

POACHING



Warwickshire Police, Warwickshire County Council and local farmers are working to tackle the issue of poaching as part of Operation Capital to put a stop to illegally obtained game and fish.

Poaching is not a victimless crime. As well as the unnecessary suffering caused to animals, it has a significant impact on rural communities and farmers crops.

It is illegal under the Hunting Act 2004 to hunt wild mammals with dogs. If you are caught doing so you risk your vehicle, dog and poaching equipment being seized under Section 30 of the Game Act 1831.

Anyone convicted of the offence can also receive a fine of up to £5,000 by a magistrates' court.

Quick guide to poaching offences:

- Trespass on any land in search or pursuit of game, woodcock, snipe or rabbits
- Enter land in search or pursuit of deer with intention of taking, killing or injuring
- Hunt fox, hare or deer with dog, rabbits or rats
- Take or destroy fish from private waterways
- Take or destroy game or rabbits
- Be on land with any gun, net, snare, lamp for the purpose of taking game without the land-owners permission

A police officer may stop and search any person or vehicle on any highway, street or public place if there is a reasonable cause to suspect poaching. Any game, article (including weapons and phone), dog or vehicle if used in offence may be seized and detained.

The police have wide ranging powers to deal with people who use their vehicles in an anti-social manner. Apart from prosecuting offenders for motoring offences, that could lead to being disqualified from driving.

The police can also seize motor vehicles using Section 59 of the Police Reform Act 2002. The keeper of the vehicle will be liable for recovery/storage costs. Section 59 also covers any such use of a motor vehicle off-road, such as common land, moorland, bridle paths, footpaths, tracks and fields.