

Operation Meles

Partners working together to combat badger persecution
by gathering intelligence and targeting offenders

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Dogs Seized in North Wales

Six raids were carried out on properties across Anglesey, Caernarfon and Gwynedd in August as part of a wide reaching police and RSPCA operation. Thirty six dogs were seized and one man was arrested following a series of police raids by officers investigating dog baiting across North Wales. The allegations centre on attacks by lurchers, terriers and whippets against foxes and badgers, among other offences. A number of people were also questioned under caution and computers, mobile phones and spades were also seized.

Houses raided in Humberside

Recently as part of Operation Cyclone the RSPCA in partnership with Humberside Police executed three search warrants. Eight dogs, some of which required further veterinary investigation, were recovered together with a large amount of evidence relating to the use of dogs for fighting with wild animals such as badger and fox. Investigations ongoing.

Somerset Farmers Fined after gassing badger sett.

A father and son who farm in Somerset were convicted at Yeovil Magistrates Court after pleading guilty to blocking a badger sett and then filling it with exhaust fumes from their Landover. Each of the accused was fined £1370

Suspended Prison Sentence

A male caught badger baiting in the County Durham area has pled guilty at Darlington Magistrates Court to attempting to take a badger and interfering with a badger sett. He also pleaded guilty to two animal welfare charges relating to the condition of four found dogs at his home.

Magistrates imposed a 12 week suspended prison sentence plus a 7pm to 7am six month curfew. He was also ordered to pay £1,580 towards court costs and charges and banned from keeping animals for five years.

Road Traffic Accidents reported as incidents.

It has come as no surprise that the number of incidents in which members of the public report road traffic accidents as “suspicious” has grown when they see dead badgers lying at the side of the road. There is no doubt that illegally killed badgers may be hidden in the carnage but it might help to know that there are two peak periods throughout the year when a large number of badgers are killed on our roads. These periods of the year which coincide with the most active time of the year for badgers occurring during March/April and Sept/Oct.

Part of the problem is that badgers having been struck by a vehicle may show no external signs of injuries increasing the level of suspicion in the public eye. Certain stretches of roads, in areas with highly populated badger territories, often lead to the deaths of several badgers over a couple of miles of road and again this raises concern. Most will be genuine road traffic victims but where possible to safely do so all are worth checking.

Badgers found dead in snares.

The SSPCA are currently investigating the deaths of two badgers which were found in snares at two separate locations in Perthshire. Both animals had been trapped in pegged snares but had pulled free and made off from the locus before succumbing to their injuries

Appeal withdrawn.

After being convicted in January 2013 at Leicester Magistrates Court for offences relating to both damaging and obstructing the entrances to a badger sett and having being fined the sum of £5000 and ordered to pay £1200 the convicted developer lodged an appeal. This appeal has now been withdrawn and the appellant order to pay further costs to cover the extra work carried out by CPS in preparing for the appeal.

Increase in incident reporting

Recent statistics showed a marked increase in the reporting of incidents alleging persecution against badgers. This increase coincides with the period during which the culls are taking place in Gloucestershire and Somerset. Clearly the general public have an increased awareness of badgers and incidents affecting them

Gamekeeper Fined £1500

After investigation by The SSPCA a local gamekeeper from the Moray area plead guilty at Elgin Sheriff Court to three charges including setting snares which were likely to cause unnecessary suffering, were likely to be dragged and failing to release or remove an animal from the snare, all contrary to the WCA 1981. A badger and several foxes were found dead in snares at the scene.

Dug sett discovered in the Pentlands.

Police Scotland acting on witness reports have found a badger sett in the Pentland Hills near Edinburgh which has been interfered with by digging into it. Police are continuing with their enquiries to trace the perpetrators.

Badgers found in cages.

RSPCA were informed by a member of the public that they had found three badgers in cages in a flooded ditch. The depth of water in the ditch meant that the animals were at the point of nearly drowning when found. The incident which occurred towards the end of October in Somerset is still under investigation.

Badgers found clubbed to death.

The SSPCA and Police are currently investigating the death of a badger at Inverness. The dead badger was found with baler twine around its neck leading to the thought that it might have been snared. However the subsequent post mortem revealed that the animal had been clubbed to death..

Dog found in sett.

The fire service were called to release a dog from a badger sett in the Glasgow area. When recovered the dog was found to have historic injuries which were thought to have been caused by past activities involving fighting with badgers. Enquiries are ongoing to trace the owner.

Badger sett ploughed by farmer.

Police Scotland are currently investigating the report that a farmer has ploughed and destroyed the entrances to a sett in the Scottish borders. This all too common occurrence can lead to badgers being trapped underground to face long lingering deaths

Items for this bulletin.

If you are aware of any incidents that can be included in a future issue of this document please forward details to me at Ian@scottishbadgers.org.uk. It is hoped that we will issue this document every three or four months.