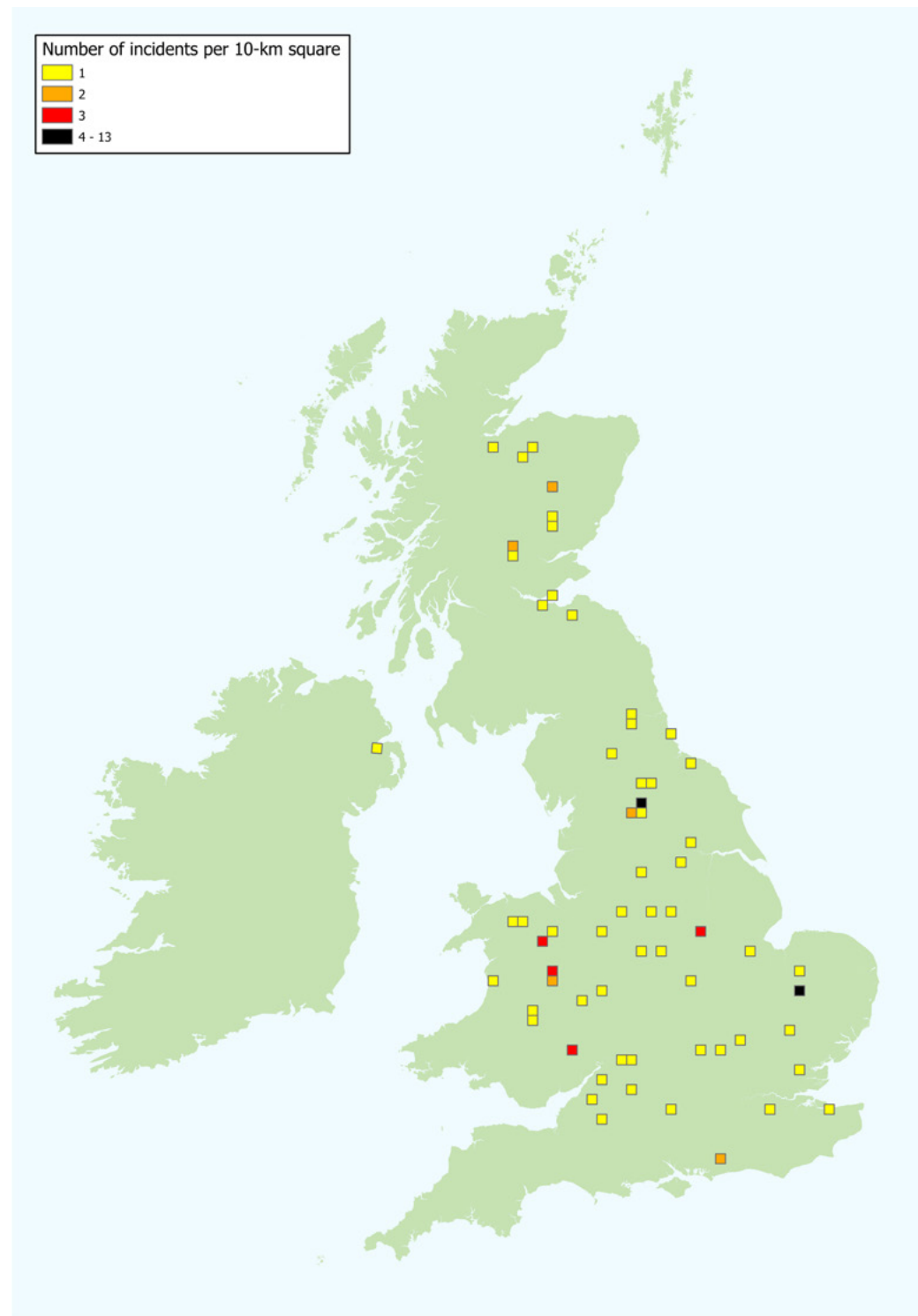
The data above were extracted from RSPB database on 23rd August 2022 and were accurate at time of extraction but are constantly being updated and may be subject to change. Additional incidents or details may be added retrospectively pending release from statutory agencies or other sources.

Data delays from various sources (including due to Covid-19) are likely to result in further incidents or details being added retrospectively to the UK map of confirmed raptor persecution incidents at rspb.org.uk/raptormap.

Appendix 4

Confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents 2021 - UK map

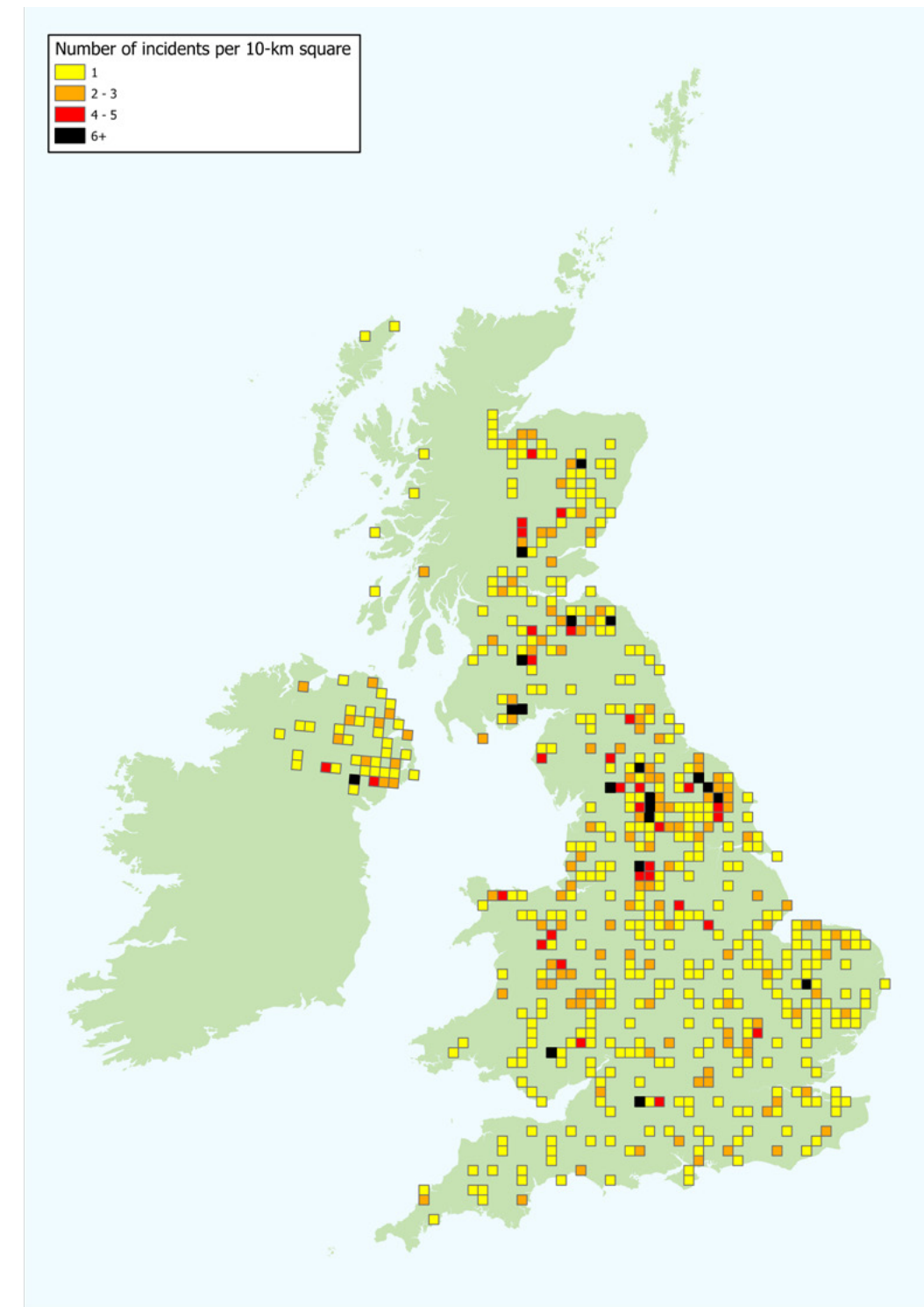
This map shows 91 of the 108 confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents in 2021, each mapped to a 10km grid square (17 are unmappable or withheld pending permission for release).



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

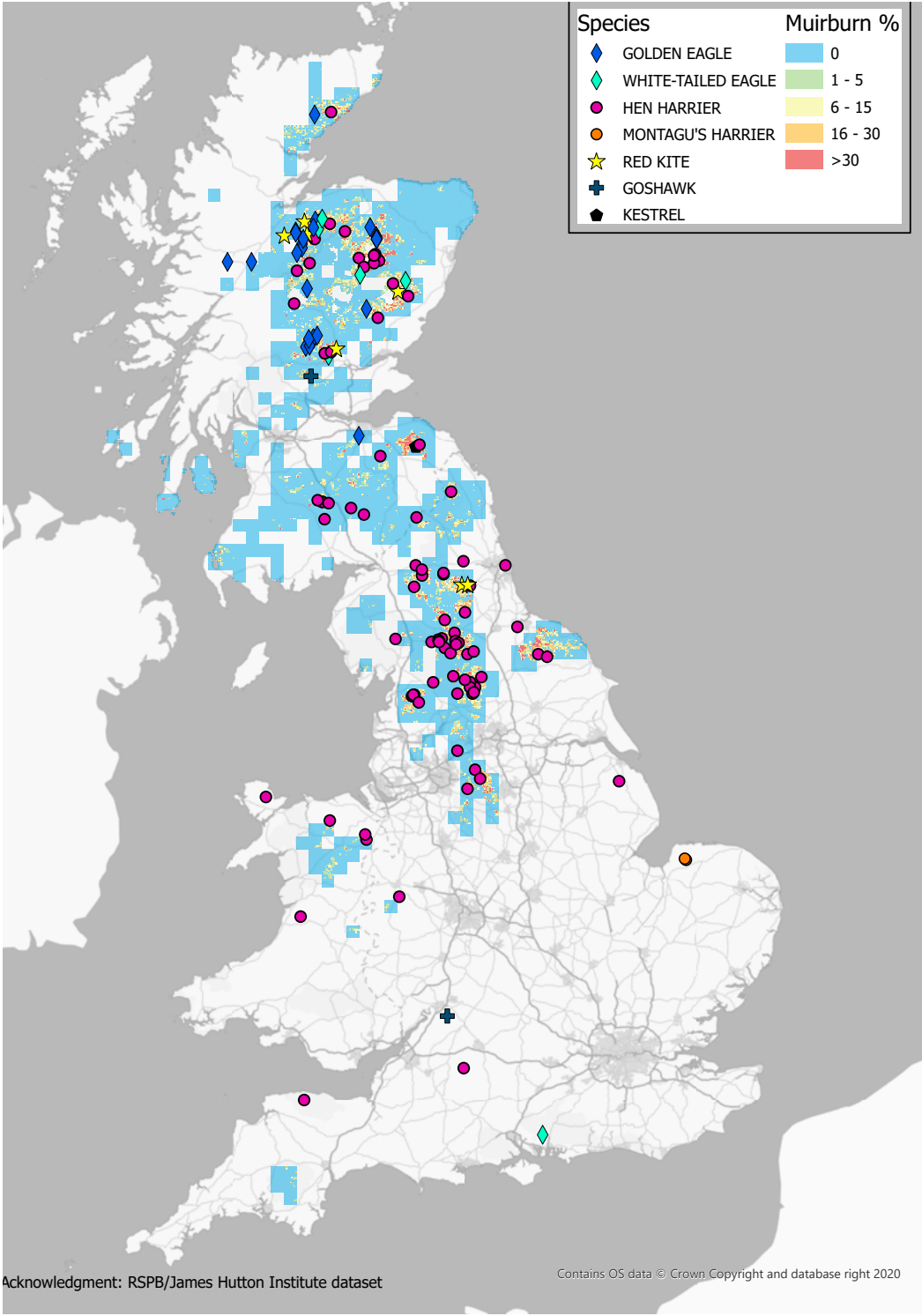
Confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents 2012–2021 - UK map

This map shows 3,023 of the 3,064 confirmed bird of prey persecution incidents 2012–2021, each mapped to a 10km grid square (41 are unmappable or withheld pending permission for release).



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

Figure 9: Suspicious disappearances of satellite-tagged birds of prey in the UK relative to areas of muirburn 2004–2021

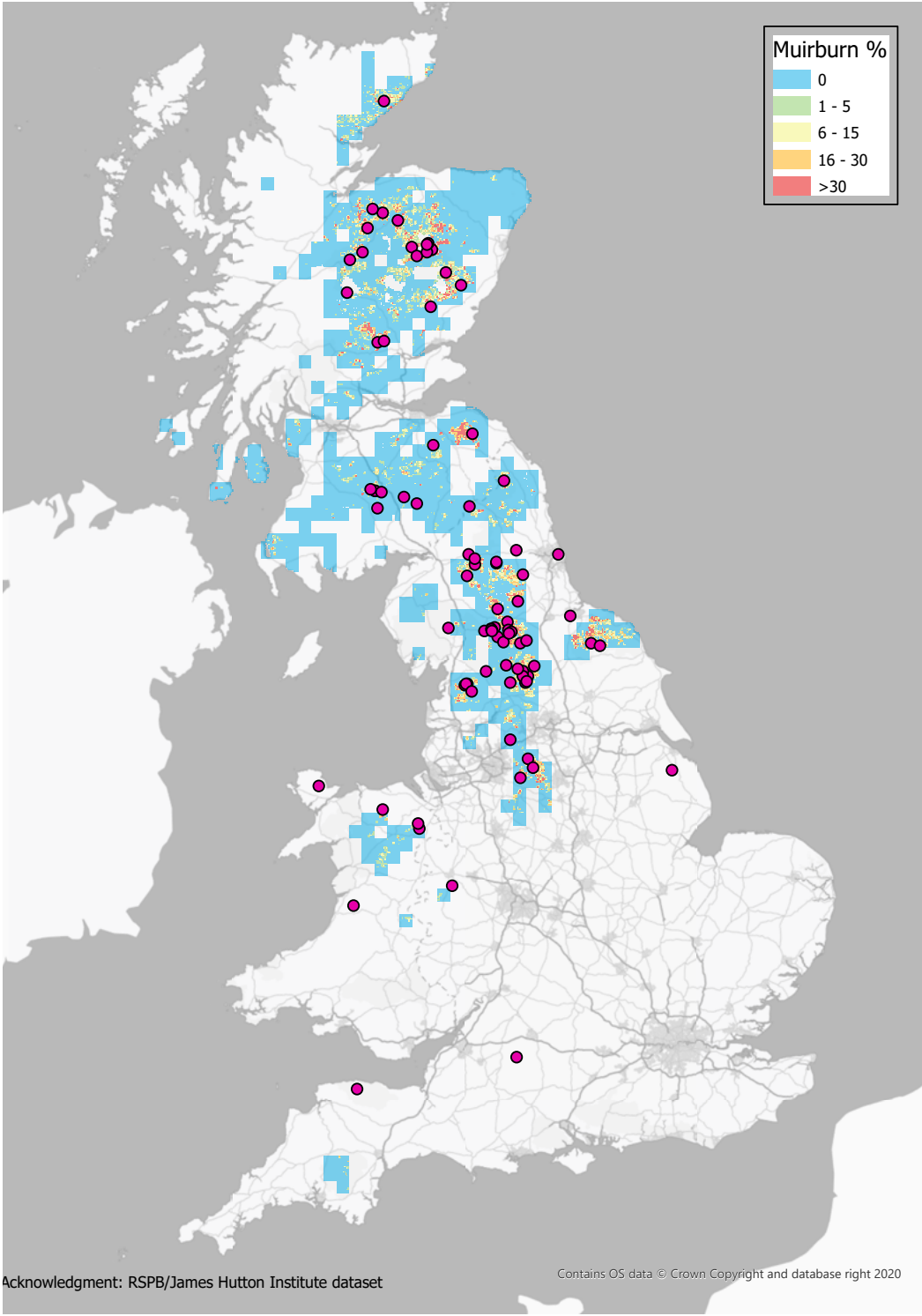


Some incident markers may not be visible where they overlap due to high incident densities.

Each marker represents the centre of the grid square in which the last known location of a satellite-tagged bird was recorded.

For the definition of ‘suspicious disappearances’, click [here](#) or go to page 19.

Figure 10: Suspicious disappearances of satellite-tagged hen harriers in the UK relative to areas of muirburn 2004–2021



Some incident markers may not be visible where they overlap due to high incident densities.

Each marker represents the centre of the grid square in which the last known location of a satellite-tagged bird was recorded.

For the definition of ‘suspicious disappearances’, click [here](#) or go to page 19.

Appendix 5

Wild bird crime prosecutions 2021

Final hearing date	Prosecutor	Court	Surname	Act	Section/Reg	No. of Charges	Plea	Outcome	Penalty Type 1	Penalty 1 Detals	Penalty Type 2	Penalty 2 Details	Summary
17/02/2021	CPS	Sheffield Magistrates	Potter	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(c)	3	G	G	Jail	Total 12 weeks suspended for 12 months			Defendant (occupation unknown) pleaded guilty to eight charges: three for possessing eggs of wild birds (179 black-headed gulls, eight golden plovers and seven curlews); three for taking eggs of wild birds (179 black-headed gulls, four golden plovers and three curlews); and two for possessing items capable of being used to take/possess eggs of wild birds. Sentenced to 12 weeks in prison, suspended for 12 months. Ordered to pay £120 costs and £128 victim surcharge. Egg collecting paraphernalia was confiscated. (Details)
				Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(b)	3	G	G					
				Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	18(2)	2	G	G					
26/08/2021	CPS	Ipswich Magistrates	Leech	Firearms Act 1968	2(2)	2	G	G	CPO	Total 12 months of 80 hours unpaid work			Defendant (part-time gamekeeper) pleaded guilty to six charges: two in relation to unsafe storage of pesticides including Ficam D (Bendiocarb); two for breaches of Section 1 firearms certificate relating to improper storage of ammunition; and two for breaches of shotgun certificate. Two additional charges relating to the poisoning of a buzzard with bendiocarb were discontinued. Sentenced to a 12-month community order of 80 hours unpaid work and ordered to pay £105 costs and a £95 victim surcharge. Chemicals were forfeited. (Details)
				Firearms Act 1968	1(2)	2	G	G					
				Health and Safety at Work Act 1974	U	2	G	G					
				Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(a)	1	NG	D					
				Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(a)	1	NG	D					
30/11/2021	Fiscal	Selkirk Sheriff	Givens	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(a)	1	G	G	Fine	£300			Accused (gamekeeper) pleaded guilty to recklessly taking and killing a barn owl and a goshawk after they were found dead in a crow cage trap, which he neglected to check, resulting in the death (starvation) of the birds. Fined £300 and ordered to pay a £20 victim surcharge. (Details)
16/12/2021	CPS	Manchester Magistrates	Prest	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(b)	1	G	G	Fine	£800			Defendant (amateur gamekeeper) pleaded guilty to unlawfully using a crow cage trap, which he neglected to check, resulting in the death (starvation) of a sparrowhawk. Fined £800 and ordered to pay £85 costs and £80 victim surcharge. (Details)
16/12/2021	CPS	Manchester Magistrates	[Withheld]	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(b)	1	NG	D					Defendant (amateur gamekeeper) pleaded not guilty to unlawfully using a crow cage trap in which a sparrowhawk died. Charges were discontinued - another defendant (Prest – see above) pleaded guilty to this charge and was subsequently convicted.
21/12/2021	CPS	Norwich Crown	Haystead	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(a)	1	G	G	Jail	2 months suspended for 22 months			Defendant (occupation unknown) pleaded guilty to animal cruelty offences relating to decapitating two pigeons in front of members of the public after the birds ate food that had been left unattended. Sentenced to a two-month prison sentence suspended for 18 months, extended to 22 months due to breach of suspended sentence. (Details)
23/12/2021	CPS	Nottingham Magistrates	Orrey	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1(1)(a)	2	G	G	Jail	Total 20 weeks suspended for 12 months	Fine	£1000	Defendant (part-time gamekeeper) pleaded guilty to nine charges, five of these related to using a baited trap to capture two buzzards, which the defendant then killed with a slash hook (captured on RSPB footage). The remaining charges related to the storage and licensing of firearms. For each buzzard, defendant was sentenced to an 18-week suspended sentence to run concurrently and £500 fine for each bird. In total for all charges, sentenced to a 20-week prison sentence, suspended for a year, fined a total of £1,000 and ordered to pay £650 costs, £50 victim surcharge, and £180 compensation to the Wildlife Forensic Working Group. (Details)
				Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	1(2)(a)	1	G	G	Jail				
				Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(b)	1	G	G	Jail				
				Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	18(2)	1	G	G	NSP				
				Firearms Act 1968	1(1)(b)	1	G	G	Jail				
				Firearms Act 1968	1(2)	2	G	G	Jail				
				Firearms Act 1968	2(2)	1	G	G	Jail				
23/12/2021	CPS	York Magistrates	Duggan	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	5(1)(c)	1	G	G	Fine	£120			Defendant (occupation unknown) pleaded guilty to using a weapon (air pistol) to kill a pigeon in his garden. Fined £120 and ordered to pay £85 costs and £34 statutory surcharge. The air weapon and ammunition were confiscated.

Key to Appendix 5

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

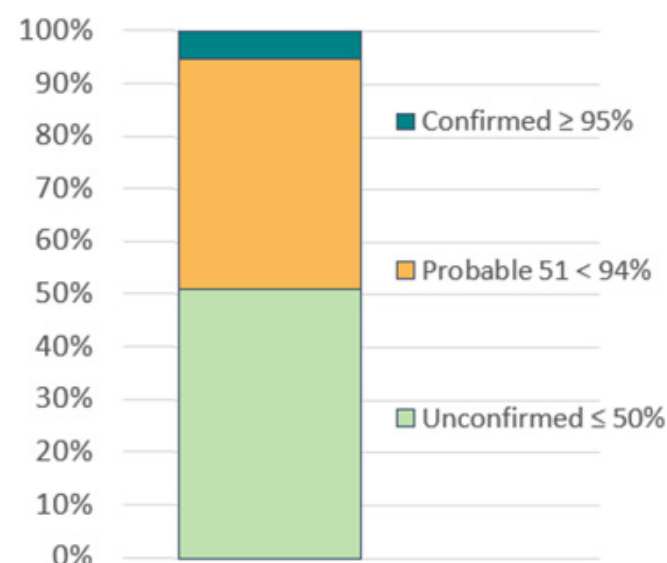
Note that the number of prosecutions listed above for 2021 is likely lower than the true figure, particularly for categories involving species that are not of conservation concern. Also, note that prosecution delays and data backlogs from various sources due to Covid-19 are likely to result in further prosecution data being received by us retrospectively. We endeavour to keep our records as up to date and accurate as possible. If you spot an error or omission, please email us at crime@rspb.org.uk

Explanatory notes

The RSPB's Birdcrime report summarises offences against wild bird legislation that are collated by the RSPB each year. We've 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 includes specialist officers with investigative (field-based) and intelligence (office-based) capability.

Incidents of bird crime are rigorously and consistently recorded by the RSPB into three categories based on certainty:



Confirmed: 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 the most likely explanation is that an illegal act has taken place.

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

'Confirmed' incidents are the primary focus for published figures due to their high evidential weighting – but note this report and associated mapped data represents only a fraction of the incidents that occur. Many incidents are simply not detected or reported because they often take place in remote and private locations. Also note that some incidents are not permitted for release: for example, whole incidents, or partial details, may be withheld to protect an ongoing investigation or at request of enforcement partners. Incidents and details may therefore be added retrospectively to future editions of Birdcrime, and to the associated Raptor Persecution Map Hub rspb.org.uk/raptormap.

'Suspicious disappearance' refers to a satellite tag that was functioning reliably then suddenly stopped transmitting, with no explanation or warning, strongly indicating foul play.

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. Note that figures featured in this report were accurate at time of extraction, but are constantly being updated and may be subject to change. If you spot an error or emission email us at crime@rspb.org.uk.

Toxicology results from the government's Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS)

([see here](#)) form the primary source of wildlife poisoning data included in Birdcrime reports. In isolated cases, toxicology results may be obtained via other routes eg where victims or baits have not been accepted for analysis via the government schemes, so private analysis has been undertaken. 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 scientific study of bird populations, including:

- Crimes against raptors in Wales 1990–2019 Published in Birds in Wales 18:1 (2021) ([see here](#)).
- The article in Nature Communications published March 2019 on patterns of satellite tagged hen harrier disappearances ([see here](#)).
- The NatureScot report 1209 reviews over two million hen harrier nest camera images and

indicates success is highest on estates with no game shooting interests ([see here](#)).

- The rigorous Conservation Framework reports by:
 - Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) on golden eagles ([see here](#)).
 - Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) on hen harriers ([see here](#)).
- A range of peer-reviewed scientific publications that demonstrate the impacts of persecution on species including red kites ([see here](#)) and peregrines ([see here](#)).
- The SNH review published in May 2017 which showed that almost a third of golden eagles fitted with satellite tags disappeared in suspicious circumstances ([see here](#)).
- The British Birds paper showing the link between raptor persecution and land managed for driven grouse shooting in the Peak District National Park ([see here](#)).

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- Scottish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SSPCA)

- The Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA)
- Raptor Study Group workers
- Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme (PBMS)
- The Zoological Society of London (ZSL)
- Scotland's Rural College (SRUC)
- Scottish Government Rural Payments and Inspection Directorate (SGRPID)
- Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH)
- UK veterinary practices
- The Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI NI)
- Ryedale Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre
- Roy Dennis Wildlife Foundation
- Welsh Government



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