

Confirmed Bird of Prey Poisoning Hotspot Maps in England and Wales- 2007 to 2011 - FAQs

What are the PAW Confirmed Bird of Prey Poisoning Hotspot Maps in England and Wales?

The PAW England & Wales poisoning maps are published to show - clearly - where confirmed poisonings of birds of prey have taken place.

They show incidents across England & Wales and - where more than one incident occurred in a small area - these are rolled together into a 'hotspot'.

They are based on robust scientific information based on post-mortem and toxicological analysis provided by AHVLA and Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera).

How are they produced?

As part of the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS), Fera carries out testing on carcasses of animals that are suspected to have been poisoned. Once deliberate, illegal poisoning is confirmed the incident is categorised as 'abuse'. Fera also records accidental - or misuse - incidents involving perfectly legal pesticides as part of their monitoring role.

Only 'abuse' incidents involving confirmed poisoning of birds of prey are included on the maps. Incidents that involve only other wildlife or domestic animals, misuse incidents and incidents where only baits have been recovered, are not included.

Natural England, who undertake the field enquiries in England, have provided the mapping services to produce the maps at the request of the PAW Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group.

Are all the spots randomised?

Detailed 'discovery' locations are recorded by Fera. However, for the purposes of hotspot map production, the detailed location of each discovery was changed to the origin of the 10km OS grid square in which they were found (i.e. the obscurity factor applied to the placement of the map 'spot'). This is due to the difficulty in connecting 'bird discovery' and 'source of poison' locations and an appreciation that a victim is not necessarily poisoned at the precise location it is discovered.

Why are they randomised?

We don't give out exact locations of finds - or 'name and shame' the businesses on whose land a carcass is found. While everyone is free to draw their own conclusions regarding these crimes, PAW in England & Wales considers it is for the courts to determine responsibility for them.

Why are they important?

Looking at robust data showing the spread of the incidents that are recorded should allow us to better target partnership working, enforcement and education to combat this problem.

Is poisoning a cause for concern in England & Wales?

The maps show that the problem of illegal poisoning continues to be a real threat to our wildlife - in particular our birds of prey. In addition a number of the incidents recorded on this map involve the chemicals carbofuran and aldicarb. These are not approved for use in England & Wales - there is no reason for anyone having these chemicals and certainly no excuse for them to find their way onto baits or to be used to kill wildlife.

Carbofuran, aldicarb and other chemicals used in these confirmed poisoning incidents are dangerous. They are dangerous to both animals and humans. Putting such chemicals out into the environment where anyone can come across them is totally irresponsible.

Why publish maps of information that the Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) already publishes in its quarterly reports on line?

CRD publish the data from the chemical analysis undertaken as a result of reports submitted to the government's Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme in England & Wales. http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/Resources/CRD/Migrated-Resources/Documents/W/WIIS_Q2_Publication_2012.xlsx

It's vitally important that all our partners and the public understand what these figures are and what they mean. In an age where vast amounts of information is available it is sometimes difficult to understand the available information.

By publishing these maps PAW England & Wales sends out a clear message to those who are looking for reliable information.

The maps use only the Fera data of confirmed poisoning and by aggregating five years worth of information on one map we can gain a better understanding of where the problem areas are.

Why are poison baits not included in these maps?

The RPPDG has published these first maps as a representation of confirmed poisoning incidents that impact on birds of prey in England and Wales. The agreed protocol commits the group to review issues such as baits.

The group will consider what further datasets could help to inform people about raptor persecution. To begin this process, the group has undertaken at its next meeting, to examine data relating to poisoned baits. It may be useful to represent such data in map form.

Who is involved in putting these together?

The mapping project is an action supported by all members of the PAW England & Wales Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group which includes the Police, National Wildlife Crime Unit, BASC, Countryside Alliance, Defra, Moorland Association, National Gamekeepers Organisation, Natural England, Northern England Raptor Forum, RSPB and the Welsh Government.

The maps project has been managed by Natural England using the WIIS data, collected by Natural England and Welsh Government, owned by CRD from the analytical and interpretative work of Fera.

What is the Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group?

PAW is interested in a number of key priority areas for action in relation to wildlife crime. One of these areas is crime against birds of prey. The PAW England & Wales has established the Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group chaired by Superintendent David Lynch of Lincolnshire Police to develop a programme of work to improve prevention, awareness raising, enforcement and intelligence gathering in England & Wales related to crimes against birds of prey. Publishing the maps is one activity aimed at preventing further harm to our wildlife.

What are the trends in illegal poisoning?

The Raptor Persecution Priority Delivery Group hopes to look at this issue and agree that in future it would be useful to produce statistically accurate trends, however at the present time this is not possible.

How should I report a suspect poisoning incident involving raptors?

If you find a raptor you think has been poisoned you should contact your local police using the number 101 and report the incident. You should ask for your report to be routed to the Police Wildlife Crime Officer for the area. Please let the police know if you have reported the matter to WIIS Freephone number.

The WIIS Freephone number is 0800 321600. You will be asked to provide details about what you have found, where it has been found and how we can get back in touch with you. Out of hours an answering machine service operates and you will be able to leave a message.

Where can I find out more about WIIS?

Further information about the operation of the WIIS scheme can be found on the following webpage:

<http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/guidance/industries/pesticides/topics/reducing-environmental-impact/wildlife/wildlife-incident-investigation-scheme.htm>