

Wildlife crime reports almost double according to latest police figures

Wildlife crime reports have nearly doubled, according to the latest figures from Police Scotland.

Between April and September 2020, Police Scotland recorded 203 wildlife crime offences compared to 111 in the same period in 2019/20, an increase of 82.9%.

A graphic with a dark blue background featuring a stylized eagle's head in profile on the right. The text 'End Wildlife Crime.' is in large, bold, white letters. Below it, 'Keep your eyes open; report any suspicious activity.' is in smaller blue text. At the bottom, there is a dark blue banner with white text: 'For more information on how to report Wildlife Crime visit www.scotland.police.uk'. To the left of this banner are social media icons for Twitter (@PoliceScotland) and Facebook (PoliceScotland). To the right is the Police Scotland crest and logo, and a '101' emergency call button with the text 'IN AN EMERGENCY ALWAYS CALL 999'. At the bottom right is a logo for 'PARTNERSHIP FOR ACTION AGAINST wildlife crime'.

Detection rates also increased, rising to 55.2% in 2020 compared to 34.2% in the same six month period in 2019.

The latest figures were released in Police Scotland's Quarterly Performance Report covering April to September 2020/21.

Detective Chief Superintendent Gary Cunningham, Police Scotland's lead for Wildlife Crime, said: "Scotland's diverse wildlife is one of its greatest assets, yet there are those who seek to destroy it. Wildlife crime has an enormous impact not only on our natural heritage but also on those communities that rely on the employment and tourism it brings.

“Investigating wildlife crime can be demanding and complex, it requires specialist skills. Earlier this year we introduced a new training course to build our capability and to enhance the skills and knowledge of our officers.

“We will continue to invest in tackling wildlife crime and ensuring our officers are trained to the highest level. But we are also asking the public to be aware and if they see anything suspicious to report it to us.”