

Operation Major Launches Nationwide to Expose Dogs Injured in Wildlife Crime

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A powerful new initiative, Operation Major, launches today across the UK to raise awareness of the dogs injured or maimed through illegal wildlife crime and to drive vital improvements in how these offences are reported.

Operation Major was born out of an incident of barbaric animal abuse, pain, and suffering, however a story that ended in hope. The initiative takes its name from Major, a brave Patterdale terrier who suffered horrific injuries during an incident of badger persecution in Derbyshire. His story became the driving force behind a pioneering collaborative effort to tackle wildlife crime and protect the dogs that are often used from harm.

The Story Behind Operation Major

Derbyshire Police were called to an active badger sett disturbance when two offenders fled, abandoning Major with devastating facial and chest injuries. Despite extensive appeals, nobody was ever held accountable.

Like countless dogs exploited in wildlife crime, Major had been treated as disposable. But unlike many, his suffering led to change. Major received lifesaving veterinary care, made a full recovery, and was rehomed into a safe and loving environment. His story became the catalyst for a nationwide collaborative effort to prevent more animals — both wild and domestic — from suffering in silence.

A Collaborative Response to Hidden Crimes

Operation Major brings together Naturewatch Foundation, the League Against Cruel Sports, Badger Trust, the RSPCA, and veterinary professionals, working closely with police forces across the country. The initiative aims to:

For the public

- Raise awareness that dogs are frequently injured through wildlife crime such as badger baiting.
- Encourage reporting of suspicious injuries or activity in rural areas.

For police officers

- Improve recognition of wildlife crime indicators.
- Support proactive investigations when dogs present with unexplained or suspicious wounds.

For veterinary professionals

- Strengthen vigilance in identifying potential wildlife-crime-related injuries.
- Ensure clear reporting pathways so concerns reach the relevant authorities without delay.

This united approach aims to protect wildlife, safeguard dogs, and ensure offenders face justice.

Jim Clark, Wildlife Crime Campaign Manager at Naturewatch Foundation, said:

Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits ::
Environment & Nature :: Farming
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Related Keywords:

Wildlife :: Wildlife Crime :: Animal
Welfare :: Animals :: Nature ::
Environment :: Rural Crime ::
Badgers :: Badger Baiting ::
Countryside ::

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“Those who exploit dogs as disposable tools in the barbaric practice of wildlife and domestic animal abuse show little regard for any living being. Through Operation Major, we hope to turn the tide and bring much-needed protection to all animals affected. Naturewatch Foundation is proud to join forces with our partners to drive this vital project forward.”

DC Aaron Flint, Derbyshire Constabulary, added:

“Operation Major is about shining a light on the cruel and criminal use of dogs in wildlife crime and animal fighting. These offences are often hidden in our communities, and we rely on increased awareness to bring them to the surface.”

“By working closely with policing teams, NGOs, professionals such as vets, and the public, we want to improve the recognition and reporting of these incidents. Every report helps us protect vulnerable animals, safeguard communities, and bring offenders to justice.”

How to Report

Anyone with concerns about dogs being used in the commission of wildlife crime is urged to act. Information can be shared safely and confidentially via Naturewatch Foundation's secure online reporting form [here](#).

Your report could prevent cruelty, protect animals, and support investigations that bring offenders to justice.

ENDS

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About Naturewatch Foundation: Naturewatch Foundation is a UK-based animal welfare charity dedicated to ending cruelty and improving the lives of animals through campaigning, education and advocacy. For over 30 years, the charity has led initiatives to tackle illegal and unethical practices, including puppy farming, animal experiments and wildlife crime. By working with policymakers, enforcement agencies and the public, Naturewatch Foundation strives to make the world a kinder place for animals. Visit naturewatch.org to find out more.

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