Life ban for Kent teen targeting wildlife

Tuesday 21 December, 2021

A teenager has been disqualified for life from keeping animals following an investigation launched by animal welfare charity, Naturewatch Foundation.

Benny Joe Eastwood (DoB: 20/05/2002) of Ropers Green Lane, High Halstow, in Rochester, appeared at Medway Magistrates' Court on 8 December where he was sentenced. He previously pleaded guilty to offences under the Animal Welfare Act relating to two dogs – a bull lurcher called Max and a terrier called Skip.

An investigation launched by Naturewatch Foundation resulted in a comprehensive report being passed to Kent Police which suggested that dogs were being used in the persecution of wildlife. Kent Police Rural Task Force subsequently executed a warrant under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 with the RSPCA on 14 April 2021 and two dogs were seized.

The two dogs were found in poor living conditions and suffering from injuries consistent with encounters with foxes or badgers. They had numerous injuries of varying degrees of healing, which suggested their encounters were not a one-off incident, with Skip having half a top lip missing.

Naturewatch Foundation's wildlife crime campaign manager, Kate Parker said: "Our investigators work tirelessly to build actionable reports to send to enforcement agencies, and this case shows that their hard work has a direct impact on animal welfare, resulting in a barbaric perpetrator being sentenced and two dogs being saved. Sadly, we can only guess at the amount of pain and misery caused to wildlife by Eastwood."

She continued: "I thank Kent Police for actioning our investigation package and the RSPCA for taking on the prosecution. To those involved in the barbaric and downright sickening activity of ripping apart our British wildlife for pure enjoyment, you **will** be reported, and you **will** be brought to justice."

Benny Eastwood will never legally be allowed to have animals again, but there remain many people, just like him, who spend their time watching innocent animals being torn to pieces, with their own dogs suffering horrendous injuries. Without the support and reporting from the public, Naturewatch Foundation couldn't do the work that it does, so if you have any information regarding named individuals hunting wildlife with dogs, please report it to the charity, in confidence:

Online reporting form:
https://naturewatch.org/get-involved/report-suspected-animal-abuse/wildlife-crime-information-report/

Email: wildlifecrime@naturewatch.org

Phone: 07865 801 068

More information and advice are available on the Naturewatch Foundation website: www.naturewatch.org

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