

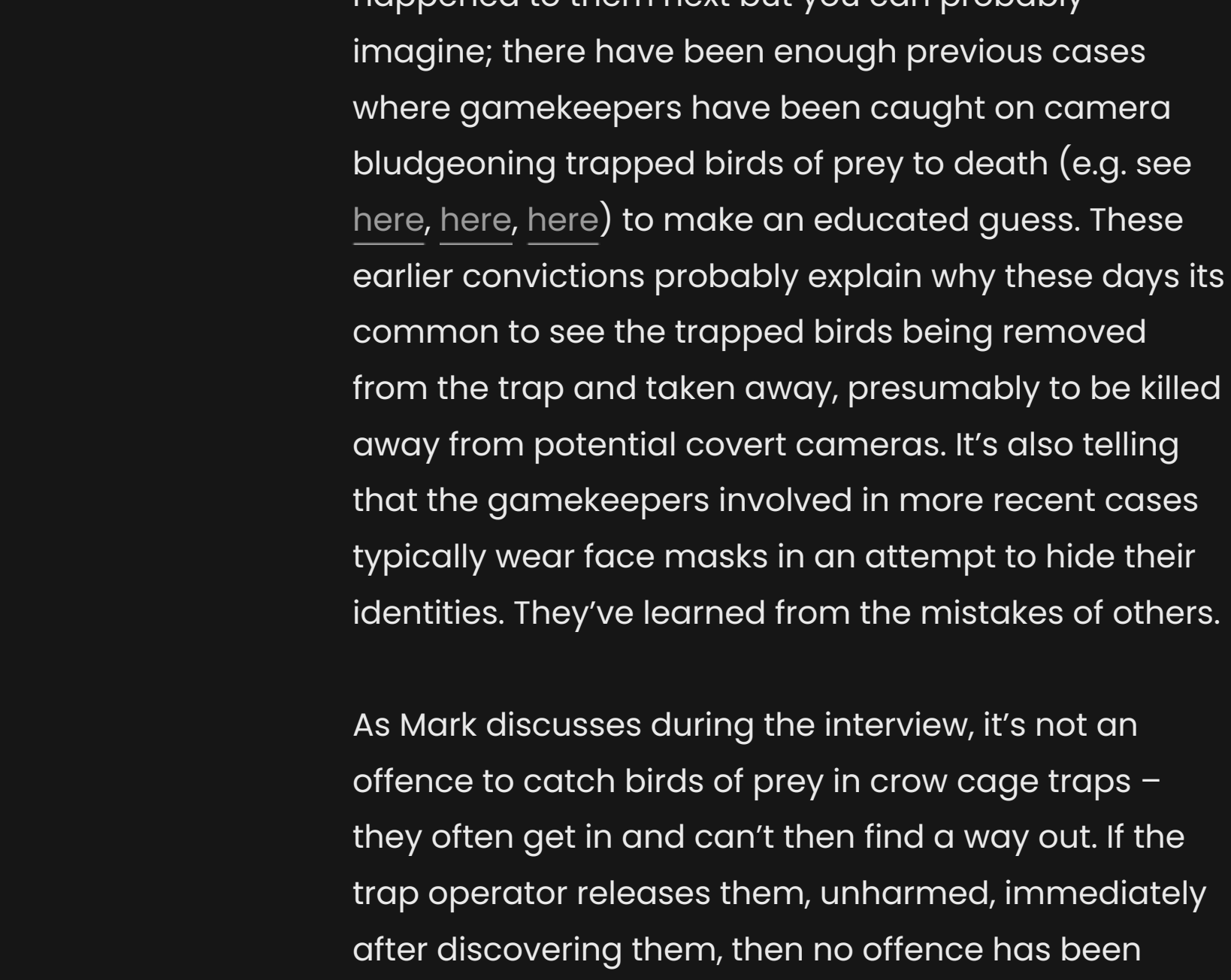
Raptor Persecution UK

Prosecution rate for crimes against birds of prey less than 4% – Sky News

RaptorPersecutionUK
February 12, 2024
News
buzzard, crow trap, trap

This weekend Sky News ran several pieces about raptor persecution and how the wildlife killers are getting with these crimes, with a prosecution rate of less than 4%.

They produced a written piece ([here](#)) featuring quotes from the RSPB's Investigations Team and they also conducted several interviews, one with Howard Jones, RSPB Senior Investigations Officer, one with Mark Thomas, Head of RSPB Investigations and one with Chris Packham.

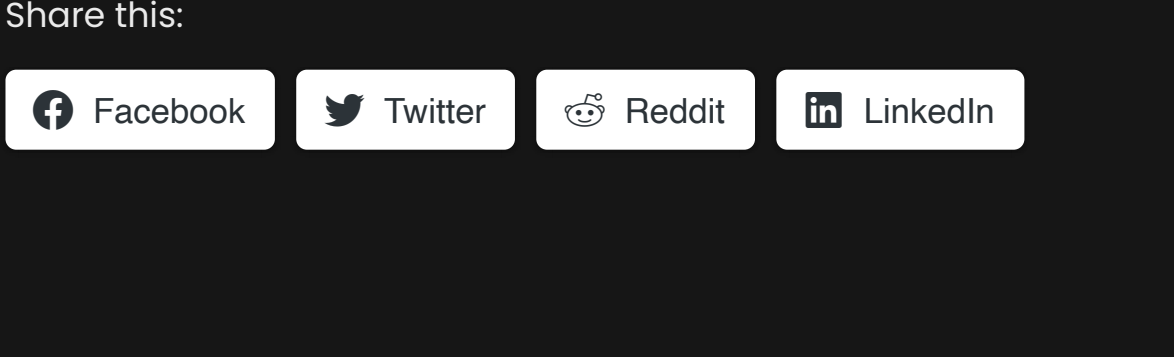
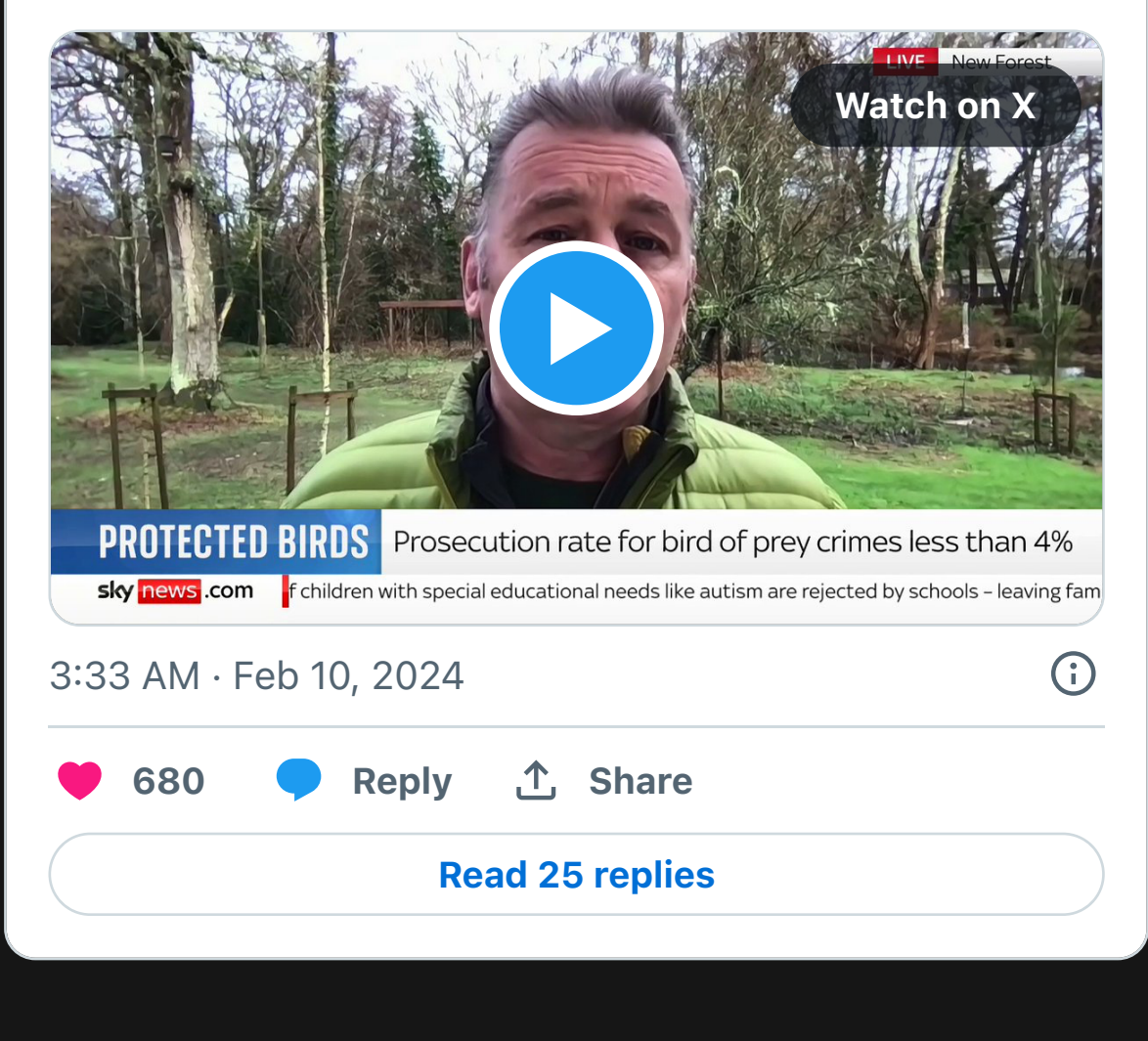


The interview with Mark Thomas showed some covert video footage by the RSPB showing two gamekeepers removing live buzzards from a crow cage trap, putting them inside fertiliser sacks, tying the bag and putting the bags inside a vehicle. It doesn't show what happened to them next but you can probably imagine; there have been enough previous cases where gamekeepers have been caught on camera bludgeoning trapped birds of prey to death (e.g. see [here](#), [here](#), [here](#)) to make an educated guess. These earlier convictions probably explain why these days its common to see the trapped birds being removed from the trap and taken away, presumably to be killed away from potential covert cameras. It's also telling that the gamekeepers involved in more recent cases typically wear face masks in an attempt to hide their identities. They've learned from the mistakes of others.

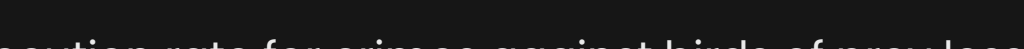
As Mark discusses during the interview, it's not an offence to catch birds of prey in crow cage traps – they often get in and can't then find a way out. If the trap operator releases them, unharmed, immediately after discovering them, then no offence has been committed. Putting them inside a sack and taking them away is a clear offence and is indicative of further offences (i.e. killing the birds elsewhere).

This particular footage hasn't previously been published, and there's a reason for that. I'll return to this case in a separate blog.

I can't find the full interviews in one place but there are various clips that can be watched via Twitter, which I've linked below.



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One thought on "Prosecution rate for crimes against birds of prey less than 4% – Sky News"

Simon Tucker
February 12, 2024 at 12:01 pm

This situation will continue for as long as senior police officers, police & crime commissioners, lawyers and the judiciary are drawn from the same stratum of society, or aspire to belong to the same stratum of society, as the landowners who instruct / allow their employees to carry out these crimes.

Even when a gamekeeper actually gets convicted, despite his employer providing top line barristers to defend the indefensible, the penalties given are almost always at the lowest possible end of the scale available.

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- 2015 persecution incidents (102)
- 2016 persecution incidents (147)
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- November 2022 (15)
- October 2022 (22)
- September 2022 (14)
- August 2022 (33)
- July 2022 (21)
- June 2022 (26)
- May 2022 (32)
- April 2022 (36)
- March 2022 (34)
- February 2022 (28)
- January 2022 (31)
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