

The Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP
Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire
The Home Office

COPY

Sent by email

2nd August 2024

Dear Minister,

Notifiable status for key wildlife crimes

Congratulations of your appointment to the Home Office.

On behalf of organisations belonging to the Wildlife & Countryside Link coalition, I am writing to request a meeting to discuss notifiable status for wildlife crimes, a cost-effective policing reform supported by police forces, civil society and the wider public.

Crimes against wildlife cause damage to species and habitats and pose a risk to people and property. [Estimates](#) published annually by Link show a sustained increase in reported wildlife crime since 2020, with the number of convictions declining over the same time period. In this area of law enforcement, more people are committing crimes and more people are getting away with it.

Data shortfalls are hampering efforts to reverse these trends. Wildlife crimes are not notifiable offences, meaning that no central, nationwide records are maintained. Due to the lack of notifiable status, wildlife crimes are typically only haphazardly entered into the incident recording systems of individual police forces, systems which do not feed through into regional or national crime databases. As a result, no one knows precisely how much wildlife crime actually takes place across the UK. This lack of knowledge inhibits strategic planning to better deter, detect and detain wildlife criminals and protect wildlife and people from their activities.

Key police units stand with wildlife organisations to request that key wildlife crime offences be added to the notifiable register, to address this dangerous data shortfall. Police support for notifiable status has been formally communicated through representations from the National Police Chiefs Council (submitted in 2020), and through repeated requests from the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU). These representations have been fully supported by charities and eNGOs working on wildlife crime. In July 2022 Link met with Home Office and Defra officials to discuss the case for making a shortlist of key wildlife crimes (agreed between Link and the NWCU) notifiable. Link subsequently submitted a full [evidence dossier](#) for consideration.

Disappointingly, the previous administration failed to respond to these recommendations. Link hopes that you feel able to rectify this missed opportunity to protect wildlife and people from those who hurt animals and to consider anew the proposals for notifiable status. Adding key wildlife crimes to the notifiable register would carry minimal costs, both in terms of public expenditure and police resources, and would contribute to the Government's crime reduction and environmental recovery missions, as well as furthering the manifesto commitment to improve animal welfare. Given the close [links](#) between rural and wildlife crime, there is also an opportunity to reduce crimes against people and property across the countryside by including measures to better tackle wildlife crime in the upcoming Home Office rural crime strategy.

On behalf of the organisations listed below, I would like to discuss this opportunity to effectively reduce wildlife crime with you and your team. Please do let me know if this might be possible, Link colleagues and I would be delighted to meet at a time convenient to you.

Thank you for your consideration of the above, I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Dominic Dyer, Chair of the Link Wildlife Crime Working Group

Replies can be sent to matt@wcl.org.uk

This letter is supported by the following organisations

Born Free
Badger Trust
Hare Preservation Trust
Humane Society International UK
Institute of Fisheries Management
League Against Cruel Sports
Naturewatch Foundation
Peoples Trust for Endangered Species
Wild Justice
Wildlife & Countryside Link
WWF-UK

CC: Baroness Hayman of Ullock, Minister of State (Minister for Animal Welfare), Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs