



Operation Artemis

If you see poaching in progress, call the police on 999 and quote 'Operation Artemis'

What is Operation Artemis?

Poaching takes many forms, from hare coursing, shooting deer at night, to using catapults to take pheasants. This type of offending is unique to the countryside and tends to be seasonal.

The image of the poacher taking 'one for the pot' has long since gone, and poaching often involves groups or gangs who are members of Organised Crime Groups involved in all levels of criminality affecting all communities.

Poaching tends to peak when the harvests come down at the end of the summer, reaching high levels between October and December. This year, the harvests have been early, meaning that access to fields is earlier than usual, so we are likely to see a longer sustained peak from September to December.

Operation ARTEMIS is Wiltshire Police's proactive operation to counter all forms of poaching, and sits within the national operation Project POACHER. Project POACHER aims to coordinate action across England and Wales through:

Prevention – Offering best advice to farmers, landowners, gamekeepers, and shooting and land management organisations regarding measures to prevent poaching, and proactive disruption procedures.

Intelligence – To allow the police to target offenders.

Enforcement – With good intelligence, the police can target poachers through the various rural and poaching based operations run throughout England and Wales.

Reassurance – By working together with communities, and by publicising activity such as operations, arrests, seizures and convictions.

Operation ARTEMIS is the word to be used when reporting all incidents of poaching, except fishing, within Wiltshire.



How to report poaching

Be prepared

- Follow the advice on the "HOW TO REPORT" card.
- Know who your local Community Coordinator is, and who your Police Community Support Officers are.
- Join the Rural Crime Team volunteer network.

Checklist

- If it is an ongoing incident, call 999 – otherwise dial 101.
- Make sure you clearly state 'Operation Artemis' to help the police track your call.
- Provide landmarks or specific road names and numbers, or a postcode or address.
- Provide descriptions of the person or people committing the offence, and the particulars of any vehicles, including make, colour and the number plate.
- Be discrete. People committing these offences will freely offer violence if challenged.
- Ensure you ask for and receive a crime reference, or log, number from the Contact Centre. This will help the police come back to you with an update.

Why should it be reported?

The people who engage in poaching are breaking the law. They will freely engage in violence if challenged. They have few qualms about trespassing on private land, and will access land via restricted byways, cutting through gates and fences in doing so. People who engage in poaching also commit many other forms of crime, including theft from farm and agricultural buildings, criminal damage, threats to occupants and workers, and many vehicle offences. Reporting poaching helps the police to form an intelligence picture, so they can be proactive and prevent these crimes being committed at all.



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Project Poacher

Project Poacher was launched at the recent UK Wildlife Crime Enforcers' Conference, following the success of Project Trespass.

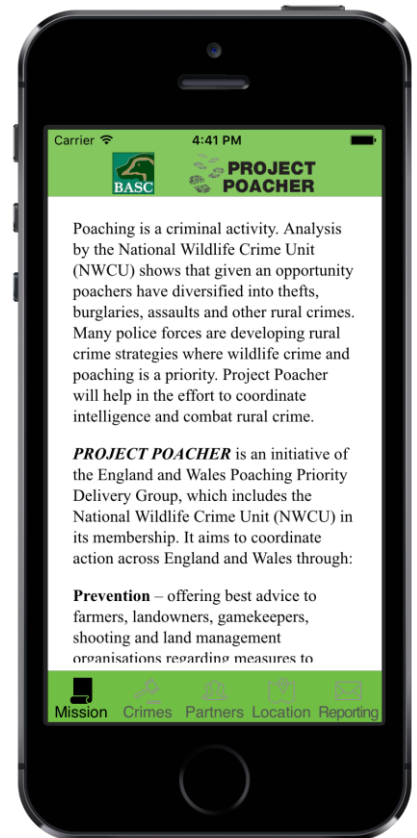
Project Poacher is made up of two key elements; advice and support for law enforcers and a free, easy to use app for reporting poaching incidents.

The app is available to download at www.projectpoacher.com

The initiative has seen public meetings held across the country involving partner agencies involved with the group, local police and members of the public living and working in the countryside. Magazine articles have been written to raise understanding and encourage the reporting of poaching incidents and police forces have taken direct action running anti-poaching operations gathering intelligence and targeting offenders.

The National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCUC) has undertaken a review of intelligence, numbers and types of convictions and other information received following the first six months of the project. The results are staggering. Intelligence collated from across England and Wales by the NWCUC increased from 44% to 55% for the total amount for wildlife crime received.

Wiltshire Police have initiated some very effective anti-poaching operations, and we will continue to do so. Operation Artemis has been initiated to coincide with the peak of the illegal hare coursing activities and the aim is to see it also being implemented by regional forces across the South West.



Rural crime prevention advice

Storage of valuable equipment

- Tools, chainsaws, welding equipment and fuel should all be stored in a secure building. Record serial numbers and security mark.
- A metal storage cage inside a building can also slow intruders down.

Locks

- Use British Standard locks, good quality locking bars and high security closed shackle padlocks.
- Windows can be protected with metal bars.
- Lock outbuildings when you are not using them. Install window locks on the ground floors.

Lights

- Thieves don't like well-lit areas so fit outside security lights activated by movement or time.
- Some areas may benefit from a constant low light. Consider fitting an intruder alarm and CCTV to alert you to anything suspicious.

Sheds

- Make sure all doors are fitted with good quality locks. Always lock sheds, and fit wire mesh to the inside of garden shed windows.
- Clearly mark your garden and power tools.

Fields and Woodland

- Consider digging anti-vehicle ditches.