

# Operation Meles

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

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## 2013 Final Incident Total Almost Doubles

The operation continues to record all incidents reported to them and having finally collated all the figures it would appear that at least 697 took place last year (2013) (353 incidents 2012). We do not claim to have all the incidents reported throughout the UK collected together but we continue to strive to record as many as possible. If it is not recorded then we haven't been told about it. If you have an incident and you want it recorded then please email the sanitised details to [Ian@scottishbadgers.org.uk](mailto:Ian@scottishbadgers.org.uk) or alternatively visit either the Badger Trust or Scottish Badgers websites where there is a simple form to fill in. No user ID or password required. Incident number, place, date, type of offence and short narrative is all we require to record it. We will be doing a full analysis of these incidents for 2013 and publishing the results in due course.

Initial analysis shows 151 baiting related incidents, a further 86 suspicious deaths and 30 snaring incidents were reported. However 194 incidents relate to setts being interfered with often as a result of otherwise legal operation such as development of forestry.

## Custodial Sentences

As the culmination to an RSPCA investigation on 11th July at Pennine Magistrates court three men from Colne, Lancashire were sentenced to terms of imprisonment having been pled guilty at an earlier hearing. Two of the men had pled to attempting to kill a badger whilst the third male pled guilty to causing unnecessary cruelty to a cat. The three were sentenced to 76, 114 and 126 days imprisonment. One of the men was banned from keeping dogs for five years whilst the other two were banned from keeping dogs for ten years.

## Retirals

Both Insp Nevin Hunter and Sgt David Knight from Devon & Cornwall Police have retired from the service recently. Both officers were long term wildlife crime officers and some of us still recall Nevin from the late 80s. Good luck to both with your, I am assured by both, separate future lives. It will be September before Nevin is finally replaced at NWCU and Sue Eddy is holding the reigns meantime.



## **Poisoning West Mercia**

Following information regarding a farmer using CYMAG to poison badgers West Mercia WCO's and NWCUI ISO's executed a warrant and recovered several different poisons. Enquiries are ongoing.

## **Four Arrested in Derbyshire.**

Four males were recently arrested after police were called to a badger sett in Derbyshire. The males who had six dogs with them were found to be at the sett when the police arrived. Enquiries are ongoing.

## **Snared Badger found in North Yorkshire**

Live badger found by walker at locus which was released apparently unharmed in a poorly placed snare on fence line. Police making further enquiries to identify the culprit. It is not recommended to release badgers from snares before they are examined by a vet. The extreme pressure exerted by the animal pulling against the snare can cause unseen injuries often subcutaneous which later become infected often causing the animals death. The advice is to take the badger into care and then release back at the same site if safe to do so once it has been examined and treated.

## **Incident reports.**

As you can see from the following reports, just a taste of reported incidents, they can often be vague and therefore difficult to investigate. It is therefore vital that we work together in partnership to assist the enforcement agencies in what can often be very time consuming and difficult enquiries. If you don't already have a good line of communication with those investigating badger crime in your area then it is well worth setting up protocols on how you can help each other and hopefully lead to more prosecutions.

## **Dead badger on sett in Kent**

Caller reports that there is a dead badger next to a badger sett which has been dug up.

## **Shooting Incident in Leicestershire**

Caller reports finding dead badger which appears to have been shot and skinned at the locus.

## **Snared Badger found in Derbyshire**

Whilst watching badger visiting a garden in Derbyshire the observer noticed one of the badgers was obviously injured. They were able to successfully capture the animal the next evening and found it had a broken snare attached. The animal was successfully treated for serious injuries and then released.

## **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](mailto:Ian@scottishbadgers.org.uk). It is hoped that we will issue this document every three or four months. I can be contacted on 07866 844232

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