

Recording and Addressing Persecution and Threats to Our Raptors (RAPTOR)

Research Institutions: Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht (NPWS), Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine (Regional Veterinary Labs) and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (The State Laboratory)

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Undertaken across Ireland.

Project Background

Ireland's native birds of prey are part of our natural heritage, key indicators of the health of our ecosystems and important assets in attracting tourists to come and stay in Ireland. High profile raptor poisoning or persecution incidents have been documented in the media. For example Hen Harriers shot in Kerry, a White-tailed Eagle shot in Tipperary, attempted poisoning of Peregrine Falcons in Dublin and numerous poisonings of Red Kites in Wicklow. There are however many other cases that are not highlighted in the media and for the past five years Government agencies have been systematically determining how great an issue poisoning and persecution is for Ireland's native raptors. This has been made possible by a cooperative approach between the National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS), the Regional Veterinary labs and State Lab who collectively produced a formal protocol for investigating bird of prey deaths in 2011. This is known as the RAPTOR (Recording and Addressing Persecution and Threats to Our Raptors) protocol. This protocol entails a significant amount of effort between three Government Departments, from collecting and handling carcasses, injured birds and evidence, to x-rays, Post-Mortem examinations, toxicological testing and follow-up investigations, data analysis, interpretation and reporting. NPWS maintain a database of incidents and the three Departments undertake to publish an annual report. The first report (for 2011) was published in 2013 and the second, third and fourth reports (for 2012, 2013 and 2014) were published in 2015. The reports can be downloaded [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#).

Overall Aim

Investigate and Document Raptor persecution and poisoning incidents

Gather all relevant data and analyse trends

Enable an appraisal of black spots, associated land-use types, methods of persecution, motives behind the persecution and the times of year at which such incidents peak.

Projected benefits of the research project

Provide intelligence for an informed approach to combating poisoning and persecution through education and law enforcement.