

Raptor Persecution UK

Serial egg thief Daniel Lingham convicted for third time

RaptorPersecutionUK
February 21, 2024
News

Press release from Norfolk Constabulary (20th February 2024):

Norfolk man illegally collected almost 3,000 eggs

A prolific egg collector has admitted illegally hoarding thousands of rare birds' eggs in Norfolk.

Daniel Lingham, 71, of Newton St Faith, appeared at Norwich Magistrates Court on Tuesday 20 February 2024 where he pleaded guilty to five offences.

They were:

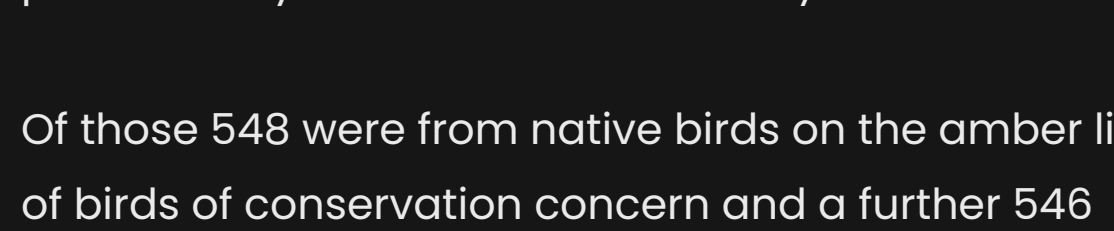
-Taking eggs from a non-schedule 1 wild bird namely a Nightjar on 9 June 2023 at Holt

-Possessing an egg or its parts of a non-schedule 1 wild bird – namely 2429 eggs on 25 July 2023

-Possessing an egg or its parts of a schedule 1 wild bird – namely 22 Schedule 1 bird eggs on July 2023

-Possessing articles capable of being used to identify and take eggs

-Breaching a Criminal Behaviour Order on 9 June 2023



Lingham captured on police body camera whilst officers search his premises for stolen eggs

Lingham, who has two previous convictions for similar crimes, was captured on a wildlife trap camera on 9 June 2023 sealing two eggs from a Nightjar nest in Holt Lowes.

Investigators were shown the footage and were able to identify Lingham by his distinctive walking stick which is seen in shot.

A police search of his home on July 25 2023 subsequently revealed the extent of his hoard.

Within the property a total of 2995 eggs were found. A large collection was in his bedroom including some non-native species, alongside 2429 native birds' eggs protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Of those 548 were from native birds on the amber list of birds of conservation concern and a further 546 were of the most serious concern on the red list including Linnet, Green Finch, Yellowhammer, House Sparrow and many more.

A further collection of eggs – which looked much newer – was found behind the bath panel including a box containing a pair of Nightjar eggs with a label 'Nightjar 2, Holt Lowes June 9.'

Officers also found identifying books, binoculars, and an egg blowing kit.

In interview Lingham said all of the eggs, bar the Nightjar ones, had been taken before his previous conviction in 2018 – although the way they were stored suggested otherwise.

He further claimed a collection on display in a cabinet in the bedroom had come from an Essex house clearance and while they were his he had not taken them himself from the wild.

He said he had been looking for adders and tiger beetles when he was "tempted" by the Nightjar eggs due to his egg collecting addiction, which was a mental health issue.

Lingham has previously been investigated and prosecuted.

In 2005 he was jailed for ten weeks after police found a collection of almost 4,000 eggs in his home.

Then in 2018 he was found to be in possession of over 5,000 eggs for which he was jailed for 18 weeks and handed a 10-year Criminal Behaviour Order aimed at stopping him from committing similar crimes in the future.

Under the CBO he is banned from entering Holt Lowes between 1 February and 1 October as well as many other sites across Norfolk and nationally – many of which appeared on place name labels among the boxes.

PC Chris Shelley from the Op Randall Rural Crime Team thanked RSPB investigators for their huge support throughout the investigation and also the National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU).

He said: "Egg collecting should be a hobby that is confined to the history books having been made illegal in 1954. The illegal collecting of eggs is tackled every year under Operation Easter with forces and partner agencies nationally taking part in bringing those involved to justice, all overseen and facilitated by the NWCU.

"Thankfully there are very few individuals now committing this crime but these few, including Lingham, cause a huge amount of harm to 1000s of birds including some of our most at risk species – in this case Nightjar, Linnet, Yellow Hammer and House Sparrows to name just a few.

"We would always encourage anyone who sees suspicious activity around bird nests in the coming months to report as much detail as possible using our online form or 999 if in progress."

Tom Grose, RSPB Investigations Officer, said: "The scale of egg theft which Lingham has committed over the last 20 years is shocking. Sadly, his obsession with collecting wild birds' eggs has ultimately resulted in thousands of breeding birds, which have invested huge amounts of energy into rearing young, to fail.

"We're relieved that this type of crime is now relatively rare in the UK, but this latest case has revealed that the breeding success of the Nightjar, a species of conservation concern, has again been targeted in Norfolk by Lingham's illegal actions.

"We'd like to thank Norfolk Police for an excellent investigation which has again led to Lingham's prosecution."

He will appear for sentencing on 3 May 2024.

ENDS

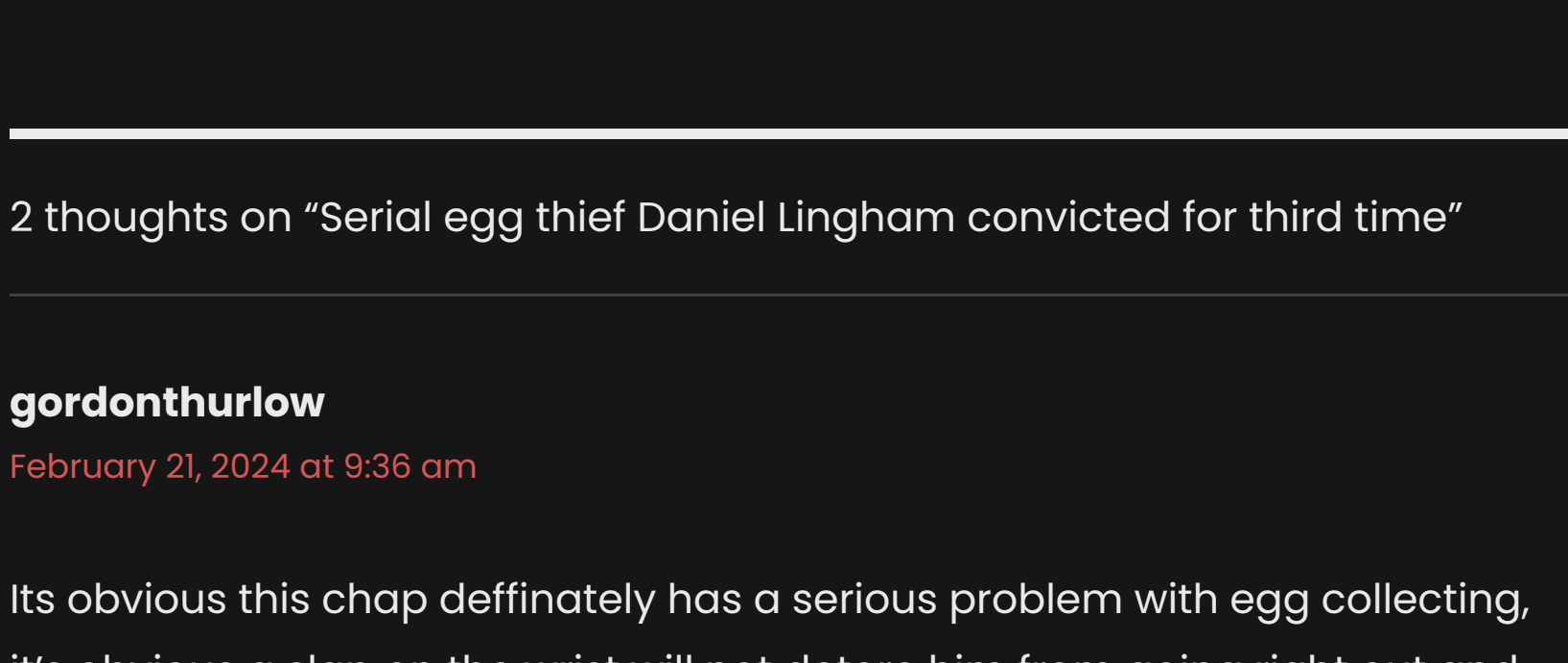
As mentioned in the press release, the last time Lingham was convicted (in 2018 for stealing Marsh harrier eggs, amongst many others, [here](#)) as well as a short custodial sentence he was also given a ten-year Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) banning him from all Norfolk Nature Reserves for ten years.

According to the Sentencing Council, 'a CBO is an order designed to tackle the most serious and persistent anti-social individuals where their behaviour has brought them before a criminal court'.

Lingham has clearly breached his CBO and the consequences of that could mean a lengthy custodial sentence depending on the court's view of mitigating and aggravating factors (see [here](#)).

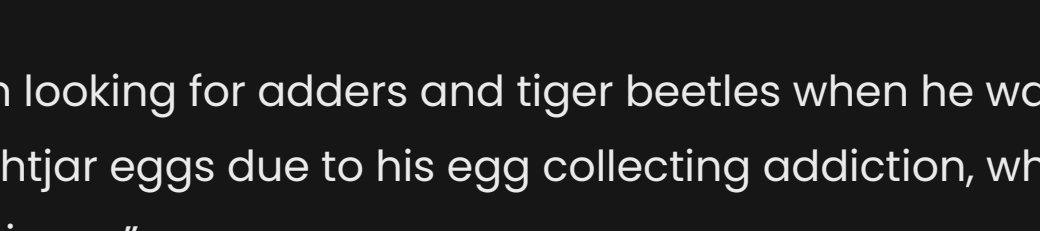
Let's see what happens when he's sentenced on 3rd May 2024.

Well done to Norfolk Constabulary's Rural Wildlife Crime, the National Wildlife Crime Unit and the RSPB's Investigations Team for getting a successful conviction.



Members of Norfolk Constabulary's Rural Crime Team with part of Lingham's illegal egg collection. Photo via Norfolk Constabulary

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2 thoughts on "Serial egg thief Daniel Lingham convicted for third time"

gordonthurlow

February 21, 2024 at 9:36 am

Its obvious this chap deffinatly has a serious problem with egg collecting, it's obvious a slap on the wrist will not deter him from going right out and starting again.

Reply

Keith Dancey

February 21, 2024 at 11:34 am

"He said he had been looking for adders and tiger beetles when he was "tempted" by the Nightjar eggs due to his egg collecting addiction, which was a mental health issue."

'Mental health issue' my foot. Does he have a vast collection of hen's eggs from Sainsbury's, then?

Reply

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