

Cat shot at close range left with air rifle pellet embedded in skull



The Scottish SPCA is appealing for information after a cat was deliberately shot in the nasal cavity by an air rifle at close range.

An x-ray revealed long-haired tabby Max, from Blackridge in West Lothian, had a pellet deeply lodged between his eye socket and optic nerve.

The pellet is now permanently embedded in Max's skull as a vet would need to remove his eye in order to extract the ammunition.

The two-year-old cat, who was shot on Wednesday 7 September, is currently on an intensive course of antibiotics to try and fight off any infections that might occur as a result of the injury.

Owner Andrew Murchison said, "He managed to make it home and when he came into the living room he lost control of his back legs, his balance seemed to go and he lost control of his bowels.

"We couldn't actually see anything wrong with him externally so we assumed he was having a seizure.

"We took him straight to the vets who carried out scans and blood tests. When we got Max home the next day blood started pouring from his nose.

"He was transferred to the vet school in Edinburgh where he was given an x-ray and that's when we saw the metal and the

pellet.

“They operated on him for over three hours and were able to remove most of the shrapnel.

“However, the main body of the pellet was so deeply lodged in between his eye socket and optic nerve that they would have to remove his eye to get it out.

“Max is not out of the woods yet and has a lot of recovering to do but we are hopeful that he’s going to be okay.

“It has been a horrific experience for our family and we are keeping everything crossed.”

People who own or use an air weapon will need to have a licence when new rules tightening access, introduced in the Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2015, come into effect from 31 December 2016.

An undercover Scottish SPCA inspector said, “It is appalling that animals such as Max are being targeted and caused such pain and suffering.

“Because the air rifle had been shot up Max’s nose at close range there was no entry wound. This was a horrific crime and Max is very fortunate to still be alive.

“Disturbingly, some people seem to think it is fun to maim and kill defenceless animals with air weapons and this is completely unacceptable in a modern, civilised society.”

Anyone with information is being asked to contact the Scottish SPCA animal helpline on 03000 999 999. Calls are in strict confidence and can be made anonymously.