

## South East Rural Crime Week

Police forces across the South East are working together to intensify their operations to tackle rural crime this week.

Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators and Partners can help by raising awareness of Rural Crime and encouraging their scheme members to report rural and wildlife crime via the [Kent Police website](#) and Live Chat for non-emergency calls. Offences occurring at the time should be reported via 999.



Rural crime is a concern for large areas of our county but it tends to go unreported. It can impact on insurance premiums, food prices and damage local communities. Rural residents can feel unsafe in their own homes; wildlife and plant species suffer, farm owners have to foot the bill for criminal damage and theft; and local businesses in rural areas can see their income and cashflow adversely affected.

Theft remains a major problem in the agricultural sector, affecting many farmers who have unfortunately experienced the theft of farm machinery, vehicles, GPS units, livestock, horses or fuel. Rural thieves have evolved beyond opportunistic local individuals. Increasingly in recent years, organised and sometimes international criminal gangs are in control of criminal activities, with emerging illicit markets further fuelling the demand for stolen equipment.

**Wildlife crime** includes actions that violate UK laws to safeguard our wildlife and plant species. It not only inflicts pain and suffering on animals, such as hares, birds of prey and bats, but also threatens the survival of certain species.

It can be connected with serious offences such as firearms crimes and organised crime, including an association with cyber-crime through the streaming of illegal activities (such as badger-baiting) that reaches into towns and cities for betting purposes.

**Environmental crime** includes serious and organised waste crime, fly-tipping, arson and heritage crime. Waste crime can take on many different forms from the very visible dumping of waste to fraudulent producer responsibility claims, deliberate breaches of permits, metal theft and the growing issue of the waste industry being used to launder money.

Please see below for the different types of rural and wildlife crime that can be reported online:

Wildlife crime includes:

- poaching
- coursing
- persecution of badgers, birds and bats

- egg theft and collection
- collection of trade in protected species and animal products
- not registering animals that require a licence
- taking protected plants
- use of poisons, snares or explosives to kill or injure animals
- animal cruelty
- hunting with dogs
- introducing invasive species
- killing or capturing, damaging or destroying the habitat of any protected animal

Rural crime includes:

- theft of farming or agricultural equipment or fuel, damage to agricultural property
- tack theft
- theft of lead from churches
- damage to ancient monuments
- illegal metal detecting
- livestock worrying

To find out more about **Rural Crime Prevention** please click on the link below:

[Rural crime prevention | Kent Police](#)

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Report a Rural Crime via the Kent Police Website - [Report a rural crime | Kent Police](#)

Stay 100% anonymous and report Rural Crime via Crimestoppers - [Giving information anonymously | Crimestoppers \(crimestoppers-uk.org\)](#)