



Operation Randall

tackling rural crime

Issue 12 | 1st of June 2021

[@RuralCrimeNfk](https://twitter.com/RuralCrimeNfk) 

Welcome to our newsletter. This month's edition has a slightly different appearance as the constabulary has changed the software system used for newsletters. The team behind the new software has tried to keep it as similar as possible and if anything made it slightly easier to read, especially on mobile devices. One thing you will notice is the newsletter is no longer an attachment but reads like an email. I don't know at this stage how this will affect people who print the newsletter for relatives, friends and other members of public which I know happens a lot. If there are any major issues, please get in touch with me and I will look into it further.

As for the team, we have been busy! Summer is supposedly upon us but the warm weather remains distinctly lacking. However, the farmers and gardeners will have appreciated the

We are now a matter of days away from launching our summer campaign – Op Seabird - tackling marine life disturbance along our beautiful coastline. We have also started planning our engagements events and it's looking highly likely that we will be able to attend a number of events this year, including Open Farm Sunday (Covid permitting) and also Sandringham Game and Country Fair in September. There are a couple more in the pipeline but are not currently confirmed.



rain we've had in recent weeks after an incredibly dry April.



YANA

[Rural mental health support](#)

Helpline: 0300 323 0400

helpline@yanahelp.org

The Launch of Our Summer Campaign - OP Seabird



Visitors to Norfolk's coast over the summer are being encouraged to act responsibly around wildlife.

Norfolk Constabulary has signed up to the national initiative Operation Seabird to tackle disturbance to seals, seabirds and nesting birds and raise awareness of the importance of protecting and preserving our rich wildlife habitats.

Officers will be out and about in specific locations across the county – including the path to the beach and footpath on Holkham estate, the Holme Dunes, Snettisham Beach to Heacham south beach, Winterton and Horsey beaches and Blakeney Point – between the beginning of June and the end of August meeting visitors.

Previous incidents along our coastline have included dogs off leads disturbing nesting birds or seals, wild campers lighting fires on the beach dune and causing significant damage to the fauna, quad bikes or 4x4s vehicles riding

Officers will be launching Operation Seabird at the Holkham estate car park in Lady Anne's Drive, Holkham Hall, NR23 1RG from 11am on Friday 4th of June 2021.

PC Chris Shelley, Norfolk Constabulary's Rural Crime Officer, said: "We always work closely with conservation charities, local councils and other key partners right along Norfolk's coastline to identify areas of concern.

"We're proud to be taking part in Operation Seabird this year and our focus will be on protecting our vulnerable ground nesting sea birds, the Little Terns and Ringer Plover, ensuring the seals on our beaches are not disturbed and educating and encouraging visitors to be responsible and consider how their actions may affect our wildlife.

"We all have a duty to act responsibly and take extra care when we're out and about. While the focus of Op Seabird is to engage, explain and educate visitors, we will act against anybody who wilfully and intentionally damages and disrupts our wildlife and their habitats."

RSPCA Insp Becky Harper said: "This year we are expecting an upsurge in people, who would normally go abroad for holidays, doing UK based staycations. It should be remembered that our beautiful beach & coastal areas, which are fun for us to play in, are natural habitats and breeding grounds for many native and migratory animals, including several species on the endangered list. We humans share this space, and we can easily and unwittingly cause disturbance, fear, and distress.

"For many tourists it can be surprising and exciting to see marine mammals, including seals & their pups which will normally rest on the beach at various times of year, as well as ground nesting birds which are usually resident between March to September. As tempting as it is to approach them, we would respectfully ask that all people are careful to: maintain a good distance; don't try to get close enough to touch or take selfies; read signs, stick to paths and keep dogs on leads where instructed to do so; and keep dogs under control at all times.

Dog attacks on seals can ultimately cost them their lives, as well as posing a risk to the dogs themselves through being bitten & disease transfer. Seal pups disturbed by curious people will move off into the sea, using valuable energy which they need to survive and grow. Birds such as Little Terns travel thousands of miles to breed in very specific UK coastal points, they have one annual chance to nest and produce young, but if disturbed this opportunity is

dogs, and careless feet."

Anyone who may have witnessed anyone deliberately and intentionally disturbing wildlife and their habitats is encouraged to contact Norfolk Police on 101, quoting Operation Seabird.

Operation Seabird was launched in 2020 by North Yorkshire and Humberside Police along with the RSPCA and is supported by local authorities, RNLI and wildlife trusts.



NEED TO TALK TO US?

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

Hare Coursing - Court Results

I am pleased to report we haven't had any reported offences in the last month and two positive court results. The first incident dates back to February 2020 in Outwell, near Wisbech. Subsequently, Frederick Eastwood of Wheatstone Road, Erith, Kent and Danny Bignall of School Lane, Horton Kirby, Kent, both pleaded guilty to daytime trespass in

Michael Travell, age 35, of Beverley Road, Norwich, and George Harber, age 23, of Shorthorn Road, Stratton Strawless, were subsequently reported for hunting a wild mammal with dogs, contrary to section 1 and 6 of the 2004 Hunting Act, and summonsed to appear at court.

They appeared before Norwich Magistrates' Court on Wednesday, 12

pursuit of game. Bignall was ordered to pay a total of £682 in fines, costs and victim surcharge while Eastwood was ordered to pay £348 in fines, costs and victim surcharge. No dogs were seized.

The second incident was at Sharrington when officers were called shortly after 11.30pm on 16 September 2020 to reports of men with dogs on private land.

Police attended the scene and discovered a silver Citroen car and a dead hare inside the vehicle. Using night vision goggles, officers spotted two men with two Lurcher-type dogs hiding in the hedgerow.

Two men aged in their 30s, a man aged in his 20s and a teenage boy voluntarily attended Aylsham Police Investigation Centre where they were questioned about the incident.

William Mitchell, age 36, of Mangreen Lane in Keswick, near Norwich,

count of hunting a wild mammal with dogs.

All three were each fined £500 and ordered to pay £145 costs, and a victim surcharge of £50. They were also given Criminal Behaviour Orders for three years. A confiscation order was also made for three dogs which will now be rehomed.

The teenage boy was told no further action would be taken against him.

Hare coursing has a terrible impact on our rural communities: it damages property, threatens people's livelihoods and subjects people and families to fear and intimidation.

It's an issue we take very seriously and we will hold those responsible to account in order to prevent this happening in Norfolk. If you witness this crime in action or have information about illegal hare coursing, please share this with us so we can work together to catch those responsible.

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.police.uk

Theft Of Postboxes

This month we have joined Royal Mail and other police forces in the eastern region to look at tackling the theft of postboxes, which are considered a heritage crime given many are the traditional style postboxes. They are sold for huge amounts of money all over the world. We need your help to keep an eye on your local postbox and report anything unusual or suspicious. We are also looking to work with Royal Mail in the future to try to make these boxes harder to sell on. It should also be noted that it is illegal to use an old postbox as your personal letterbox if it is still painted red and has the plate still in situ even if it has been bought legitimately.



Theft of Catalytic Converters

We continue to see a number of catalytic converters being taken from vehicles overnight and during the day. Please consider marking your catalytic converter with your name and postcode. There are also a number of devices that can be fitted to try to secure the device. Always try to leave your car in a well-lit area and, where possible, close to CCTV cameras and not in a secluded location. While all cars can be targeted, vehicles that sit higher off the ground tend to be the most vulnerable as offenders can get under the vehicles.



Tackling Illegal Fishing

Other Wildlife Matters

Manager in the west of county recently spent a Sunday out with Environment Agency patrolling waterways and fisheries tackling illegal fishing during the closed season as well as rod licence offences. They dealt with 4 people for rod licence offences.



have seen reported this past month, we continue to receive reports around nesting birds being disturbed due to people carrying out work on trees and hedges. Its really important to remember all wild birds nests are protecting from being disturb whilst active or being built. Therefore if you come across a birds nest whilst working in your garden this Spring/Summer please stop what you are doing and wait for the nest to become inactive in the Autumn to do the work.

Also please don't forget our ground nesting birds not only along our coastline but also in a our fields and popular dog walking spots. Ground nesting birds are some of our endangered birds including Lapwings, Nightjars, and Skylarks they are vulnerable to wandering humans and dogs. Always stick to official footpaths and keep dogs on leads to help protect their nests.

The police will never...

-  Contact you to ask for your PIN or bank details
-  Ask to withdraw cash to hand over to them for safe-keeping
-  Ask you transfer money out of your account for fraud reasons
-  Send someone to your home to collect cash, PINs, or cards

 ActionFraud
www.actionfraud.gov.uk

Protecting Our Bats

We continue to receive a few reports of potential bat disturbances especially around building sites and trees being cut down. It is essential that if you have a bat roost within your property or garden (trees) you will require a licence from Natural England to carry out any work.

Whilst on the subject of bats the Bat Conservation Trust released an interesting article at the beginning of the month around 'Urban Exploring' and disturbance to bats. This is also an area of concern for us in regards to damage to vulnerable and historic buildings and also people putting themselves at risk of harm.

"The Bat Conservation Trust is aware that a rising trend known as 'urban exploring' in abandoned buildings and underground hideaways is illegally impacting on bats.

Many bats live in the sorts of places that are now attracting a surge in hobby 'explorers', who go into old buildings and then share videos of their explorations on social media.

Many online sites show this activity is happening in places such as mines, caves, forts, abandoned former prisons, empty industrial buildings, houses, former asylums and hospitals, underground WW2 bomb shelters, disused railway tunnels, derelict schools, church ruins, military bunkers, quarry buildings, fuel storage bunkers and even grain siloes.

This is a concern for the safety of people and bats. Roosting bats are often hidden away in such places, but their presence may not be obvious. Such places are often entered illegally and may be dangerous and unstable, and health-wise they may contain dangerous substances or other hazards.

Whilst we welcome people getting out and legally and safely exploring and finding solace in 'wilder' places, we obviously do not encourage law breaking, potential damage to important sites or disturbance of vulnerable wildlife. We urge people to please consider the wildlife, which deserves our respect.

BCT's Wildlife Crime Officer, Mark Goulding, who leads our Wildlife Crime Project, said bat disturbance and activity in such sites is on the rise: "Evidence is emerging that some of these activities by a minority of individuals are unlawful. Some of these locations may be of heritage and or archaeological significance or Sites of Special Scientific Interest. It is a criminal offence to

“Many of these locations have protected species of flora and fauna within them. All UK bat species and their roosts are protected by law.

“Unfortunately, there has been cause for the police to investigate individuals involved in unlawful anti-social behaviour and criminality linked to ‘urban exploring’. A police caution has already been issued for one bat related offence linked to Urban exploring.

For the health and safety of people, as well as the protection of features within these locations, BCT urges that permission is obtained from the appropriate authority or owner, and advice is sought on the site before any such activity takes place. This should also include finding out if there are bat roosts, and making sure they are not disturbed.

To find out more about the Bat Crime Investigations Project [click here.](#)”

Final Word

Thankyou again for taking the time to read this months Newsletter. The new system has made this one look and feel slightly different. Any feedback would be appreciated - we are also looking at including clickable links through to other pages on the internet, which in the long term has great benefits to be able to share information and ideas with everyone.

Lets hope for some warmer weather this month, as always any concerns or comments please get in touch.



Recent Press Releases

Appeal following boat theft in Acle

Police are appealing for witnesses after a boat was stolen in Acle. The incident happened sometime overnight between Sunday 23 May and Monday 24 May when a 14 ft motorboat was stolen from outside a property in Charles Close.

The boat was recovered on Monday morning (24 May) on High Road in Beighton, however the outboard engine and marine equipment from within, had been stolen. The engine and equipment were recovered later that day in Beighton.

Officers are appealing for anyone who may have witnessed the incident or anyone acting suspiciously in the area during the time stated, to come forward. Please contact PC Paul Bassham in the Broadsbeat Team on 101 quoting crime reference 36/35428/21.

Attempted catalytic converter theft in Thetford

Police are appealing for information after an incident of criminal damage to a car on Wednesday 19 May 2021.

men were seen near a victim's car just after 10:50pm.

After being disturbed by the victim, the two men drove away quickly from the scene in what is believed to have been a silver VW car.

The victim's car exhaust pipe was found to have been cut in what appears to be an attempted theft of a catalytic converter.

Police would like to hear from anyone who may have witnessed the incident, or have dash cam footage from the area at the time.

Anyone with information is asked to contact PC Louise Watson at Dereham Road police station on 101, quoting crime reference number 36/34173/21.

Police are appealing for witnesses after a boat was stolen in Norwich.

The incident happened sometime overnight between Sunday 23 May and Monday 24 May when a 14 ft motorboat was stolen from outside a property in Charles Close.

The boat was recovered on Monday morning (24 May) on High Road in Beighton, however the outboard engine and marine equipment from within, had been stolen. The engine and equipment were recovered later that day in Beighton.

Officers are appealing for anyone who may have witnessed the incident or anyone acting suspiciously in the area during the time stated, to come forward. Please contact PC Paul Bassham in the Broadsbeat Team on 101 quoting crime reference 36/35428/21.

Residents urged to be vigilant following burglaries

Residents in the Broadland and South Norfolk areas are being urged to be vigilant following a number of burglaries in recent weeks.

Seven addresses have been broken into where thieves have targeted cash and jewellery. The incidents have taken place in:

Yarmouth Road in Smallburgh between 9am and 10.30am on Thursday 27 May (36/36335/21).

Maypole Green in Toft Monks between 9am and 12pm on Wednesday 26 May 2021 (36/36123/21)

(36/35796/21).

Yarmouth Road in Blofield between 11.30am and 2pm on Monday 24 May

(36/35503/21).

Church Road in Lingwood between 9am and 10.35pm on Thursday 20 May

(36/34511/21).

Laurence Avenue in Brundall between 12pm and 5.20pm on Tuesday 18 May

(36/33850/21).

Clarks Loke in Blofield between Sunday 9th May and Tuesday 11 May

(36/31661/21).

Investigations into these incidents are on-going and officers are making enquiries as to whether the burglaries are linked.

In the meantime, officers are advising residents to be vigilant and reports any suspicious behaviour to police on 101 or call 999 if you believe a crime is in progress.

Anyone with information about the burglaries should contact Great Yarmouth CID on 101 or call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Jubilee House, Falconers Chase, Wymondham, Norfolk, NR18 0WW

To update your details or change your subscription preferences, please click [here](#)