

Stephen Parkinson

Director of Public Prosecutions, Crown Prosecution Service

By email

cc Kevin.Kelly@nwcw.police.uk and Nigel.harrison@northwales.police.uk

March 2025

Re: National Wildlife Crime Lead

Dear Mr Parkinson,

I am writing on behalf of the Wildlife and Countryside Link Wildlife Crime Group, England's largest coalition of organisations working to reduce crimes against flora and fauna, to urge wildlife crime to be treated with greater priority within the Crown prosecution Service (CPS).

The National Wildlife Crime Unit work tirelessly with police forces to prevent and seek justice for wildlife crime offences. The work of prosecutors is invaluable in bringing offenders to account for their actions, which is particularly notable considering the challenging environment that they are working in.

We are concerned to see that there has been very little movement within the CPS in numerous years to strengthen the national response to wildlife crime. Link last wrote to express our concerns on this matter in March [2024](#). The role of the CPS National Wildlife Crime lead has continued to remain vacant since the previous postholder held the position. Due to this, the Wildlife, Heritage and Rural Crime Community Involvement Panel have not met since May 2023. This Panel, convened by the Wildlife Crime lead, would bring all those working actively in wildlife law enforcement together. The NWCU are building a strong front to show that these crimes will not be tolerated and this needs to be backed by support from the CPS.

The evidence for the problem of the loss of engagement between specialist wildlife crime organisations can be seen in the exacerbating trend of falling convictions for wildlife crime offences. Link member data used to create the annual wildlife crime report since 2017 finds a record number of reported incidents (excluding fisheries) in 2023 but the rate of convictions to have fallen to an all-time low of [1%](#).

The completion rate from the report through to successful prosecution is now less than a third of the average of all crimes, meaning that offenders are more likely to get away with wildlife crime than with many other crimes. We understand that the absence of leadership in the CPS has prevented national training for prosecuting lawyers on wildlife crimes offences, which is a contributing factor for such failures.

Wildlife crime is not victimless. Many species are already under incredible strain and are being pushed to their limit, with criminal activity an additional and significant threat. Offenders of such crime types are often linked to organised or violent crimes against people, with the mistreatment of animals an indicator of violence towards women. By working to convict wildlife criminals, police forces and the CPS can sanction and deter reoffending from people likely to go onto to commit violent crime.

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Link would be very grateful for your response to these concerns, and hope that you will commit to appointing a new National Wildlife Crime lead and resume the CPS Wildlife Community Panel meetings.

We look forward to your reply and would warmly welcome an opportunity to meet to discuss our concerns in more detail.

Yours sincerely,

Lisa Manning,
Policy Officer
Wildlife and Countryside Link

RSPB
Naturewatch Foundation
British Hedgehog Preservation Society
Wild Justice
Peoples Trust for Endangered Species
Badger Trust
Seal Research Trust
Humane World for Animals UK
Angling Trust
Bat Conservation trust
Hare Preservation Trust
Froglife
RSPCA