



Horses, ponies and donkeys



Tethering

Beach donkeys

Livery yards

**Horse-drawn
carriages**

Equine welfare

**Keith Holmes of Darenth
Parish Council in Kent who
has been working closely
with local travellers
to ensure responsible
equine tethering.**

STUART THOMAS



Horses, ponies and donkeys

In addition to their statutory duties to inspect riding establishments, local authority officers may often deal with matters relating to equines – horses, ponies and donkeys.

One issue that is a particular challenge for both welfare organizations and statutory bodies such as the police and local authorities is tethering. This is mainly used as a method of management of equines but can also be used for dogs and goats. The RSPCA is not in favour of tethering as a long-term method of securing animals. However, while animals are tethered, their welfare can be enhanced by following basic guidelines.

Several commercial companies offer a service to remove tethered or straying equines, but their record on animal welfare is variable. Local authorities using such companies should check on the fate of horses handled by them, and find out whether there are any welfare prosecutions pending in respect of their activities.

Freely grazing equines can also pose welfare concerns. People often express concerns about their health during extremes of weather or if they are left on poor grazing or with no visible signs of food or water.

Tethered horses are a common sight in certain areas of the country. Local authorities are urged to take a proactive and positive approach towards this issue.



COLIN SEDDON/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY



E.A. JAMES/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

Owning a horse is a major responsibility and local authorities can help by promoting responsible ownership.

Riding concerns

Local authorities should also be aware of welfare and safety issues associated with use of horses and ponies for commercial purposes such as donkey rides on beaches, landau carriages, and donkey rides or donkey derbies at fetes or local shows.

Welfare of horses in private livery yards is also an issue of concern. There is at present no specific legislation in this area. Some livery yards are extremely well run. However, in the worst cases there is serious overstocking, no pasture management, and horses are kept in run-down buildings, without any overall supervision of animal welfare. Few records are kept, if any, and some owners are virtually untraceable. In some cases, riding lessons may also be given on these premises with no consideration given to health and safety requirements.

Equine identification

The RSPCA believes many of these welfare problems could be overcome with a suitable system of permanent identification that would help match up owners with straying equines or with equines that have been neglected or cruelly treated. The Society also believes it is still far too easy for someone to obtain a horse or pony, leading in many cases to irresponsible ownership.



Horses, ponies and donkeys



Tethering of equines

Tethering is a method of securing animals by a chain or rope attached to a stake in the ground. It is most commonly used for equines, such as horses and ponies, as well as other animals, like goats and dogs.

Tethering is often used to secure animals on common land or land in public ownership, eg owned by local authorities or other public sector organizations.

Although tethering was used originally by the travelling community, the majority of horses secured in this way are kept by owners who live at a fixed address but choose this method of managing their animals because it is very low-cost.

Animal welfare implications

The RSPCA believes tethering is not a suitable method of long-term management of an animal as it restricts the animal's freedom to exercise itself, to find food or water, or to escape from either predators or the extremes of hot or cold weather. The animal is also at risk of becoming entangled in the tether causing injury and distress, or in extreme cases, death. The Society is also concerned that tethering is seen as a cheap solution to the care of equines, leading to irresponsible equine ownership.

Equines are often tethered in inappropriate locations such as wasteland or by highways where they are at risk of harm and injury and may also be a danger to other livestock and passers-by.

Tethered equines are covered by various pieces of legislation:

- **The Protection Against Cruel Tethering Act 1988** – this act makes it an offence to tether any horse, pony, ass or mule in such a manner as to cause the animal unnecessary suffering.
- **Abandonment of Animals Act 1960** – makes it an offence to abandon a domestic or captive animal, whether permanently or not, in circumstances likely to cause unnecessary suffering. In most cases, tethered equines have not been abandoned as the owner has every intention of returning to the animal. However, there are concerns about the infrequency with which some animals are checked.
- **Highways Act 1980 (section 155)** – this act enables the police to deal with any horse, cattle, sheep, goat or swine found straying on or beside the highway. Their owner could be found guilty of an offence.
- **Animals Act 1971** – Section 4 deals with livestock belonging to a person which strays onto land in the ownership or occupation of another and causes damage. This is principally a civil matter and not one with which the RSPCA would generally become involved. Local authorities may use this to deal with problems of equines straying on public land.

Where tethering exists the RSPCA believes a code of practice should be followed which should protect the welfare of the tethered animal. This should include information on when and how equines may be tethered, requirements for food and water and regular welfare and veterinary checks.

Take action now

- Encourage all owners to follow a basic code of good practice. Incentives for compliance could be introduced such as free microchipping, footcare or worming. Local landowners and businesses may be willing to help meet part of the cost in order to reduce the numbers of equines being tethered on their land.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance approach to illegal tethering by employing a contractor to quickly remove equines and impose suitable fines. Whenever contractors are used, the local authority would need to satisfy themselves that the contractor can guarantee the welfare of animals in their care. There have been cases where prosecutions have been taken against equine contractors for neglect of equines. It is important to ensure that an animal is not removed from one set of sub-standard conditions only to end up in a similar or worse situation.
- Consider providing alternative secure grazing sites where equines do not need to be kept tethered.
- Work with neighbouring local authorities, the police and animal welfare charities on a regional strategy for dealing with tethered equines.
- As the public often contacts local authorities and other organizations with concerns about tethered animals, it would be worthwhile producing leaflets or signs that explain the council's policy on dealing with tethered equines. This may help reduce the number of calls to the local authority about suitably tethered and healthy equines. It may also help alert people to potential animal welfare problems, eg equines tethered close to trees or on wasteland, so the owner can be contacted and asked to move the animal. If possible a 24-hour phone number should be given to which calls about illegally tethered and straying horses can be directed. This could be either the council's own 24-hour emergency service or, in some cases, the police have been willing to accept this responsibility and then direct calls to the most appropriate agency.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the horses, ponies and donkeys section.

Case study – **Kent equine working party**

Dartford Council and other local authorities in the area are working with the police, parish councils and other organizations including the RSPCA to try and combat the problems caused by illegally tethered and straying horses in the north west of Kent. There is a large, transient travelling community and high numbers of tethered and freely-grazed horses. Straying horses have caused havoc on link roads to the M25 and the cost to local police is very high. The Joint Equine Group has decided to pursue a zero-tolerance approach by ensuring that any horses tethered in an inappropriate place are quickly removed. The group has developed a system of both temporary and permanent warning signs and appointed local contractors to take the animals to secure, temporary accommodation pending sale, return to the owner or rehoming. As soon as an animal is spotted, a temporary sign is attached nearby warning the owner to remove it or face removal by the local authority and the imposition of significant fines. Permanent signs have been erected at entrances to parks and other public land. A key factor is protecting the anonymity of the organizations involved and the signs carry the logo of the Joint Equine Group rather than those of individual organizations. The scheme is jointly funded by the local authority, police and local landowners.

“The approach seems to be working,” explained Bob Penny, of Dartford Council. “However, it does rely on the wholehearted commitment of all the different organizations involved. Everyone needs to accept that it will cost money but I believe the positive results are worth it.”

The council is also investigating suitable areas where tethering or free-grazing can be allowed. And to ensure acceptable standards of welfare, the RSPCA and British Horse Society have developed a voluntary code of practice for equine owners.



“Although the RSPCA does not approve of tethering, I am pleased with the gradual improvements in animal welfare we are now seeing and also the reduction in numbers of animals straying on to the highway,” said Chief Inspector Steve Dockery of the RSPCA. “We hope that owners will begin to police themselves by encouraging each other to look after their animals as well as reporting any problems to the Society or the local authority.”

Contact

Bob Penny, Recreation Services Manager,

Dartford Council: 01322 343344 or bob.penny@dartford.gov.uk

Livery yards

Livery yards are places where people can stable their own horses for a fee – as opposed to riding establishments where the horses are owned and rented out by the proprietor. They vary from ‘full livery’ where the yard owner does all the work involved with the care of the horse, to DIY livery where the yard owner merely rents out a stable and the use of grazing land. At present there is no specific legislation to cover livery yards, and the welfare of horses is of great concern.



Unfortunately some livery yards may be badly managed with little thought to animal welfare. In the worst cases there is serious overstocking, no pasture management, and horses are kept in dilapidated buildings. Few, if any, records are kept, and some owners (both of the yards and the animals) are virtually untraceable. In some cases, riding lessons may also be given on these premises with no consideration of health and safety requirements. Often there are no facilities for turning the horses out, particularly during the winter, and no provision for dealing with emergencies.

Although local authorities have no legislative power over the licensing of livery yards, it is within their remit to check that health and safety regulations are being met. There is particular concern about the risk of fire due to the wooden fabric of the buildings and large quantities of hay and straw – and the lack of emergency procedures in such an event.

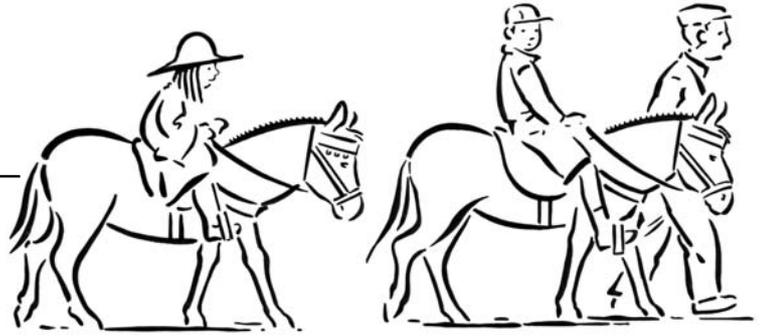
The RSPCA believes that there may be many livery yards which could be considered as unsafe places for both people and animals and yet are not controlled by any licensing or accreditation scheme. The only way for local authorities to take action may be indirectly. Investigation into such premises should therefore involve officers from health and safety, trading standards and planning regulations.

Take action now

- Visit livery yards on an annual basis to check health and safety regulations are being met.
- Encourage trading standards officers to check there is no contravention of the *Riding Establishments Act 1964 and 1970*. They may also enquire into the legality of contracts (if any) between the horse owner and the yard owner.
- Encourage livery yard owners to sign up to the British Horse Society Approved Livery Yard Scheme. Yards that join the scheme are regularly inspected and receive additional support and benefits as members, such as inclusion in a national directory and insurance discounts. For details see contacts section. The scheme is supported by the RSPCA and all other leading equine welfare charities.
- Building developments and car parking arrangements at livery yards should be checked to ensure that they do not contravene planning regulations.
- If cruelty or neglect is suspected, contact the RSPCA immediately.

Donkey rides on beaches

There are about 850 donkeys working on beaches in the UK. All operators of commercial donkey rides must be licensed by the local authority under the Riding Establishments Act 1964 and 1970. This includes a veterinary inspection of the animals and the premises by a vet registered as a Riding Schools Act inspector with the RCVS.



Help from the Donkey Sanctuary

The Donkey Sanctuary in Devon is a charity devoted to improving the welfare of donkeys throughout the country. It is developing partnership schemes with an increasing number of UK local authorities with the aim of improving conditions for beach donkeys.

Before annual licenses are granted, an inspector from the sanctuary, together with a local equine vet, visits the donkey operators to check the animals. He then hoof-brands all the donkeys that are fit for working. Only the branded animals may be used for rides. The Donkey Sanctuary has produced a code of practice for beach donkeys.

Donkeys in winter

The RSPCA and the Donkey Sanctuary are pressing for local authorities to make it a condition of the licence that operators state where their donkeys will spend the winter. Often, they are put in unsuitable homes with people who have little or no knowledge of donkey welfare. Under the Riding Establishment Act 1964 and 1970, the licensing authority has a duty to know the whereabouts of the animals throughout the year.

To assist donkey operators, the Donkey Sanctuary actively searches for winter homes for beach donkeys, as well as offering free training courses in donkey welfare for the winter carers.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the horses, ponies and donkeys section.

Take action now

- Contact the Donkey Sanctuary for advice on ensuring the welfare of beach donkeys.
- Undertake annual inspections early in the season and with a vet, as well as a representative from the RSPCA or the Donkey Sanctuary. If possible, take along a Health & Safety Officer.
- Insist that working donkeys are hoof-branded or microchipped so that no un-inspected animals can be drafted in.
- As part of the licence, draw up a code of practice for donkey operators, listing the animal welfare and health and safety needs.
- Arrange random checks on working donkeys to ensure that the animals are healthy and that the conditions of the code of practice are being met.
- Make it a condition of the licence that operators give the full contact details of the people who care for the donkeys in winter.



Case study – **Blackpool Borough Council**

The Donkey Sanctuary's scheme of inspecting and hoof-branding beach donkeys was pioneered nine years ago in Blackpool – home to the UK's largest population of beach donkeys.

The scheme evolved after the Sanctuary's regional welfare officer, Bill Tetlow, noticed how one particularly bad operator was cheating the licensing system. "He kept bringing the same eight donkeys in for inspection, making out they were from different stands. So he gained four licenses for 32 donkeys – but the vet had actually only seen eight of them."

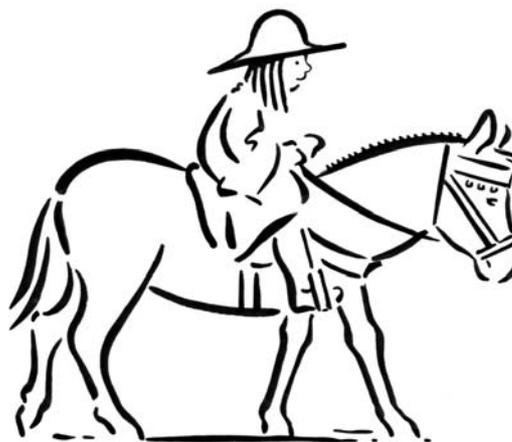
After seeing this, Bill contacted the council and persuaded them to introduce an identification scheme. As a result, each May, Blackpool's beach donkeys are inspected by a vet and hoof-branded by the Donkey Sanctuary. This has now become a popular local event, known as 'Donkey Day'. In anticipation of the forthcoming equine passports and in response to requests from operators, as of this year, all donkeys are microchipped, instead of hoof branded. A special microchipping and inspection day was held in which all the various agencies participated. The chipping was carried out by RSPCA and council-appointed veterinary surgeons using equipment and chips funded by the RSPCA. Any new donkeys introduced during the season are microchipped by the council's own veterinary consultant.

Throughout the season, licensing enforcement officers make regular checks on the donkeys to ensure only microchipped animals are being used. The RSPCA and Donkey Sanctuary officers are also allowed to check for chips. If any of the donkeys look unwell, a vet is immediately called out. To ensure the council's enforcement officers are aware of the welfare needs of the donkeys, they all attend a course run by the Donkey Sanctuary.

Says environmental health officer, Bob Ridley: "It is a brilliant partnership scheme which not only benefits the donkeys but also the town itself. The people of Blackpool are proud of their donkeys, and happy in the knowledge that the council takes their welfare needs seriously."

Contact

Bob Ridley, Blackpool Borough Council: 01253 477477 or bob.ridley@blackpool.gov.uk



Horse-drawn carriages

Horse-drawn carriages offering rides to members of the public are popular attractions in many tourist resorts.

The operators of the carriages must be licensed by the local authority under the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976*. A Code of Practice for Horse Drawn Vehicles is available from the Department for Transport.



Take action now

- Ensure all working horses are inspected annually by an equine vet.
- Attach conditions to the licences outlining the basic welfare needs that must be met.
- Introduce a passport scheme so inspectors can easily keep a check on the horses being used.
- Undertake random checks on working horses throughout the season.
- Check that the permitted working hours are not being exceeded.

Case study – Blackpool Borough Council

Blackpool’s landau carriages are licensed under the same legislation as hackney carriages.

Each horse must be registered and have a ‘passport’ showing its working hours. The passport has a photo as well as a drawing that shows the unique markings of each individual animal’s coat.

The licence requires that no horses may be used to pull carriages unless they have passed an annual inspection with a vet. Working hours for the horses are limited to seven per day, during which a break of not less than one hour must be given.

Enforcement officers check the horses at random to ensure they are registered and their welfare needs are being met. In the near future, the council is hoping to introduce microchipping of the working horses with the help of RSPCA inspectors.

Says environmental health officer, Bob Ridley: “Animal welfare is a high-profile and emotive subject in Blackpool, and the working donkeys and horses are very much on view. Their welfare is a priority for the council, so we investigate any reports of animal suffering immediately. We are also lucky to have such terrific working arrangements with the Donkey Sanctuary and the RSPCA.”

Contact

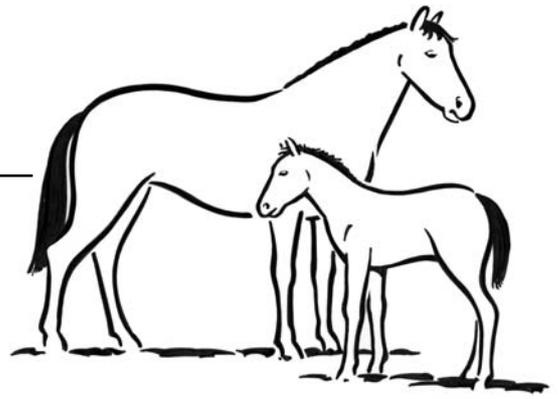
Bob Ridley, Blackpool Borough Council: 01253 477477 or bob.ridley@blackpool.gov.uk

See the section on Licensing for further information on the Riding Establishments Acts 1964 and 1970.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the horses, ponies and donkeys section.



Welfare at markets



When horses, ponies or donkeys are sold at markets, their welfare needs should be given careful consideration.

Local authority inspectors are responsible for enforcing the relevant legislation: the *Welfare of Horses at Markets (and Other Places of Sale) Order 1990* and the *Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997*.

To help in the enforcement of the orders, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) has produced a booklet entitled *The Welfare of Horses, Ponies and Donkeys at Markets, Sales and Fairs*.

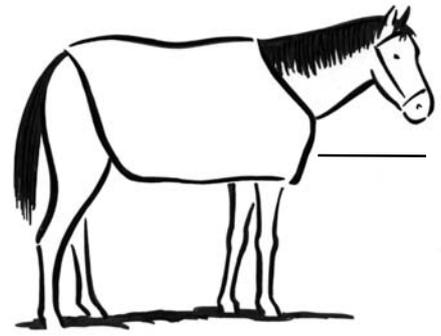
The code covers the need for calm, careful handling, feeding and watering, as well as general conduct at markets. Most of the basic guidelines are the same as for livestock at markets. However, horses and ponies have their own characteristics and in some circumstances will react differently from other animals.

Take action now

- Ensure all horse dealers, hauliers and market staff are aware of the requirements of the *Welfare of Horses at Markets (and Other Places of Sale) Order 1990*. Ensure these requirements are being met and consider prosecution if not.
- Insist that markets carry out their obligations under the Order to appoint a welfare officer, and make sure that person is clearly identifiable.
- Follow the guidance given in the DEFRA Code of Practice, *The Welfare of Horses, Ponies and Donkeys at Markets, Sales and Fairs*. Promote the code to everyone involved in the market process.
- Work with neighbouring councils to ensure there is consistency in animal welfare standards at markets across the county (see *Animal welfare forums* section).
- Consider producing simplified versions of any new legislation and mailing to those involved in animal markets.
- Work to develop a close liaison with RSPCA market inspectors, DEFRA veterinary officers, market operators, horse dealers, hauliers and the National Farmers Union.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the horses, ponies and donkeys section.

Advice on horse welfare



Local authority staff are often asked to give out advice about the general welfare of horses in fields – whether from prospective horse buyers, horse owners or concerned passers-by. Although not a direct responsibility of the council, it would be a valuable service if officers passed on relevant welfare information, leaflets or contact numbers to the public.

Basic welfare pointers include:

- all horses and ponies kept at grass need shelter - during the summer, they need protection from the sun and flies, in winter they need protection from the cold, rain and wind
- natural shelter is not usually enough – owners should provide covered shelters or wind-breaks, unless the animal is only turned out for a short period (up to three hours)
- all horses and ponies at grass during the winter need supplementary feeding as winter grazing provides very little nourishment
- hay should be provided every day and water must be freely available
- horses must be wormed regularly
- feet must be trimmed every six to eight weeks, and teeth should be checked twice yearly
- horses grow thick winter coats, which should not be clipped unless they have permanent stabling.

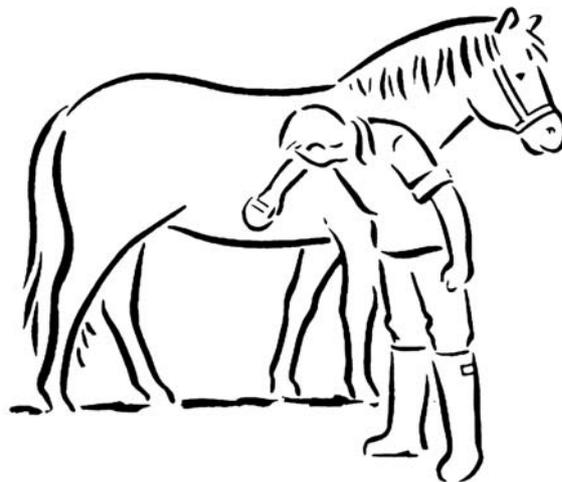
The RSPCA stocks free leaflets about the responsibilities of keeping horses, which local authorities can mail out.

To encourage responsible ownership, local authorities are recommended to keep a register of horse owners with contact numbers. This would facilitate the rapid tracing of owners if horses were reported to be ill or injured. It would also be helpful in dealing with the growing problem of straying horses.

Any reports of cruelty or neglected horses should be reported to the RSPCA on 08705 555999.

See the section on Managing for welfare for further information on donkey and pony rides.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the horses, ponies and donkeys section.



Ragwort

Ragwort is highly poisonous to horses and cattle. It is one of the injurious weeds specified in the *Weeds Act 1959*. This means that DEFRA has the power to serve notice upon any owners of land where ragwort is growing, requiring them to take action within a specified time to prevent the weed from spreading. However, they generally only do this when agricultural land is threatened.

Legal responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the local authority to clear ragwort from its land, and to take action against other landowners if they are allowing ragwort to spread. If ragwort is threatening agricultural land, and the owner of the land does not remove it, the local authority should contact DEFRA.

If the threatened land is non-agricultural, the local authority should be able to take action under specific by-laws, or under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (where weeds may be considered to constitute a nuisance or be prejudicial to health). Also, section 215 of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* provides powers for local authorities to serve notice on the owner or occupier of land that is harming the amenity of the area.

Take action now

- Be vigilant in checking for ragwort on council-owned land. If ragwort is growing, take immediate steps to control it.
- Where ragwort is growing on privately-owned land, trace the owners and press for them to control its growth. This can sometimes be very difficult in the case of commercial development land.
- In areas where ragwort is increasing, use council publications and the media to alert the public to its dangers, and to report infestations.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the horses, ponies and donkeys section.

Horses and road safety

The British Horse Society (BHS) estimates over 3,000 road accidents a year involve horses. There were 147 horse-rider casualties and two deaths in 2000.

The government has recently launched a campaign to raise awareness of this problem and is urging motorists to slow down around horses. In addition to a national media campaign, more references to horses and riders are included in the new driving test. Horse riders are also being urged to take the BHS road-riding and road-safety test.

Take action now

- Road-safety teams and animal welfare officers can help raise awareness by making information available to both motorists and riders. See contacts section for details of resources.
- Highways authorities can make improved provision for bridleways – an all-purpose highway giving equal rights to horse riders, cyclists and pedestrians from which motor vehicles are excluded.

Contacts and resources

Orders and statutory instruments (SIs)

Some of the main regulations relating to equines are:

- The Protection of Animals Act 1911
- The Protection Against Cruel Tethering Act 1988
- The Protection of Animals (Amendment) Act 1988
- Welfare of horses at markets (and other places of sale) Order 1990 (SI 1990/2627)

Download at:

www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1990/Uksi_19902627_en_1.htm

- Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997 (SI 1997/1480)

Download at:

www.legislation.hmso.gov.uk/si/si1997/97148001.htm

Further details of other relevant Orders and SIs are available in the Equine Industry Compendium (see below).

Legislation and SIs are available from the Stationery Office, TSO Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT
Tel: 0870 600 5522
E-mail: bookenquiries@theso.co.uk
www.the-stationery-office.co.uk

Horse identification/horse passports

DEFRA media release explaining extension of horse passports to all equines by end of 2003.

Download at:

www.defra.gov.uk/news/2002/020214c.htm

DEFRA question and answer sheet on horse passports

Download at:

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tracing/horses/horses_q&a.htm

Tethering of equines

RSPCA resources

More detailed information is available in the RSPCA local government briefs on *equine tethering* and *animal welfare on gypsy and traveller sites*. Contact Joceline Tran on 0870 7540 166

Information sheet for owners of tethered equines.

Tied animals – how to avoid tragedy. RSPCA flyer (covers tethering of equines, goats and dogs)

Donkey rides on beaches

Useful contacts

The Donkey Sanctuary, Sidmouth, Devon EX10 0NU
Tel: 01395 578222 (8.30am – 4.30pm)
Fax: 01395 579266 or www.thedonkeysanctuary.org.uk
Contact Martin Taggart on 01395 578222 or Bill Tetlow on 01422 204208

Horse-drawn carriages

Useful resources

Code of Practice for horse-drawn vehicles (June 2000)

Department for Transport, Vehicle Standards and Engineering

Tel: 020 7944 2078

E-mail: alexander.jones@dft.gsi.gov.uk

Welfare at markets

Government publications

- Code of Practice – *The welfare of horses, ponies and donkeys at markets, sales and fairs*,

DEFRA 1990

Download at:

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/farmed/markets/pb0408/horsetoc.htm

- Guidance notes on the Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997

Download at:

www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/welfare/farmed/transport/wato-guidance.pdf

Also available free of charge from **DEFRA** Publications, Admail 6000, London, SW1A 2XX
Tel: 0845 955 6000
E-mail: defra@sr-comms.co.uk; www.degra.gov.uk

Useful contacts

DEFRA Helpline, 3-8 Whitehall Place, London SW1A 2HH.
Tel: 08459 335577
E-mail: helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk or www.defra.gov.uk.
For **DEFRA** publications see www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/publications/pubfrm.htm

National Assembly for Wales

Agriculture and Rural Affairs Department (ARAD)
Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ
E-mail: agriculture@wales.gsi.gov.uk
www.wales.gov.uk



Advice on horse welfare

RSPCA resources

Horse sense – quick reference welfare flier

A horse of your own?
leaflet and poster

Ponies care guide

Is your horse protected this winter?
leaflet

Donkey derbies – a code of practice

Publications

Equine Industry Welfare Guidelines Compendium for Horses, Ponies and Donkeys, March 2002.
DEFRA/ADAS in consultation with BEVA, BHS, ILPH, NEWC, RSPCA, Donkey Sanctuary and the equine industry organizations.

Available from any of the above organizations. RSPCA contact: David McDowell, Equine Veterinary Officer
Tel: 0870 7540 0364 or
E-mail: veterinary@rspca.org.uk

A detailed list of resources and contacts covering all aspects of equine welfare is included within the compendium.

You can order small quantities of RSPCA publications, local government briefings or the RSPCA publications catalogue by e-mailing Joceline Tran – jtran@rspca.org.uk

Useful contacts

Pasture management

The Horse Pasture Management Project is a joint pilot project between Surrey County Council and the Countryside Agency. The Project aims to maximise the potential for farmers and landowners to provide suitable grazing for horses whilst also seeking to minimise the negative impact intensive horse keeping may have on the countryside. This is achieved through advice and guidance for horse owners and landowners; dissemination of best practice; provision of factsheets; training and workshops; model grazing licence/tenancy agreements; research into a muck composting service and a 'rubbish' amnesty and production of a website and list of selected/approved contractors.

For further information contact: Rachel Simpson, Project Officer, Horse Pasture Management Project, 2 West Park Farmhouse, Horton Country Park, Horton Lane, Epsom, KT19 8PL.
Tel: 01372 741783
E-mail: rachel.simpson@surreycc.gov.uk or
www.surreycc.gov.uk/horsepastureproject

The following organizations can advise on all aspects of the management of horses, ponies And donkeys (but are not equipped to deal with cases of cruelty which should immediately be reported to the RSPCA)

British Horse Society

Stoneleigh Deer Park, Kenilworth, CV8 2XZ
Tel: 08701 202244 or
www.bhs.org.uk

Road Sense for Riders (limited quantities available) and *Horse Sense for Motorists* – Leaflets and posters
Available from BHS Safety Office on 01296 707782/707745

BHS livery yard approvals scheme – Approvals Dept, British Horse Society at the address above.

International League for the Protection of Horses (ILPH)

Anne Colvin House, Snetterton, Norfolk NR16 2LR
Tel: 01953 498682
E-mail: ilph@ilph.org or
www.ilph.co.uk

The Donkey Sanctuary

Please see section on donkeys for contact details.

Ragwort

Information on ragwort is available on the **DEFRA** website: www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/ weedsact/guidance/htm

DEFRA ragwort helpline for the public:
01179 591000 (south)
01270 754000 (north)

Welsh local authorities can contact *Fields*: Lesley George, Plant Health & Biotechnology Branch, Countryside Division, National Assembly for Wales
Tel: 029 2080 1153
E-mail: lesley.george@wales.gsi.gov.uk

Highways: Robert Cone, Head of Network Management Transport Directorate National Assembly for Wales, Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ

E-mail: c.doran@bhs.org.uk



**Horses, ponies
and donkeys**



Farm animal focus



ANDREW BELLIS/SAVAGE PICTURES

Animals on allotments

Farm animal welfare

City farms

Farm animal attractions

The annual 'chicken run' inspections of livestock kept on Tameside allotments have become a highlight of the allotment year with owners proudly showing off their husbandry skills and experience. RSPCA Chief Inspector Marie Griffiths carries out the regular visits with officers from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council



GOEFF DU FEU/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

Getting to know you – meeting some friendly sheep at a 'childrens' farm.



Farm animal focus

The welfare of farm animals has never been so important or topical. Recent disease outbreaks and concerns about how animals are used in food production have focused attention on farming and food safety. Local authorities are both directly and indirectly involved in farm animal welfare. Trading standards officers play a key role in monitoring and enforcing legislation relating to livestock movements and welfare at markets. Other local authority officers may come into contact with livestock kept on allotments or in back gardens.

Five freedoms

The RSPCA believes the welfare of farm animals should take into account five essential freedoms:

- freedom from hunger and thirst
- freedom from discomfort
- freedom from pain, injury and disease
- freedom from fear and distress
- freedom to express normal behaviour.

A number of local authorities have been particularly proactive and done much to improve farm animal welfare. This not only involves rigorous market inspections and checks on hauliers, but also educational campaigns to raise awareness of animal health and welfare matters. A key element in this is the development of an effective system of liaison among all the groups and organizations concerned in the welfare of farm animals.

Trading Standards officers play a key role in ensuring the welfare of farm animals at market and during transport.



COLIN SEDDON/RSPCA PHOTOLIBRARY

Allotment animals

It is also the responsibility of local authorities to ensure the welfare of farm animals on their allotments. Animals must not be kept on allotments, or anywhere else, unless they can be provided with an appropriate environment and adequate general care. If a local authority feels it is not able to ensure these basic standards, for any reason, it should expressly prohibit the keeping of any animals on its allotment sites.

Animal-friendly products

As major purchasers, local authorities have the power to promote animal-friendly products, such as free-range or barn (perchery) eggs, or toiletries which have been produced without cruelty to animals. The RSPCA's Freedom Food is a farm animal welfare food labelling scheme which identifies meat, eggs and dairy produce from animals cared for according to welfare standards set and monitored by the Society.

The future of farming

Farm animal welfare has always been a key priority for the RSPCA and indeed some of the Society's earliest successes were achieving improvements to farm animal welfare in the early nineteenth century.

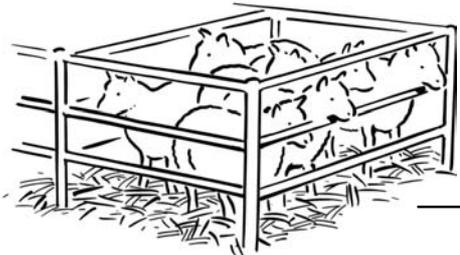
Recent crises such as the foot and mouth outbreak have demonstrated that the need for sustainable, animal welfare-friendly farming practices has never been greater.

The RSPCA is playing a central role in campaigning for improvements both at a national and international level. It is urging the Government to take farm animal welfare seriously and has published a detailed ten-point plan, which outlines what action needs to be taken. The Society has also produced its response to the government's Policy Commission on farming. On specific welfare issues, the Society has launched campaigns on broiler and laying hen welfare; provided scientific and technical input to the European campaign on pig welfare and launched educational materials to stamp out lameness in sheep.



Farm animal focus

Livestock markets



Although the responsibility for standards on farms lies with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), local authorities play a key role in enforcing farm animal welfare legislation at markets and during transportation.

The *Welfare of Animals at Markets Order 1990* (as amended by the *Welfare of Animals at Market (Amendment) Order 1993*) covers the welfare needs of cattle, sheep, goats and other ruminants (deer, llama etc) pigs, rabbits and poultry at market. Local authority inspectors are responsible for enforcement of the Order, as well as disease control within markets. The auctioneers should also have a named person responsible for animal welfare.

Code of practice at markets

The DEFRA code of practice, *The Welfare of Animals in Livestock Markets*, highlights important areas of legislation that relate directly to animal welfare, as well as providing additional information and advice about the appropriate care and handling requirements.

Horses and ponies are dealt with in a separate Order, the *Welfare of Horses at Markets (and Other Places of Sale)*.

The RSPCA and livestock markets

Being at market is potentially a very stressful time for any animal since it involves additional transport to and from a totally strange environment. Everyone who handles, transports, buys or sells animals at market is responsible for their welfare and has a duty to take all necessary steps to prevent suffering.

The RSPCA believes the current system of marketing livestock is unacceptable in welfare terms. An added concern is that livestock markets can provide the perfect environment for disease transmission. It is in the best interests of livestock, producers and the industry as a whole that alternative marketing systems are developed, avoiding the need for livestock markets, particularly for the most vulnerable animals.

Where markets remain the RSPCA believes conditions must be improved to reduce the risk of distress and suffering by livestock during their passage through such establishments. The knowledge and skill of drovers must be ensured, and facilities such as loading bays and flooring in passages improved.

Further detailed information is contained in the RSPCA's ten-point plan and its position paper following the government's policy commission report. Please refer to the contacts and resources information at the end of this section.

Take action now

- Ensure all farmers, hauliers and market staff are aware of the requirements of the *Welfare of Animals at Markets Order 1990*. Make sure these requirements are being met and consider appropriate action or even prosecution if necessary.
- Follow the guidance given in the DEFRA code of practice, *The Welfare of Animals in Livestock Markets*. Promote the code to everyone involved in the market process.
- Work with neighbouring councils to ensure consistency in animal welfare standards at markets across the county (see *the Planning for animal welfare* section later in this guide)
- Consider producing simplified versions of any new legislation and mailing to those involved in animal markets.
- Work to develop a close liaison with RSPCA market inspectors, DEFRA veterinary officers, market operators, farmers, hauliers and the National Farmers Union.

See the Horses, ponies and donkeys section for information on equine welfare at markets.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the farm animal focus section.



Transport of animals

Local authorities are responsible for ensuring the welfare of animals while they are being transported for commercial purposes, whether to market or slaughter. The *Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997* sets standards for the transport of live animals. The legislation requires that all animals are handled and transported in ways that will not cause injury or suffering.

The RSPCA, and its network of market inspectors, monitors the live transport of animals and their welfare at markets. The Society believes both the frequency and duration of travel for many livestock are considerably greater than necessary and that excessive movement of animals across the UK is a major risk factor in spreading disease through the livestock population. Scientific research and practical experience have underlined the potentially harmful and stressful nature of live transportation. The RSPCA therefore believes that stricter limitations on livestock movements are essential to safeguard animal health and welfare. The RSPCA would also like to see the introduction of a formal certification scheme for livestock hauliers based on an independent assessment of their ability to care for animals during transport.

Take action now

- Ensure all known hauliers are aware of the requirements of the *Welfare of Animals (Transport) Order 1997*.
- Follow the guidance on transport in the DEFRA Code of Practice, *The Welfare of Animals in Livestock Markets*. Promote the guide to hauliers and those involved with loading and unloading animals.
- Undertake checks on all known animal hauliers to ensure UK and European Union standards are being met.
- Work with the police and RSPCA market inspectors to arrange roadside checks on known routes to and from markets.
- Consider producing simplified versions of any new legislation and mailing to those involved in the transportation of animals.



Case study – **Surrey County Council**

Surrey County Council has introduced several initiatives to improve the welfare of farm animals.

Several years ago, its trading standards department produced a simplified guide to farm animal legislation, initially to make things clearer for its officers. This proved so useful that versions were mailed to other relevant people such as farmers, hauliers and market operators. Whenever new legislation is introduced, simple guidelines are written and mailed out.

Kevin Chesson, Senior Trading Standards Officer with specialist responsibility for animal health and welfare enforcement, explains: “New legislation can be extremely complicated, so we do try and assist by providing straightforward written guidance, we also provide an advice service. Education has to run hand-in-hand with enforcement”.

As a result of the recent foot and mouth disease crisis, Surrey has entered into an agreement with the police, who also have shared responsibility for enforcement. This agreement covers the stopping and checking of livestock vehicles. The purpose is to ensure compliance with disease control and welfare provisions. In addition to this Surrey has increased the number of visits to a local abattoir.

The council takes seriously all complaints regarding the welfare of farm livestock and works in close co-operation with the RSPCA. Joint visits are conducted with DEFRA vets. Compliance with animal health legislation is checked at the same time. Any infringements which may be discovered are dealt with by advice, caution or prosecution depending upon the severity.

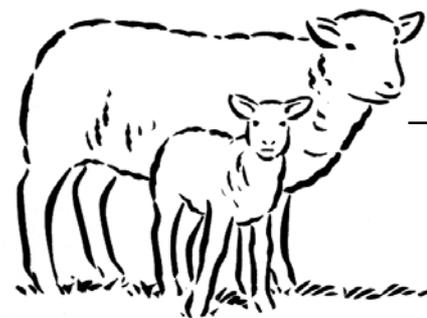
Surrey County Council was a founding member of the south east region animal health and welfare panel. This forum brings together all local authorities from across the south east of England. The purpose is to increase knowledge, share best practice and ensure consistency in the enforcement of all animal health and welfare legislation. Surrey currently provides the representative to the national panel.

Contact

Kevin Chesson, Surrey County Council: 01372 371794 or kevin.chesson@surreycc.gov.uk

Livestock worrying

It is estimated that over 24,000* sheep were killed or injured by dogs in 1999. This is an 8.5 per cent increase on the previous year and represents a cost to farmers of more than £2 million. Local authorities can help combat this alarming situation by raising awareness of the problem and encouraging more responsible dog ownership.



In 2000, the RSPCA ran a successful campaign in partnership with the National Farmers Union and the National Sheep Association. Free signs, warning walkers to keep their dogs under control around farm livestock, were distributed via NFU offices and local authority rights of way officers. Parish councils helped by putting up signs and campaign posters in their local areas.

To check availability of signs contact Joceline Tran at the RSPCA – jtran@rspca.org.uk or call 0870 7540 166.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the farm animal focus section.

* NFU Mutual

Freedom Food



Certification Mark

As major purchasers, local authorities have some power to set purchase conditions on their own land and within their premises with respect to animal welfare. Such conditions could include, for example, the requirement that food animals be humanely slaughtered, that only free-range or barn (perchery) eggs be used, or that cosmetics and toiletries produced without cruelty to animals are used.

Freedom Food is the RSPCA's farm assurance and food labelling scheme, which currently identifies meat, eggs and dairy produce from animals reared according to farm animal welfare standards set and monitored by the Society.

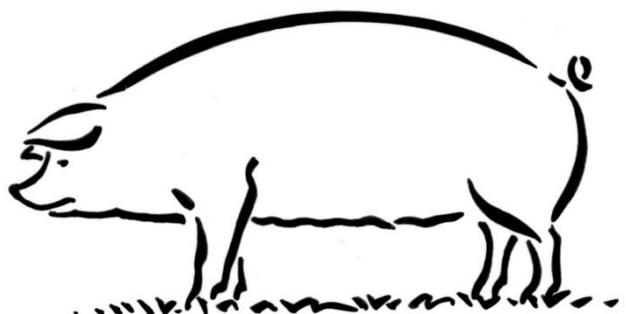
The scheme was launched in 1994 with the aim of improving the lives of as many farm animals as possible, by linking welfare-friendly farmers to welfare-minded consumers who wanted to support good husbandry practice when buying animal products. Most major supermarkets and some independent stores now stock Freedom Food products.

Freedom Food is also hoping to work with the Farmers' Markets Association to promote the concept of buying food which has been produced locally and to higher welfare standards.

Take action now

- Contact the RSPCA's Freedom Food department for information on local animal-friendly products and farmers' markets.
- Encourage council caterers, contractors and suppliers to use Freedom Foods and products which have not been tested on animals.
- Promote the buying of Freedom Food and locally-grown produce in council publications.
- Mention Freedom Food at meetings of forum groups to encourage other local authorities to purchase animal-friendly products.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the farm animal focus section.



Welfare of animals on allotments



Where animals are kept on allotments, the RSPCA advises the use of guidelines to safeguard animal welfare and ensure the highest standards of animal husbandry. There is more detailed information in the RSPCA local government brief on animal welfare on allotments – see *Resources* section for details.

Animals must not be kept on allotments, or anywhere else, without an appropriate environment and adequate general care. If a local authority cannot ensure these basic standards, it should expressly prohibit the keeping of any animals on its allotment sites.

In view of the specific needs and the sometimes complex legislative requirements covering the keeping of pigs, cattle and sheep, the RSPCA believes it would be extremely difficult to care properly for these species within the confines of an average allotment. Such animals should not therefore be kept at such premises.

Wherever they are kept, all species of farm animals have certain basic needs that must be adequately catered for if the animals are to have an acceptable quality of life.

Specific needs of different species

Each animal species has different needs to be considered. The RSPCA local government brief on animal welfare on allotments provides general guidance on the keeping of goats, chickens, ducks, rabbits and equines (see *Resources* section). For information on the keeping of equines, whether freely grazed or tethered, see the *Equines* section of this guide.

Take action now

- In conjunction with local allotment societies, draw up an *animals on allotments* policy stating which species of animals may be kept, how many, and the standards of care required. The policy should also state on which sites animals may be kept and which sites are not suitable.
- Any allotment holder keeping animals should supply full contact details with a 24-hour phone number in case of emergencies.
- Either a designated person from the allotment society or a local authority officer should carry out pre-arranged and spot-checks on the animals kept on the allotment site.
- Consideration should be given to additional security measures on sites where animals are kept, particularly those vulnerable to vandalism or theft.
- Allotment holders and local authority staff should be encouraged to contact the RSPCA for either proactive advice on animal welfare issues, or to report any concerns about animal welfare, as well as suspected illegal activity such as wild bird trapping or snaring.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the farm animal focus section.

Case study – Tameside Council

A high-profile RSPCA prosecution resulting in a ten-year ban on an allotment holder keeping poultry has led Tameside Council to review its animals on allotments policies.

The man prosecuted was keeping chickens on a privately-owned allotment. “We were quite shocked when we read about the appalling conditions these chickens had been kept in and we decided that we didn’t want anything like that happening on our own sites,” said Steve Davis of Tameside Council.

Working with local RSPCA Inspector Marie Griffiths, a series of meetings was held with the local allotment societies. “There was some scepticism as the allotment holders felt they had years of experience, whereas we knew very little. However, through discussion and an informal co-operative approach they have agreed to accept our annual visits and even chase us up to ask when the next visits will be,” says Marie.

Steve and Marie jointly visit all the seven sites where animals are kept and since the scheme started four years ago, have seen major improvements in standards. This is largely due to the efforts of the allotment holders who are continually striving to improve conditions because of the pride that they have and take with their poultry. The allotment holders are also beginning to police themselves by introducing on a lot of the sites their own livestock officers and even livestock sub-committees. This helps ensure and encourage the continual improvement of conditions for livestock on the allotment sites, thus setting standards for all existing, new or potential livestock keepers on any site.

“Although the informal approach has worked well, we have also made it clear that we won’t tolerate any poor standards. The RSPCA has access to the sites at all times and we will give tenants a chance to improve standards. However they know we will withdraw tenancies if necessary. But a good deal of trust and cooperation has been built up between the allotment holders, the RSPCA and the council, so hopefully we won’t need to use the heavy-handed approach very often.”

Contact

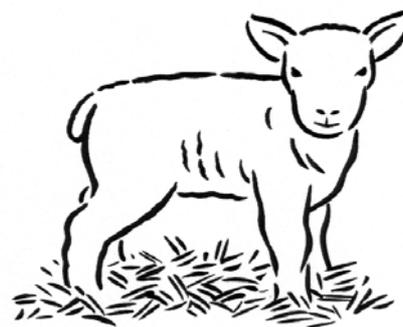
Steve Davis, Tameside Council on tel: 0161 342 3394 or steve.davis@mail.tameside.gov.uk



Farm animal attractions

The welfare of farm animals kept in zoos, city farms, farm parks and similar establishments comes under the remit of DEFRA. However, local authorities are responsible for the health and safety of the general public at such places, particularly with regard to the spread of disease.

Every year the RSPCA receives a number of complaints from the public regarding the welfare of farm animals at attractions. These range from concerns about the animals' general condition, through to their environment, management, and very often, the nature and degree of handling they receive from the public, sometimes unsupervised.



The primary aim of any establishment where farm animals are kept must be to ensure the welfare of the animals. The same guidelines should therefore be followed as for the keeping of animals on allotments, paying particular attention to the varying needs of different species.

Many farm animal attractions also provide pet corners where visitors are allowed to handle animals. The RSPCA is opposed to this practice due to the animal welfare concerns arising from uncontrolled handling and feeding (particularly by children), a lack of adequate supervision and excessive disturbance. This can lead to injury (especially in the case of young animals), fear and distress. Suggested welfare guidelines for pet corners/farm attractions can be found in the licensing section of this guide.

The RSPCA urges local authority health and safety officers to keep visitors' handling of animals at such attractions to a minimum and make sure any handling is supervised by a competent person at all times. Any concerns about animals should be reported to the RSPCA or DEFRA.

The RSPCA also has serious concerns about the use of 'mobile farms', which tour the country in large trailers. Farm animals are off-loaded at pre-arranged sites as part of educational schemes to enable people to see them at close quarters.

"The welfare of these animals may be compromised," explains Dr Julia Wrathall, of the RSPCA's farm animals department. "Pigs in particular are not good travellers and animals may be subject to inappropriate handling. The educational value of such events is also questionable, as they are not presenting a realistic picture of modern farming practices. Visits to farms experienced in hosting visitors are far more beneficial for both the public and the animals concerned."

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the farm animal focus section.



Contacts and resources

General

RSPCA resources

Future of farming – RSPCA ten-point plan for sustainable and animal welfare-friendly farming, 2001

Future of Farming – RSPCA position paper following the policy commission report, 2002

Farm animal welfare – RSPCA views on farm animal welfare issues

Profit with principle – animal welfare and UK pig farming (report)

A captive life – European pig welfare

It's time to put the chicken before the egg – facts about battery farming

The suffering goes on – RSPCA campaign for better animal welfare during long-distance live transport

Livestock worrying posters (A4 poster D21/A3 Welsh bilingual poster)

Briefing sheets from the RSPCA farm animals department on:

- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE)
- battery hens
- broiler chickens
- turkey production
- live transportation
- ostrich farming
- pet pigs
- pig production
- sheep production
- religious slaughter
- the slaughter of food animals
- the slaughter of poultry
- veal production.

Farm Animals Department

RSPCA, Wilberforce Way, Southwater, Horsham RH13 9RS
Tel: 0870 7540 203
E-mail: farm_animals@rspca.org.uk

Useful contacts

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)

3-8 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2HH
Tel: 08459 335577 or
www.defra.gov.uk

Detailed information on farm animal legislation; guidance notes, animal disease etc can be found in the animal health and welfare section of the DEFRA website.

National Assembly for Wales

(Welsh Assembly Government)
Agriculture & Rural Affairs
Department (ARAD)
Cathays Park, Cardiff CF10 3NQ
Tel: 029 2082 3593
E-mail: laura.griffiths1@wales.gsi.gov.uk
www.wales.gov.uk

Trading Standards Institute

3-5 Hadleigh Business Centre
351 London Road
Hadleigh, Essex, SS7 2BT. Tel:
0870 872 9000.
E-mail: infocentre@tsi.org.uk
www.tradingstandards.gov.uk

Professional body for trading standards officers. For specific information or advice on farm animal welfare matters, local authorities may contact the Lead Officer for Animal Health and Welfare at the address above.

Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) (formally known as LACOTS)

10, Albert Embankment,
London, SE1 7SP.
Tel: 020 7840 7200.
www.lacors.gov.uk

Local government central body with the remit of co-ordinating local authority enforcement of regulatory services.

British Free-Range Egg Producers Association

C/o Staveley Farm, Claverley,
Wolverhampton WV5 7DE
Tel: 01746 710817

The Federation of City Farms and Community Gardens

The Green House, Hereford Street,
Bedminster, Bristol BS3 4NA
Tel: 0117 923 180
E-mail: admin@farmgarden.org.uk
www.farmgarden.org.uk

Access to farms – partnership of national organizations promoting quality educational visits to farms.
www.farmsforteachers.org.uk

Freedom Food

For publications and further information on Freedom Food contact Freedom Food marketing department
Tel: 0870 7540 014
E-mail: freedomfood@rspca.org.uk

Welfare of animals on allotments

RSPCA Local government briefing

Welfare of animals on allotments – includes guidance on care of different species.

DEFRA advisory leaflets and information on *The Weeds Act 1959*
www.defra.gov.uk/enviro/ weedsact/default.htm

Growing in the community
a good practice guide on allotments management (ENO12) (LGA, etc)
Cost: £20/15 – local authorities and not for profit organisations.

Contact: IdeA Publications Sales
Tel: 020 7296 6552
(credit card orders only)
Fax: 020 7296 6523
E-mail: book.sales@idea.gov.uk
Post: Sales Unit, IdeA,
Layden House,
76-86 Turnmill Street,
London EC1M 5LG







Wildlife welfare



- Legal protection
- Living with wildlife
- Lethal litter
- Fledglings
- Illegal bird trapping
- Wildlife areas

Children at Sunnyhill Primary School in Streatham, London, received free copies of *Lowdown*, an environmental education magazine produced by London Borough of Lambeth. This particular edition focused on the dangers caused to animals by litter. The newsletter also included details of the RSPCA's lethal litter campaign.



Wildlife welfare

Growing numbers of people are concerned about the welfare of wildlife and the protection of habitats. Local authorities can reflect these concerns – and gain local support – by introducing wildlife-friendly policies.

A number of laws exist to protect wildlife, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, one of the most common Acts used by the RSPCA in convictions, and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which gives greater protection to animals such as dolphins, otters and barn owls.

Wildlife conflicts

The RSPCA is opposed to the taking and killing of wild animals, and the infliction of any suffering upon them. If there is a problem with a particular wildlife species – such as the fox, squirrel or pigeon – it believes killing the animal should be the last resort, only to be considered after alternative methods have been tried.

Local wildlife is under threat due to loss of habitat, pollution and litter.



Carelessly discarded litter can be a death-trap – land needs to be cleared regularly to ensure rubbish does not accumulate.

To find long-term solutions to pest control, it is important to determine why the animals are attracted to the area – such as for food or shelter – and wherever possible, remove these attractants. If this is not possible, non-harmful methods of deterrence should be developed and used.

The Society believes snares are one of the most cruel and indiscriminate killers of wild and domestic animals. RSPCA surveys show that it is not only the target species that get caught in snares. Most commonly cats are the victims, but snares also trap dogs, badgers, hedgehogs, squirrels and deer.

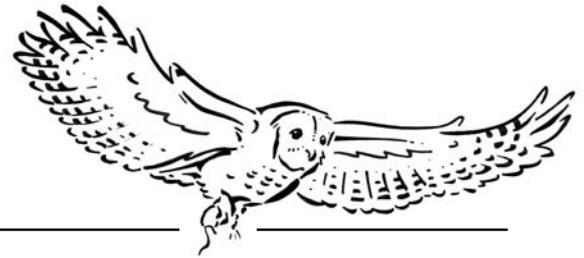
Habitat loss

Wildlife habitats are constantly destroyed to make way for agricultural and building developments. Woodlands are cleared, hedgerows destroyed and ponds filled in. This not only robs animals of their homes, but also depletes the supply of insects and plants on which they depend. In addition, wildlife is at risk from poisonous pesticides and chemicals, and from litter, which can trap or maim.

Local authorities can help by providing wildlife areas in parks and verges, discouraging the use of pesticides, initiating anti-litter campaigns and being vigilant for illegal activities such as badger baiting and the trapping of song birds.



Wildlife welfare



Protection for wildlife

The main acts that provide protection for wildlife are:

- **the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** – Part 1 deals with the protection of wildlife in the UK
- **the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000** – this gives greater protection to species protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, by making it an offence to ‘recklessly’ disturb certain animals
- **the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996** – this made it an offence to carry out certain acts with the intention to inflict unnecessary suffering on any wild mammal
- **the Protection of Badgers Act 1992** – protects badgers and their habitat, primarily making it an offence to kill or injure any badger, except under licence, damage or destroy a badger sett or access to it, or disturb a badger in it
- **the Deer Act 1991** – protects deer in England and Wales by making it an offence to kill, injure or take each sex and species of deer within the appropriate close season, with specified exemptions – it also prohibits the use of certain methods to take or kill deer unless a licence is obtained.

The majority of prosecutions under these Acts are taken by the police or the RSPCA. Local authorities need to be aware of the provisions of the Acts so they can advise members of the public, developers, local businesses and their own staff and contractors to ensure these laws are not being contravened.

Take action now

- Develop working practices and protocols that ensure all relevant council staff understand their own obligations as well of those of the council under UK wildlife legislation. Many departments and staff may get involved in decisions relating to removal or modifications to properties, building works or maintenance, which could harm wild animals or their habitats, eg staff in planning, estates, housing and grounds maintenance (eg hedgerow trimming), refuse removal (especially clearance of blackspots in woods, near waterways etc).
- Make staff aware of how to recognize illegal activity such as badger trapping and snares, and how to report any suspicious or illegal activity.
- Provide information and details to the general public, and specifically to homeowners or individuals seeking planning permission, about the requirements of UK wildlife legislation.
- Join PAW – Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime. PAW is actively encouraging local authorities to join the network.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the wildlife welfare section.

Living with wildlife



It is inevitable that there may be occasions when the needs of wildlife and of the local community conflict. The RSPCA urges local authorities to review any 'pest' control policies carefully to ensure the needs of animal welfare are being met. Local authorities must also be aware of the legal protection given to wildlife.

The RSPCA is opposed in principle, to the taking or killing of wild animals, or the infliction of suffering upon them. Any action taken against wildlife should always take account of scientific knowledge regarding the behaviour and biology of the species involved. The first option must be to seek alternative means of preventing damage. Only if these are inappropriate, and control is still necessary, should local authorities consider humane action that is specific to the species, and in many cases to the individual animal causing the damage. For example, the local authority must first assess why the species in question is attracted to the area and then find a way to remove or reduce these attractants. Non-lethal methods such as building proofing and deterrents should also be used before methods of population control, such as egg destruction or culling, are considered.

The species local authorities are most likely to think about controlling include:

- feral pigeons
- gulls
- mice and rats
- bats
- grey squirrels
- foxes
- badgers

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the wildlife welfare section.

The law regarding bird control

The taking, killing or injuring of wild birds or their destruction or taking of their eggs or nests, while the nests are in use or being built, may only be carried out in accordance with the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981*.

The methods permitted for the control of birds are:

- proofing buildings to prevent birds landing or roosting on them, or otherwise entering the building
- scaring devices
- nest and egg destruction
- taking and killing by permitted methods.

An offence may be committed if the proofing injures protected birds (other than those for which the proofing activity is being undertaken), or disturbs or damages their nests or eggs.

The Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) issues general licences that allow for the legal capture and despatch of 13 bird species, including feral and wood pigeons, when there is no alternative satisfactory solution for protecting public health or safety, preventing the spread of disease or for the protection of livestock or food sources. However, the control must be undertaken by an authorized person and all the other conditions of the licence must be followed.

Feral pigeons

Pigeons can cost local authorities and private companies millions of pounds each year in bills to clean and repair buildings and monuments.

In order to maintain pigeon populations at manageable levels, local authorities need to address why the pigeons are attracted to the area and follow a concerted and humane approach. Bird control strategies need to be carefully researched and backed up by informative public education campaigns.

Culling feral pigeons is time-consuming and costly, and generally only provides a short-term solution. Killing pigeons often results in an outcry from the general public, and adverse publicity. Many people enjoy feral birds as part of urban wildlife, and derive great pleasure from feeding them.

Research has shown pigeon populations quickly recover after a culling strategy. As the birds become less abundant there is less competition for food and shelter, so the remaining birds respond by breeding more. Birds from surrounding areas also move in to exploit the extra food supply. The culling is not only futile, but also a drain on finances and public support.

This point was concisely made by Christopher Feare in his review section on Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon for *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds* (Gibbons et al 1993. T & A D Poyser Ltd). Professor Feare was until recently a senior official at the former Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food's Central Science Laboratory:

‘In attempts to reduce damage, due largely to fouling, it has been found that large numbers of feral pigeons have to be culled, at great expense, to achieve even a small reduction in overall numbers. Unless the culling effort is sustained, numbers quickly recover. Locally, more success in damage alleviation is achieved by excluding birds from specific areas with netting, or from building ledges by using appropriately spaced sprung wires or other devices.’

In his view ‘The only way to achieve a permanent reduction in numbers is to remove the birds’ food supply’.

Some councils are adopting a holistic approach to pigeon control based on a project in Switzerland, which halved the pigeon population in the town of Basel between 1988-1992.

To prevent serious problems, the RSPCA recommends a combination of the following methods to reduce pigeon populations:

Removing the food supply

- A long-term public awareness campaign should be introduced to discourage the feeding of feral pigeons as a humane approach to controlling the local pigeon population. This should focus on the health and environmental issues and promote responsible feeding. The message can be spread via the media, council publications, leaflets, poster and signs.
- Measures should be taken to reduce accidental feeding from food waste, for example by encouraging everyone in the area to use secure bins and asking food traders to dispose of waste carefully.
- Street cleaning procedures should be reviewed to ensure areas where food waste is a problem are cleared frequently and effectively.

Proofing buildings

The object of proofing is to make roosting and nesting sites less attractive to the birds and to encourage the birds to move from the area where they are causing a problem without hurting them. This method can provide a long-term solution and is more acceptable to the public.

- Any work to make buildings bird-proof should only be done by people with a good knowledge of bird behaviour and of the specialist products available. Once a building has been assessed for proofing the most appropriate proofing devices are used to counteract why the pigeons are attracted to the building.
- Anti-perching devices include stainless steel sprung wire systems or the various 'spiked' devices.
- If netting is used it must be properly installed and maintained to avoid birds getting trapped in or behind the netting.
- Repellent gel can be appropriate in certain situations, but must be appropriately coated to avoid the birds getting stuck.

Egg removal

The Basel study also involved building several well-kept and controlled nesting lofts close to the feeding zones, so the pigeon populations could be encouraged to nest in one area. The sites were visited each week and all eggs removed. The lofts were inexpensive to build and could be placed on roofs of buildings away from public view and near existing roosting sites.

But the removal of eggs from controlled nesting lofts will require providing the necessary monitoring, maintenance, cleaning etc, as well as taking precautions to address the health and safety concerns for operatives because of disease.

The RSPCA is against culling pigeons, unless such alternative methods have been tried without success. But if culling is the only option, the most humane and effective method is by using large cage traps baited with grain. These must be properly operated, checked on a daily basis and any captured pigeons humanely dispatched by a competent operator.

Gulls

Although there are a number of different species of gull in the UK, it is the herring gull that most frequently nests on buildings in coastal towns. This can lead to complaints from residents about noise, droppings, gulls 'begging' for or taking food, or defending their nest and chicks by swooping on people nearby. A more serious problem can arise if nesting material blocks a gas flue, preventing fumes from being vented properly.



Herring gulls have the same basic legal protection as feral pigeons and likewise can be culled under certain circumstances. But a similar humane approach should be used to find a long-term solution.

Wherever possible, existing birds and nests should be left undisturbed. But to deter nesting during future breeding seasons take action before May. There are various devices on the market (often consisting of some form of spike system), that can be installed after the building has been assessed for the most suitable proofing. In some situations a simple wire system can be installed to fit into an area between the chimney pots.

Local authorities in popular seaside towns also particularly need to tackle the issues of discarded fast food, overflowing bins and feeding gulls by visitors.

Landfill sites can be another great attraction, especially black-headed, common and black-backed gulls. In rare cases, large flocks can be a hazard for aircraft. Another significant nuisance is the excrement dropped on site operators, neighbouring residential or industrial properties, wildlife habitats and reservoirs.

Humane methods of reducing the bird populations at landfill sites include:

- sheeting lorry-loads of waste
- immediately compacting and spreading waste on arrival
- frequently covering waste with non-soil material
- regular litter collection
- using mobile nets to prevent bird access to waste
- bird kites, which mimic birds of prey.

The law regarding the control of other animals

Rodents, foxes, grey squirrels and other non-protected species can also be legally controlled by the use of the approved humane methods for 'pest control' purposes. In all cases, the RSPCA believes that the methods of control and taking should cause the minimum of pain and distress to individual animals. Wherever possible non-harmful methods of deterrence should be developed and used.

Mice and rats

The most common animals that come into conflict with people are the house mouse and brown rat. Both thrive on food left by people, and their populations are limited by the amount of food available.

If traps are being used, the RSPCA recommends using the most humane. For example, if live-capture traps are used the holding compartment needs to be as large as possible and if spring traps are used care must be taken to ensure the trap is set properly and appropriate for killing the target animal on capture. If traps are set in houses or gardens, reasonable care must be taken to ensure that protected and non-target animals – such as shrews, hedgehogs and birds – are not harmed. Traps should also be checked regularly to ensure captured animals are not left to suffer.

Rats are often attracted to gardens for food. As long as there is a good food supply, they will multiply. The first line of approach should be to try to prevent problems arising by taking measures to make a site less attractive to them and trying to proof buildings and other structures against access. For example, rubbish should be removed and properly disposed of. Edible material such as kitchen waste should not be put out onto open compost heaps but either composted in special bins or put out for collection with the rest of the household refuse in secure bins. If food is put out for wild birds this should preferably be via suitable feeders or up on bird tables. Quantities of food should not be left out late in the day when it is unlikely to be eaten and will therefore remain as a potential source of attraction to rats and mice. If domestic pets, such as rabbits or birds, are kept, their food should be stored in secure containers and waste disposed of carefully. Care should also be taken to avoid spillage of animal food near hutches and to avoid putting waste bedding material, which may contain animal food debris, onto open compost bins.

Many local authorities are finding rat populations are escalating in parks and open spaces – where they feed on food waste and excess bread left for birds and ducks. Local authorities are urged to focus on trying to reduce the food supply by, for example, encouraging people not to feed the ducks and examining waste disposal methods.

Grey squirrels

Grey squirrels can cause problems in buildings after gaining access to loft spaces for shelter to nest or in parks and gardens due to their habits of stripping bark off trees, digging up bulbs and raiding bird tables.

If householders want to deter squirrels, they should first remove the food that is attracting them. Wire netting can protect seeds and bulbs in pots, as well as sensitive areas of vegetable and fruit gardens. Food for birds should be put out in squirrel-proof feeders, and refuse should be disposed of carefully.

Squirrels are expert climbers and will quickly make use of overhanging branches or creepers to get onto a roof. Removing these may help solve the problem. Also ensuring the roof is kept in good repair will minimize potential points of access.

If a squirrel has gained access to a building, it is first necessary to establish whether it has built a nest and is rearing young. If so, it is recommended that, if possible, they are left until the young squirrels leave the nest (young are born between January and August and are independent by 13-16 weeks).

When it is certain there are no squirrels in the loft, points of access should be blocked off with strong wire netting. Grey squirrels are most active during the mid morning and mid afternoon when they forage, so this is the best time to do any exclusion work.

People often think capturing a grey squirrel and releasing it elsewhere is a humane approach. But this is against the law, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, section 14. A squirrel moved to a new area is likely to have difficulty in settling into an established population and will probably die, or be killed by a car, dog or cat.

Only if squirrels are causing a serious problem, and alternative means are not appropriate, should killing be considered. If this is the case, the method used should be precisely targeted and carried out humanely, causing the minimum of harm and distress. The RSPCA therefore recommends only a reputable pest control contractor should dispatch a squirrel.

Foxes

Foxes may be regarded as a problem in gardens, for example, when they are thought to be responsible for fouling, digging or noise. Killing foxes may be considered a solution to the problem, but it is likely to be ineffective as new foxes will soon move into the vacated areas.

Foxes are attracted to gardens for food – often left out for birds, on compost heaps or in waste bags. To discourage them, the first step should be to remove these food supplies, by using such things as securely sealed dustbins and composters. Strawberries, raspberries and vegetables can also be fenced off or protected by a frame of netting; taking care to ensure the mesh size is at least 4cm to reduce the risk of other wildlife becoming tangled in the netting. Foxes can be further discouraged by limiting access to the areas where they find shelter, such as under overgrown bushes.

Proprietary animal repellents are available from garden centres or hardware stores, and may also be used to encourage foxes in the area to move out, with the vixens often taking any cubs to a different location. However, read the label and follow the instructions carefully, as each product is prepared and approved for use against certain animals in the specified way. The use of any substance to deter foxes that has not been approved for such use is illegal. The use of creosote for such purposes is not acceptable, as it is harmful to the pads of the foxes' feet and dangerous to cats and other pets.

If you find a fox earth in the garden, don't block it until you are certain it is empty. Check by lightly blocking the entrances with loose soil or sticks, through which a fox can easily break out. If after a few days the holes have not been re-opened, the earth can be permanently blocked with hard-packed soil. Great care should be taken in the spring to avoid blocking cubs into an earth – the operation is best carried out between late summer and late winter.



Living with badgers

The *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* lays down provisions protecting badgers and their habitat. The law makes it an offence to:

- take, kill or injure any badger, except under licence
- cruelly ill-treat any badger
- use certain prohibited firearms
- dig for a badger
- damage or destroy a badger sett or access to it, or disturb a badger in it
- use a dog to enter a badger sett
- tag or mark any badger except under licence.



Problems with badgers?

Dealing with problem badgers is complex and there are many pit-falls. In the first instance, it is advisable to contact the local badger group, wildlife trust or the RSPCA. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 prohibits taking any action against badgers without a licence. When damage is persistent or economically serious, the Act notes that licences may be granted by DEFRA in England or the National Assembly for Wales, to take or kill badgers and to interfere with setts in order to prevent 'serious damage to land, crops, poultry or any form of property'. DEFRA is required to consult with the appropriate Statutory Nature Conservation Agencies, such as English Nature or the Countryside Council for Wales, on the issuing of 'damage' licences. You must therefore contact one of the three statutory nature conservation agencies to:

- inform them of – among other things – the damage caused by the badgers
- provide assurances that the badgers are causing a serious economic loss
- show that there is significant damage to properties and potential for further loss.

Building developments

There are occasions when an occupied badger sett may be in the way of a building programme. To avoid later problems, developers should always be encouraged to carry out surveys with the local badger group, wildlife trust or ecological consultant before seeking outline planning permission.

Only if a badger sett is proved to be long disused and empty can it be destroyed without a licence. When badgers are in the way of a building development, and are causing no damage, there is no option in law to have them killed. The options are (in decreasing order of preference):

- re-alignment of the buildings, gardens and roads so that the sett can stay in position
- deterring badgers from the particular sett, so that they can change their patterns of behaviour and use other setts for sleeping and breeding
- the entire social group can be relocated to a new area – this is the least preferred and most expensive option.

Digging near badger setts

If any local authority, landowner or builder knows they are going to have to dig a trench or pit within 20 metres of the nearest entrance to a badger sett, they should first contact the relevant nature conservation agency (for development operations) or the relevant agricultural department (for forestry operations). A licence may be required for such work from one of the three statutory nature conservation agencies.

Protecting setts from badger-diggers

Illegal badger digging is widespread in the UK, but at present is only a severe problem in a few areas. The best strategy to help reduce the incidence of digging is to increase public awareness. Local authorities can work with badger groups to inform people of what to do if they see someone behaving suspiciously near a badger sett. This can be done through a media campaign and leaflet or poster distribution. Contact numbers can be given for the local badger group, RSPCA, wildlife trust and police wildlife liaison officer.

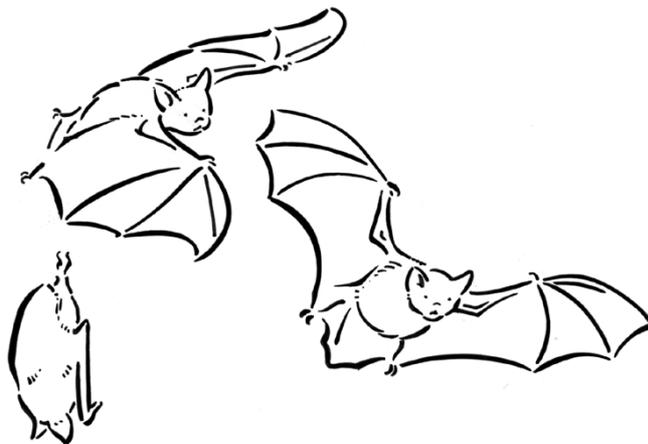
Bats in buildings

Many of Britain's bats roost in both modern and older buildings. Under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* it is against the law to kill, injure, disturb or take bats, or damage, destroy or obstruct a bat roost. However, a bat found in the living area of a house may be legally caught and released. As with other animals, protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 listed at schedule 5, you may tend to a disabled bat in order to release it when it recovers, or kill a seriously disabled bat.

It is important to inform householders that bats do not damage buildings. They do not gnaw wood or bring in nesting materials. The bats' droppings, which consist of mainly insect fragments, are not a danger to health and make an excellent soil fertiliser. A single bat may eat more than 3,000 insects on a summer's night, including crop pests and wood-boring insects.

If bats are causing a nuisance, it is a legal requirement that the relevant statutory nature conservation agency and the Bat Conservation Trust are consulted before any attempts are made to block the gaps through which they enter roof spaces, etc.

Wood preservatives or other chemicals must not be used in the roosting places without the advice of one of the official conservation agencies. If bats are found hibernating in a cool cellar or outhouse during winter, they should not be disturbed as they might die if they leave the roost in winter.

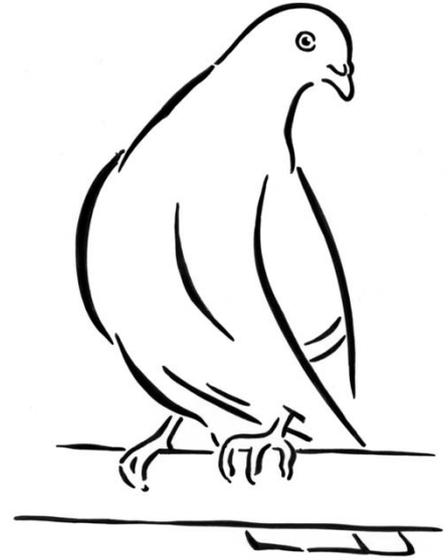


Case study – Nottingham City Hospital

One year since Nottingham City Hospital adopted a humane approach to bird control, its pigeon population has been reduced by an estimated 50 per cent.

The hospital introduced new methods following public pressure against its former policy of lethal culling. The first step was to appoint a person on-site, rather than using private contractors. With advice from the Pigeon Control Advisory Service, he proofed many of the buildings with a combination of the appropriate netting, wires and spikes.

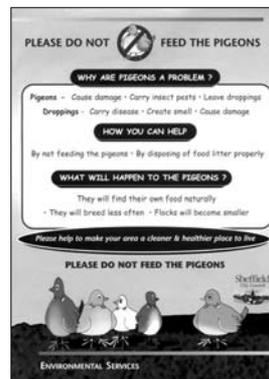
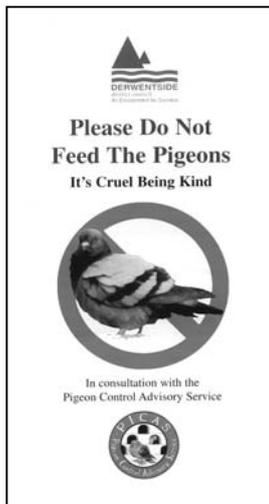
He then made ‘pigeon coops’ from old staff lockers turned on their sides and compartmentalized into nest areas. These are sited on the flat roofs where there are large bird populations. Food, water and bedding material (twigs) are left to encourage the birds to nest. Eggs are then removed daily from the lockers and other known nest sites.



Clive Young, environmental services manager, is delighted with the results of the initiative: “As a hospital we have to be extra careful about infection, so the pigeons were a real problem. There is now a marked reduction in pigeon numbers, cleaning costs have gone down, and the initiative is well-supported by the public.”

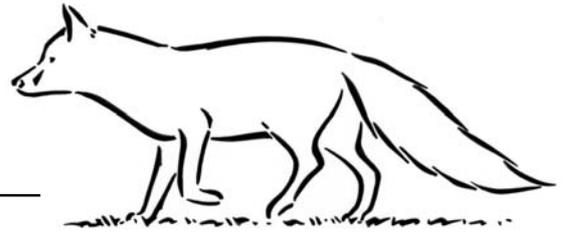
Contact

Clive Young, Nottingham City Hospital: 0115 969 1169 ext 47049 or cyoung1@ncht.trent.nhs.uk



Sheffield City Council has worked with PICAS to produce public information leaflets which are given out by city wardens to local residents seen feeding pigeons. Derwentside District Council also produce an educational leaflet

Pesticides, poisons, traps and snares



The pesticides, traps and snares that can be used are defined by law and are approved for use for targeting certain animals under the approved conditions. Operatives are required to take all reasonable precautions to avoid risks to other non-target animals, to safeguard the environment and to fully comply with the specific conditions of use.

The term pesticide also includes animal repellents; with a variety of repellents approved for use to deter certain mammals, including moles, cats and dogs, deer, small rodents, rabbits and foxes.

The RSPCA is concerned about the widespread agricultural and commercial use of chemical substances that are potentially lethal to wild, farm and domestic animals. The Society also has particular concerns about the use of strychnine for poisoning moles.

The RSPCA is opposed to the use of all snares and any trap that causes suffering. The Society is most concerned that snares (wire nooses most commonly used to catch foxes or rabbits) are completely indiscriminate. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 requires people setting snares to check them regularly and take 'all reasonable precautions' to prevent injury to protected animals. The use of self-locking snares is outlawed. It is illegal to set snares for birds, deer and badgers but these animals are regularly trapped in snares set for other animals.

RSPCA inspectorate surveys have shown only a third of species caught were target species. The majority were cats, with badgers and dogs also caught in significant numbers.

Snares are also very cruel because the trapped animal inevitably panics and tries to free itself. As it does so, the snare can tighten and cause severe injuries and often death. Death can also occur as the animal succumbs to starvation or is killed by predators.

Take action now

- Find alternative humane methods to controlling wildlife populations.
- Ensure only properly trained operatives use approved pesticides and take all reasonable precautions to avoid harm to non-target animals.
- The use of glue boards should be avoided. One industry body, the British Pest Control Association (BPCA), would like to only see the method remain available for use in certain circumstances by trained and professional operators and has asked distributors not to supply such boards or rodent glue to the general public. BPCA has produced a code of practice concerning the use of these traps, which it says should be regarded as a 'last choice' option. Its advice is that such traps must be inspected at least twice a day, including at weekends and public holidays. It says that where inspections cannot be carried out twice daily, boards must be removed from the site.
- Only live traps capable of restraining an animal without causing harm or injury should be used. Traps should be visited at least every 12 hours. Where animals are to be destroyed, a method of killing must be used that renders the animal insensible to pain and distress until death occurs.
- Prohibit the use of snares and traps that cause suffering on all land under council control.
- Make the RSPCA leaflet, *Snared*, available to members of the public.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the wildlife welfare section.

Lethal litter



Every year thousands of animals die or suffer because of the thoughtless disposal of rubbish. Cans, broken glass, plastics and discarded fishing tackle are some of the most lethal – and most commonly dumped – items.

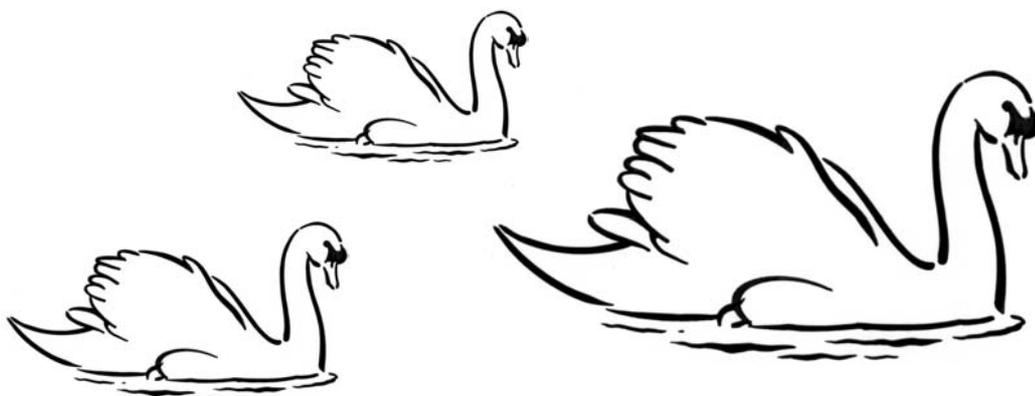
The *Environmental Protection Act 1990* makes duty bodies responsible for keeping their land clear of litter and refuse – mainly local authorities, schools, colleges and universities. It also gives local authorities and citizens the right to take legal action to get areas cleaned up.

Take action now

- Organize litter-picks that involve community groups and local businesses – especially in hot-spot areas that are known to have a litter problem.
- Run anti-litter campaigns in the media and council publications, emphasizing the dangers to wildlife.
- Produce leaflets and posters, or distribute the RSPCA leaflets and posters.
- Encourage people to care for parks and open spaces through the provision of on-site interpretation panels, nature trails and guided wildlife walks.
- Place signs by waterways to remind people about the hazards of discarded fishing tackle.
- Provide and promote recycling bins, and ensure that litter black spots are cleaned regularly.

The RSPCA also urges local authorities not to take part in mass balloon releases. The deflated balloons often end up in fields or the sea where animals can mistake them for food, with fatal results.

A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the wildlife welfare section.



Case study – Lambeth Lowdown



The London Borough of Lambeth chose lethal litter as the theme for the first edition of *Lambeth Lowdown*, the council's new schools newsletter. The newsletter forms part of the Council's campaign on key street issues such as lethal litter, graffiti, safe routes to schools (and open spaces) and dog fouling.

"These are issues that not only link into the curriculum but also ones where children can immediately see how they can make a difference. Competitions with prizes from pop groups such as SClub7 and an upbeat, colourful design and writing style will help ensure that school children are not turned off and encourage them to play their part in improving their local environment," said community environment officer Iain Boulton.

The first issue was sent to all junior schools in the borough and included website references to other organizations, including the RSPCA website and lethal litter campaign. Copies of the four current issues of *Lambeth Lowdown*, including the edition on lethal litter, are available from Iain Boulton, as is a summary of the results from a feedback questionnaire sent to all participating schools

Contact

**Iain Boulton, Community Environment Officer, London Borough of Lambeth: 020 7926 6209
or iboulton@lambeth.gov.uk**

Fledglings and other young animals

Every spring and summer the RSPCA is contacted by thousands of people who have found what they think is an abandoned young bird or orphaned animal.

In most cases these youngsters have not been abandoned – their mothers are usually close by and looking out for them. This particularly applies to fledgling birds, deer fawns and fox cubs. 'Rescuing' such wildlife can often do more harm than good.

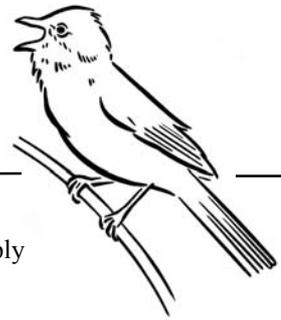
Take action now

Local authorities can help to avoid unnecessary intervention by featuring the issue in council publications in spring, as well as distributing the RSPCA leaflet *Do me a favour – don't touch*.



A full list of contacts and resources is at the end of the wildlife welfare section.

Illegal bird trapping



Hundreds of songbirds are cruelly trapped and taken from the wild each year to supply the trade in finches. Many of these birds die in transit, and few live for more than a year in captivity.

The most common species of bird taken from the wild are bullfinches, goldfinches, greenfinches, siskins, redpolls, linnets and reed buntings. Trappers often catch the birds by hanging nets between trees, or coating twigs with glue. Not only extremely cruel, the practice is illegal – *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* prohibits the possession or sale of wild birds or their eggs.

Take action now

The RSPCA is appealing to local authorities to help stamp out the cruel trade in the ways listed below.

- Ensuring council staff are aware of the problem. Any suspicious activities involving birds, such as sightings of decoy traps, mist nets and traps, should immediately be reported on the RSPCA national number 08705 555 999.
- Printing and distributing information leaflets for the general public to raise awareness of the issue, as well as publicizing it in council publications.
- Informing the RSPCA's special investigations unit about the sale of British birds in pet shops (this is only legal if they are captive-bred). Call 08705 555 999.
- Not licensing one-day bird sales – the RSPCA believes they do not serve the cause of animal welfare and can be an outlet for illegally caught birds.

Creating wildlife areas

A simple way for local authorities to provide new wildlife habitats is by being less 'tidy' when maintaining parks and verges. Areas where grasses and wildflowers are left to grow provide shelter and food for a huge range of creatures, including hedgehogs and butterflies. A pond will provide a haven for a wide range of wildlife, including frogs, toads and dragonflies. Also just by leaving a pile of dead wood in woodlands an ideal habitat can be provided for beetles, insects and invertebrates.

The excessive use of chemicals such as insecticides and slug pellets should be avoided. They often kill far more species than those that they are designed for. Many small birds and other animals rely on insects for food and an accumulation of contaminated insects can lead to the death of the creatures that eat them.

Through the production of leaflets or information packs, local authorities can encourage householders to create wildlife havens, such as providing ponds or leaving wild areas in their own gardens, and schools to do the same in their grounds.

Case study – **Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre, Southampton**

The Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre, run by Southampton City Council, has been nationally recognized as a unique and invaluable resource for residents, local authority staff, visitors and researchers.

In 1998, the centre won a United Kingdom Man and the Biosphere (UKMAB) award. This commended its work in bringing together government and non-governmental bodies and local communities in projects that involve nature conservation, education and the enjoyment of natural features. The Hawthorns was hailed as ‘an excellent example that other authorities would do well to emulate’.

The Hawthorns is located on The Common, a green open space in the heart of the city, and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for its abundance of habitats and wildlife. Within the centre are study facilities, a display room, and extensive grounds. It is open year-round and entry is free.

From the centre, the city council’s three ecologists provide information on wildlife, biodiversity and nature conservation issues. The team is also responsible for assessing planning applications, monitoring protected species, making nature conservation designations and developing the city’s biological databases.

Their comprehensive education programme includes school visits, teacher training, and advising on the development of wildlife areas in school grounds, as well as initiatives such as guided walks, talks, and displays.

Contact

Lin Hand, Hawthorns Urban Wildlife Centre: 023 8067 1921
or hawthorns.wildlife.centre@southampton.gov.uk



Contacts and resources

Protection for wildlife

Useful contacts

RSPCA Wildlife department
Tel: 0870 7540 327
E-mail: wildlife@rspca.org.uk
Post: Wildlife Department,
RSPCA HQ, Wilberforce Way,
Southwater, Horsham RH12 9RS

Copies of all current legislation can be obtained from The Stationery Office Publications Centre
Tel: 0870 600 5522
(general enquiries) or
www.the-stationery-office.co.uk

English Nature

Northminster House, Peterborough,
Cambs. PE1 1UA
24 hrs enquiries service
For general enquiries
call 01733 455100/101/102
Fax: 01733 455103
E-mail: enquiries@english-nature.org.uk
www.english-nature.org.uk

English Nature publications (free unless otherwise stated) – guidance notes and information for developers available from English Nature enquiries service:

Badgers and development

Great Crested Newts – mitigation guidelines

Focus on Bats (£1)

Bats in roofs

Bats – mitigation guidelines

Barn Owls on site – a guide for developers and planners

English Nature publications can also be ordered via the website:
www.english-nature.org.uk/pubs/publication/Pub_Search.asp

National Assembly for Wales

(Welsh Assembly Government)
Robert Griffiths
Food & Farming
Development Division
Tel: 029 2082 5771
E-mail:
robert.griffiths@wales.gsi.gov.uk
www.wales.gov.uk

The Countryside Council for Wales

Plas Penrhos, Ffordd Penrhos,
Bangor, Gwynedd, LL57 2LQ
Tel: 01248-385500
Fax: 01248 355782
E-mail: c.gwn@ccw.gov.uk or
www.ccw.gov.uk

Deer Initiative – a broad partnership of organizations that work together to promote a humane, responsible and sensitive approach to the management of wild deer.
Tel: 01823 451900 or
www.thedeerinitiative.co.uk

Information on latest developments, wildlife legislation and enforcement is available from the **Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs**,
3-8 Whitehall Place,
London SW1A 2HH
Tel **DEFRA** helpline – local call rate number: 08459 335577
Fax: 020 7270 8419
E-mail: helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk or
www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/index.htm

Information on wildlife legislation can be found at
www.naturenet/law/index.html

Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime – a multi-agency group of representatives of all the organizations involved in wildlife law enforcement (including the RSPCA) in the UK, particularly police wildlife liaison officers and customs wildlife and endangered species officers. Information is available at
www.defra.gov.uk/paw/default.htm

Living with wildlife

RSPCA resources

Living with ...badgers
Living with ...foxes
RSPCA information sheets

Frogs & toads Leaflet

Hedgehogs & you Leaflet

Snakes alive! Leaflet on UK snakes

Seaside Special – living with gulls in seaside towns Leaflet

Pigeons

The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991 by D W Gibbons, J B Reid and R A Chapman, T & A D Poyser Ltd. Section on feral pigeons by Christopher Feare.

Regulation of the street pigeon in Basel, by D Haag-Wackernagel, Wildlife Society Bulletin. 1995. Volume 23. Number 2. pp 256-260.

ENCAMS (formerly known as **Tidy Britain Group**) (England HQ)
Elizabeth House, The Pier,
Wigan, WN3 4EX
Tel: 01942 612639
Fax: 01942 824778,
E-mail: enquiries@encams.org or
website www.encams.org

Pigeons – expert advice on the issues – report produced by Encams

Pigeon Control Advisory Service

(PICAS) – for more information contact PICAS
Tel: 07974 485263 or 07903 011715
E-mail: enquiries@picas.org or
www.picas.org

Foxes

The Fox Project – provides advice to householders or local authorities on the best way of dealing with foxes.

Advice line: 0906 2724411, or
Tel: 01732 367397

E-mail:

vulpes@foxproject.freeserve.co.uk or

www.innotts.co.uk/~robmel/
foxproject.html

Unearthing the urban fox
Fox Project booklet

National Fox Welfare Society

135 Higham Road, Rushden,
Northants, NN10 6DS.

Tel: 01933 411996

Fax: 01933 397324

E-mail: info@nfws.org.uk or
www.nfws.org.uk/pro/
problems.htm

Badgers

More details about protecting badgers, dealing with problems and the legal implications are available from the RSPCA Wildlife department on 0870 7540 327 or
E-mail: wildlife@rspca.org.uk

The contact details for the local badger group can be obtained from the **National Federation of Badger Groups**,

15 Cloisters Business Centre,
8 Battersea Park Road,
London, SW8 4BG.

Tel: 020 7498 3220

Fax: 020 7627 4212

E-mail: enquiries@nfbg.org.uk or
www.nfbg.org.uk

Bats

Bat Conservation Trust

15 Cloisters House,
8 Battersea Park Road,
London SW8 4BG.

Helpline No: 020 7627 2629

(9am to 1pm, 2pm to 5:30 pm
Monday to Friday, except for
bank holidays),

Fax: 020 7627 2628

E-mail: enquiries@bats.org.uk or
www.bats.org.uk

The BCT can provide the contact details for the local bat group.

Pesticides, poisons, traps and snares

Legislation: including the
Ground Game Act 1880;
Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act 1962
Animals (Cruel Poisons)
Regulations 1963;
Food and Environment
Protection Act 1985;
Control of Pesticides
Regulations 1986 (as amended);
Pests Act 1954;
Spring Traps Approval
Order 1995

RSPCA resources

Snares RSPCA leaflet on dangers
of legal snares.

Useful contacts

Pesticides Safety Directorate

Tel: 01904 455775

Fax: 01904 455733

E-mail:

information@psd.defra.gsi.gov.uk

Post: PSD, Mallard House,
Kings Pool, 3 Peasholme Green,
York YO1 7PX

National Pest Technicians Association

Tel: 0115 952 4333

Fax: 0115 948 3696

E-mail: officenpta@aol.com

Website: www.npta.org.uk/
Post: Huntingdon House Business
Centre, 278-290 Huntingdon
Street, Nottingham NG1 3LY

British Pest Control Association

Tel: 01332 294288

Fax: 01332 295904

E-mail: enquiry@bpca.org.uk

Website:

www.bpca.org.uk/links.htm

Post: Ground Floor,
Gleneagles House, Vernongate,
Derby DE1 1UP

Lethal litter

RSPCA resources

RSPCA local government brief on
lethal litter.

Lethal litter poster and leaflet;

Here's a line to remember
(problems caused by fishing litter)
poster and leaflet. RSPCA.

Useful contacts

ENCAMS (formerly known as
Tidy Britain Group) (England HQ)
Elizabeth House, The Pier,
Wigan, WN3 4EX
Tel: 01942 612639
Fax: 01942 824778
E-mail: enquiries@encams.org or
website www.encams.org

Keep Wales Tidy Campaign (South Wales)

33/35 Cathedral Road,

Cardiff, CF11 9HB

Tel: 02920 256767

Fax: 02920 256768

E-mail:

kwtcsouth@tidybritain.org.uk

Keep Wales Tidy (North Wales)

2 Slate Quay, Caernarfon, LL55 2PB

Tel: 01286 674081

Fax: 01286 678188

E-mail: kwtnorth@tidybritain.org.uk

Fledglings and other young animals

RSPCA resources

Do me a favour – don't touch –
Leaflet and poster

All alone? – leaflet and poster –
what to do if you see a lone fox cub

