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### **Introduction**

This Tactical Assessment is produced for the Scottish Wildlife Crime Tasking and Coordination Group (TCG) that occurs on a quarterly basis. The assessment details each UK Wildlife Crime priority issue placed into the context of the criminal threat posed specifically to Scotland and provides recommendations that have been produced in consultation with subject experts, it is imperative that prior to the meeting ending, every recommendation contained in this document has a decision made by the TCG chair to either ratify the recommendation, or reject it. Each recommendation is contained within a summary at the beginning of the document.

### **Aim of Report**

This assessment provides an overview of the criminality affecting the wildlife in Scotland. It will inform the Tasking and Coordinating Group (TCG) of: The overall picture of wildlife crime and incidents in Scotland.

- The current UK wildlife crime control strategy priorities identifying current, emerging and future threats.
- Issues of exception i.e. high risk that fall outside the current UK wildlife crime control strategy identifying current, emerging and future threats.
- The impact of current law enforcement activity on crime and incident levels.
- Key dates of events or planned operations that require resources to be allocated by the SWTCG.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the tactical assessment is to drive the business of the TCG and enable informed resource decisions by:

- Reviewing intelligence, prevention and enforcement plans and currently agreed operational activity.
- Reporting new operations and problems in light of current intelligence and demand, taking into account the data provided.

### **Method**

The assessment is based on data recorded on the NWCU intelligence system, including:

- Crime and Incident data received from Scottish Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs)
- Intelligence reports

### **Previous Actions**

There are currently no ongoing actions. Actions 1-11 will continue to be on-going but do not require constant monitoring and will therefore feature as appendix one.

## Part One - Priority Areas

### Overview

This assessment will feature reported incidents to the NWCU over the last six months (Jun-Nov2011) broken down by season (summer & autumn). The following table provides a breakdown of the main priorities area during this time, along with the expected risk that spring poses.

Category of Incident	Summer	Autumn	Total	Expected to Increase in Spring
Badger Persecution	3	7	10	Vulnerability will increase from February onwards
Bat Persecution	4	1	5	February may experience increases
Freshwater Pearl Mussels	0	0	0	No
Hare Coursing	25	16	41	Activity expected to increase from April onwards
Poaching - Deer	9	12	21	February will be prevalent but will decrease following this
Poaching - Fish	25	9	34	Incidents may increase from April & May
Poisoning - Raptors	6	8	14	Yes, particularly from April onwards
Raptor Persecution	4	2	6	Yes, particularly from April onwards
<b>Total</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>131</b>	

Due to the redundancy of the coordinator's post within Strathclyde, NSIR incidents have not submitted to the NWCU since June, in addition four months data is also missing from Tayside<sup>1</sup>. Meaning any comparison or analysis of the incidents reported during the period reviewed with last years data will be meaningless and has therefore not been undertaken for this assessment.

### 1.1 Badger Persecution

Submitting Force	July	August	September	October	November	Total
Dumfries & Galloway		1		1		2
Fife	1		1			2
Grampian			1	1		2
Lothian & Borders			1		2	3
Tayside	1					1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>10</b>

During the period reviewed only incidents relating to the disturbance of setts were reported<sup>2</sup>. However, historically Strathclyde have experienced high levels of badger fighting, as Strathclyde have not reported any incidents during the period reviewed, this may explain the decrease in the type of activity.

### **New Ways to Gather Intelligence - SSPCA<sup>3</sup>**

The SSPCA is urging people, particularly women, to come forward with information relating to badger baiting. Badger baiting, like most forms of animal fighting, is predominantly an activity conducted by men and the SSPCA want to encourage wives, girlfriends and family members to speak out against this barbaric crime. The following extract was taken from the SSPCA website;

"Some of the information we receive about animal fighting comes from female partners, friends and family members who are quite rightly disgusted to discover that their husband, boyfriend, brother or son is involved in such an extremely cruel activity. Many

<sup>1</sup> Tayside's data was submitted too late for inclusion

<sup>2</sup> There were no reports in June 2011

<sup>3</sup> [www.scottishspca.org](http://www.scottishspca.org)

are distraught when a partner returns home with their dog suffering from terrible injuries”.

### **Seasonality**

Badgers will become more vulnerable from February onwards as the main breeding season gets underway. Cubs will begin to emerge from the sett from April and May; the level of risk should then subside from June onwards.

### **1.2 Bat Persecution**

In line with identified seasonality, the summer experienced the greatest number of the incidents (5) over the last six months as shown by the table below.

Submitting Force	Breach of Licence	Destruction	Developers	Local Authority	Tree Felling	Total
Dumfries & Galloway	1				1	2
Fife				1		1
Lothian & Borders			1			1
Northern		1				1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>

### **Seasonality**

The level of risk for bats should be at its lowest during January and February as they will be in hibernation. However, they should begin to emerge in March and in April the risk is high as they move between sites to feed.

### **1.3 CITES Issues<sup>4</sup>**

There was only one reported incident in relation to CITES issues over the past six months.

### **1.4 Freshwater Pearl Mussels**

There have been no reported incidents of the taking or disturbance of FWPM over the last six months.

### **Seasonality**

FWPM are at their least vulnerable throughout December, January and February. The risk only starts to increase from May onwards into summer.

### **1.5 Poaching**

During the last two seasons, deer, fish, hare coursing and other types of poaching accounted for over half of all incidents reported (51% / 107). This is an increase in comparison to the previous two seasons when poaching accounted for 42% of incidents; each of the key areas will be looked at in more detail within this section.

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<sup>4</sup> Seasonality not applicable for CITES Issues

**Deer Poaching**

Submitting Force	Coursing	Grallochs	Observed	Shooting	Total
Lothian & Borders		2	2	5	9
Fife	2	5			7
Dumfries & Galloway		2			2
Grampian			1	1	2
Central Scotland				1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>21</b>

Due to the absence of Strathclyde's and Tayside's data comparison with previous data is not possible. However, L&B and Fife are experiencing a higher number of deer poaching incidents than usual. Incidents are expected to increase further throughout December as demand for venison increases.

**Seasonality**

The poaching of deer is at its greatest throughout the winter months; however the risk drops substantially in March.

**Fish Poaching**

Submitting Force	Summer	Autumn	Total
Central Scotland	7	2	9
Grampian	6	1	7
Lothian & Borders	5	2	7
Dumfries & Galloway	3	3	6
Fife	4	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>34</b>

In line with identified seasonality summer recorded the greatest number of incidents, with reports lessening throughout autumn.

**Seasonality**

The poaching of fish is least likely to happen during winter, due to the weather and the impact on the rivers. The risk will start to increase from April onwards.

**Hare Coursing**

Submitting Force	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total
Central Scotland				1		2	3
Fife	5	2	3	1		1	12
Grampian	1	6	4		1	1	13
Lothian & Borders			1	4	1	4	10
Tayside	2		1				3
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>41</b>

Over the last six months hare coursing accounted for one fifth of incidents (41), with August recording the most incidents as per seasonality.

**Seasonality**

Hare coursing is least expected in winter according to previous trends. However, the risk increases substantially from March onwards.

**1.6 Raptor Persecution<sup>5</sup>**

Species Involved	Confirmed Poisoning	Shooting	Traps/Snares	Unconfirmed Poisoning	Total
Buzzard		2	1	9	12
Goshawk		2			2
Kestrel			1	1	2
Red Kite	1			1	2
Buzzard & Sparrowhawk				1	1
Peregrine Falcon		1			1
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>20</b>

Due to the absence of some forces data comparison with other seasons is not possible. Most poisonings during the period reviewed remain unconfirmed; as some are awaiting an outcome from SASA.

**Seasonality**

The illegal killing and disturbance of raptors is least likely in the winter months. However as breeding season gets underway from April onwards the risk increases significantly.

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<sup>5</sup> Including Poisoning, Egg Theft, Chick Theft, Nest Disturbance/Destruction and Wild Caught Birds to concentrate on Golden Eagle, Goshawk, Hen Harrier, Red Kite and White-Tailed Eagle

## **Intelligence Requirements / Non Priority Areas**

### **CITES – Annex A Orchid Species**

No intelligence or incidents were received in relation to the illegal trade in orchids during the period reviewed.

### **Finch Trapping**

One incident was reported by Fife in June.

### **Illegal Taking of Wild Birds' Eggs**

No intelligence or incidents were received in relation to the illegal taking of wild birds' eggs during the period reviewed.

### **Illegal Trade in Raptors**

One incident reported in relation to the illegal trade in raptors.

### **Illegal Trade in Parrots**

No intelligence or incidents were received in relation to the illegal trade in parrots during the period reviewed.

### **Other - Non Priority Areas**

The SSPCA is reporting an increase in the number of sick and injured grey seals being reported. They report having rescued 34 seals this November, an increase of 50% compared to the same month last year. They are currently caring for 23 juvenile grey seals at their Wildlife Rescue Centre in Fife. All of this year's casualties are youngsters that have found themselves in difficulty this winter. They are unable to specify any reason as to why there has been an increase during 2011. There has been no increase in reports to the NWCUC concerning seals; however data is missing from Strathclyde and Tayside for the latter part of 2011.

## **Key Dates for Planning**

- UK TCG, 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012, London
- PAW Open Seminar, 1<sup>st</sup> March 2012, Kew Gardens
- Scottish Wildlife Crime Enforcement Conference, 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012, Tulliallan

## **3.0 PESTELO Factors**

### **Legislation**

- **The WANE Act and the Deer Code<sup>6</sup>**

The Code aims to support the voluntary approach to the management of Scotland's wild deer and is a requirement of the Wildlife and Natural Environment (Scotland) Act 2011. This Act makes changes to the Deer (Scotland) Act 1996. The change recognises the importance of deer welfare and the significance of deer to the economy and people as well as the environment. The changes also increase the range of circumstances where SNH can intervene in deer management. SNH have written 'Code of Practice on Deer Management' available on their website which aims to recognise the importance of deer welfare and the significance of deer to the economy and people as well as the environment. They also increase the range of circumstances where SNH can intervene in deer management. This is a statutory Code which has been subject to parliamentary approval. It is not an offence to breach the Code. However, Scottish Natural Heritage (SNH) and other public bodies will consider the extent to which you have followed the Code if a decision needs to be taken to intervene in your deer management.

### **Environmental**

- **Environmental Crime Taskforce<sup>7</sup>**

An Environmental Crime Taskforce is being set up in Scotland to tackle the growing problem of environmental crime - from illegal dumping to organised crime. The taskforce (announced at the Environmental Crime Summit held in Edinburgh, November 2011) would be well equipped to deal with the growing issue of organised crime operating in the environment sector, be it stolen equipment found at landfill sites, money laundering at unlicensed scrap yards or illegal dumping of industrial chemicals.

The summit also heard about further measures designed to tackle environment crime, including:

- Improving environmental legislation to make it simpler, targeted and more effective
- Increased collaboration and intelligence sharing between enforcement agencies leading to more successful prosecutions
- Development of better targeted penalties for environmental offences

Environment secretary Richard Lochhead announced;

"Bringing together the expertise of the police, SEPA and Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service, the taskforce will improve intelligence gathering and information sharing and ensure we make well informed choices about the priorities for action. We will do our

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<sup>6</sup> [www.deer.management.co.uk](http://www.deer.management.co.uk)

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.scotland.gov.uk>



utmost to work with enforcement agencies to ensure unscrupulous individuals or businesses who seek to recklessly undermine our natural resources for criminal profit or through wilful neglect will pay the price."

### **Environmental**

- **Poor Weather Limits Success of Sea Eagles<sup>8</sup>**

Three fewer white-tailed sea eagle chicks fledged in 2011 than the year before, according to the latest breeding figures from RSPB Scotland. Bad weather in May was thought to have been a factor behind the dip, from 46 to 43, with some nest sites damaged by the stormy conditions. However, 2011 did see an increase in numbers of territorial pairs with 57 compared to 52 last year.

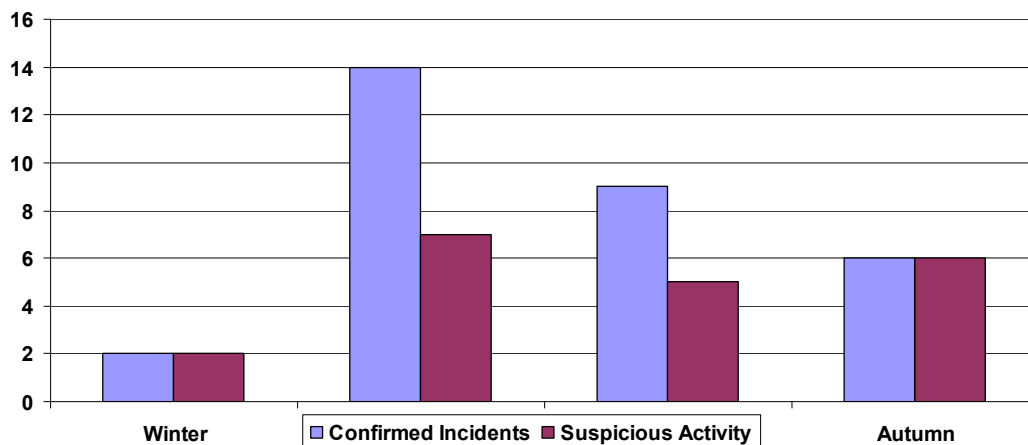
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<sup>8</sup> [www.bbc.co.uk/news](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news)

## Part two – Geographical

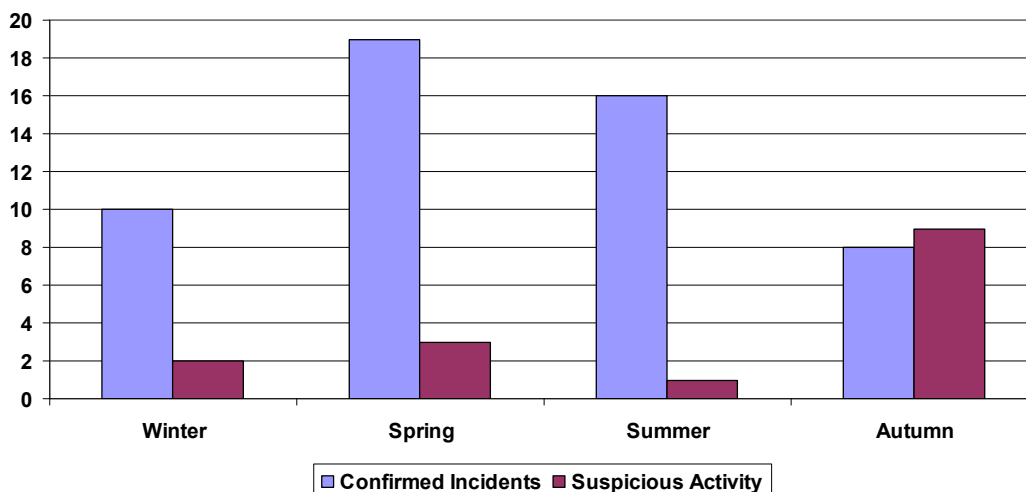
The following section will discuss the number of reported *incidents*<sup>9</sup> from each force area throughout the last year (Dec2010- Nov2011).

### 2.1 Central



The poaching of fish is the greatest issue in Central and as predicted in the last TA did increase during summer and into autumn.

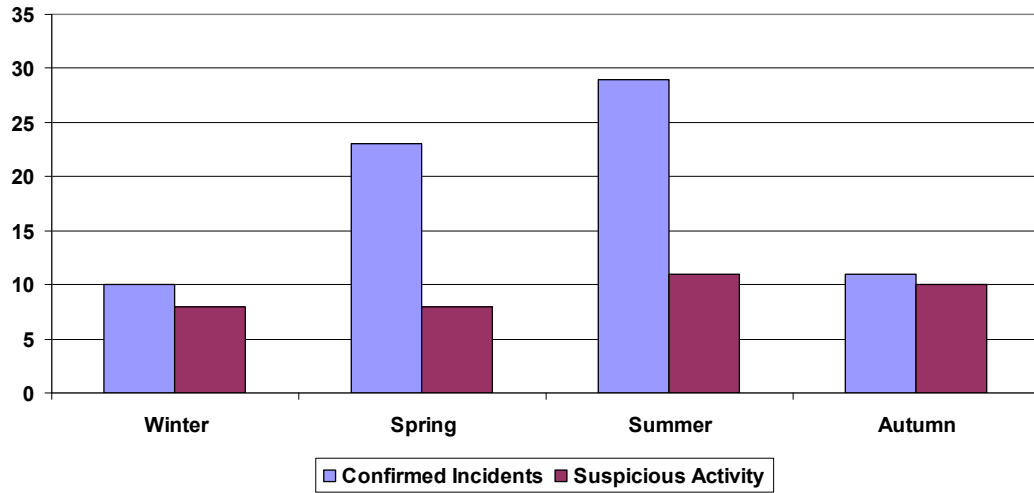
### 2.2 Dumfries & Galloway



Poaching, particularly fish and deer have been the most commonly reported incident over the last year.

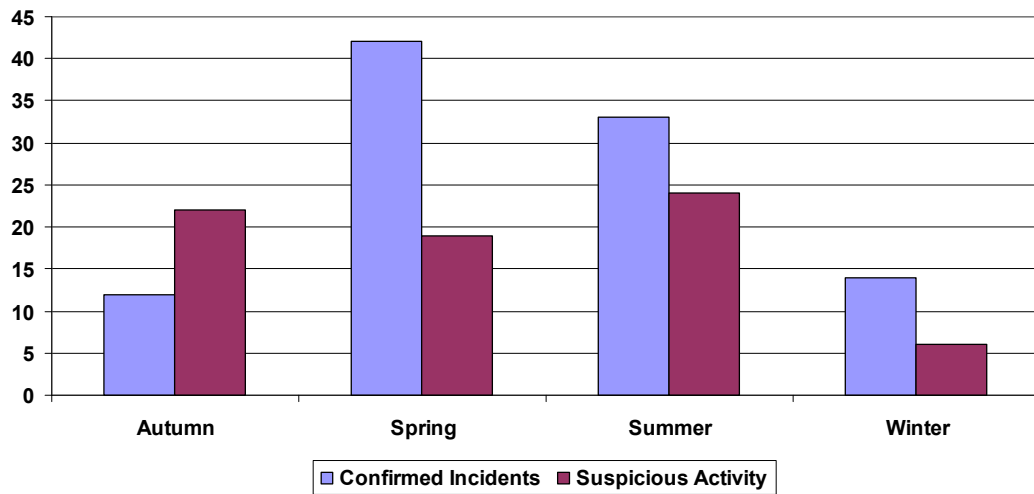
<sup>9</sup> Excludes 'Non Crime Related' and 'Other' for a full breakdown of all incidents reported see appendix three & four

### 2.3 Fife



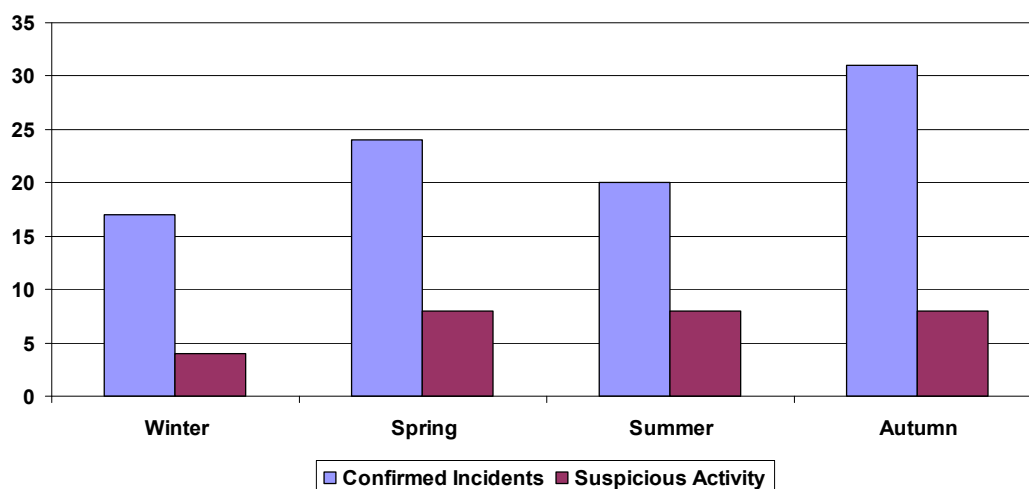
Deer poaching has been the most reported incident from Fife over the last year, particularly in autumn and this is likely to increase during winter.

### 2.4 Grampian



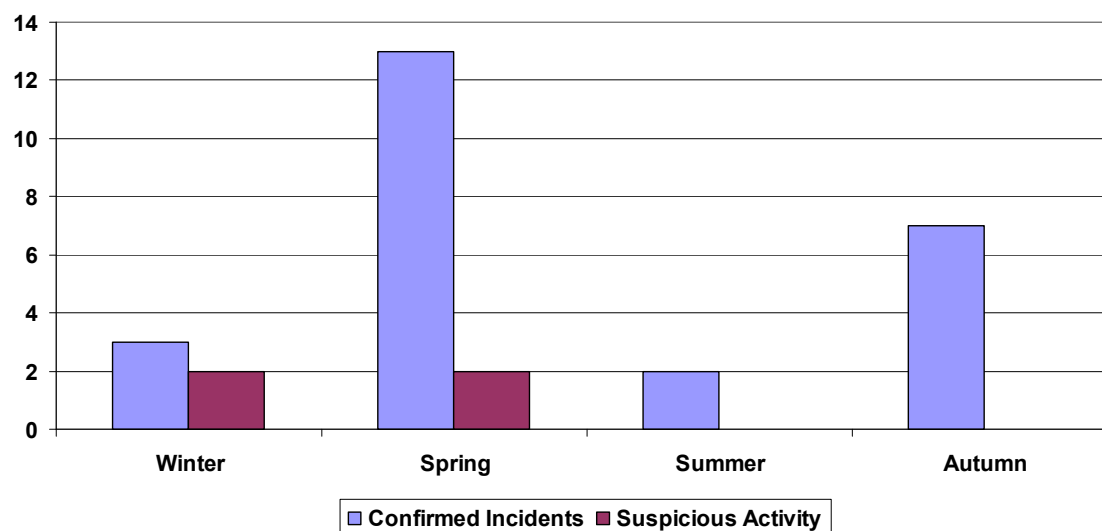
Hare coursing has been the most prevalent issue in Grampian over the last year, particularly over the summer and into the autumn.

### **2.5 Lothian & Borders**



Hare coursing has been the greatest issue for L&B over the last 12 months and this was most prevalent during autumn.

### **2.6 Northern**



The persecution of raptors, particularly poisonings, is the most commonly reported problem in Northern over the last year.

### **2.7 Strathclyde**

Due to the absence of data from Strathclyde this section has not been completed.

### **2.8 Tayside**

Due to the absence of incident data from Tayside this section has not been completed.

## Appendix Two: Full breakdown of reported incidents submitted to the NWCU for summer and autumn (June-November 2011)

Submitting Force	Category of Incident	Total
Central Scotland	Habitat Destruction	1
	Hare Coursing	3
	Poaching - Deer	1
	Poaching - Fish	9
	Poisoning - Non Raptors	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>
Dumfries & Galloway	Badger Persecution	2
	Bat Persecution	2
	Nest Destruction/Disturbance	3
	Non Native Species	2
	Poaching - Deer	2
	Poaching - Fish	6
	Poaching - Other	2
	Poisoning - Raptors	2
	Shooting	1
	Traps/Snares	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>
Fife	Badger Persecution	2
	Bat Persecution	1
	Habitat Destruction	2
	Hare Coursing	12
	Nest Destruction/Disturbance	7
	Poaching - Deer	7
	Poaching - Fish	5
	Poaching - Other	6
	Poisoning - Raptors	1
	Shooting	2
	Wild Bird Egg/Chick Theft	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>46</b>
Grampian	Badger Persecution	2
	Habitat Destruction	3
	Hare Coursing	13
	Nest Destruction/Disturbance	6
	Poaching - Deer	2
	Poaching - Fish	7
	Poaching - Other	1
	Poisoning - Non Raptors	1
	Poisoning - Raptors	3
	Shooting	3
	Traps/Snares	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>
Lothian & Borders	Badger Persecution	3
	Bat Persecution	1
	Fox Hunting	1
	Hare Coursing	10
	Nest Destruction/Disturbance	3
	Poaching - Deer	9
	Poaching - Fish	7
	Poaching - Other	1
	Poisoning - Non Raptors	4
	Poisoning - Raptors	5
	Raptor Persecution	4
	Shooting	1
	Traps/Snares	3
<b>Total</b>		<b>52</b>
Northern	Bat Persecution	1
	Habitat Destruction	1
	Nest Destruction/Disturbance	1
	Poaching - Other	1
	Poisoning - Raptors	2
	Shooting	2
	Traps/Snares	2
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>
Tayside	Badger Persecution	1
	Habitat Destruction	1
	Hare Coursing	3
	Nest Destruction/Disturbance	1
	Non Native Species	2
	Poisoning - Non Raptors	1
	Poisoning - Raptors	1
	Raptor Persecution	2
	Shooting	1
	Traps/Snares	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>14</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>208</b>

**Appendix Three: Full breakdown of ‘Suspicious Activity’ incidents submitted to the NWCU for summer and autumn (June-November 2011)**

Category of Incident ▼	Central Scotland	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders	Tayside	Total
Badger Persecution	1	1		5			7
Bat Persecution				2			2
CITES Other			1				1
Fox Hunting		1					1
Hare Coursing	2	2	1	11	8	10	34
Nest Destruction/Disturbance	1	1	1	2			5
Non Native Species				1			1
Poaching - Deer		3	4	3	1		11
Poaching - Fish	7	2	3	6	5		23
Poaching - Other		2	1	3	1		7
Poisoning - Non Raptors				1			1
Poisoning - Raptors						1	1
Raptor Persecution			2	1			3
Shooting			10	10			20
Traps/Snares				4	2		6
<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>123</b>

**Appendix Four: Full breakdown of ‘Non Crime Related’ incidents submitted to the NWCU for summer and autumn (June-November 2011)**

Category of Incident ▼	Central Scotland	Dumfries & Galloway	Fife	Grampian	Lothian & Borders	Tayside	Total
Badger Persecution				2			2
Bat Persecution		2				1	3
Freshwater Pearl Mussels					1		1
Nest Destruction/Disturbance		1		1	1		3
Poaching - Deer				3	1		4
Poaching - Fish		1					1
Poaching - Other		1	1				2
Shooting		1	1	8	5		15
Traps/Snares	1			1			2
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>33</b>