Raptor Persecution UK

Red Kite dies after being found with gun-shot injuries in Peak District National Park – Police appeal for information

Derbyshire Constabulary has issued an appeal for information (27 September 2026) following the discovery of a shot Red Kite in the Peak District National Park on or before 7th July 2026.

RURAL CRIME APPEAL – RED KITE SHOT

We are appealing for information following the discovery of an injured Red Kite in the Buxton and Combs area.

WHEN: Before or on Tuesday 7th July

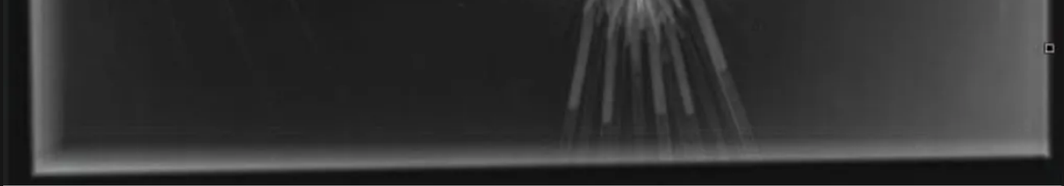
WHERE: Above Buxton and below Combs – mapping coordinates were 53.293834, -1.940895

Location of shot Red Kite in Peak District National Park (map annotated by RPUK)

An injured Red Kite was brought to a local veterinary practice after being found by a member of the public. When initially assessed by vets, the kite was in shock and appeared to be playing dead. There was swelling and bleeding around the injured area of its wing.

Following X-rays, it was sadly discovered that the kite had pellets embedded in its left wing, indicating that it had been shot. Despite receiving veterinary treatment, the kite sadly passed away.

X-Rays and wound photos via Derbyshire Constabulary:



WE ARE APPEALING FOR INFORMATION

We appreciate that the information available at this stage is limited, including the exact time the incident occurred. However, any information could be important.

Were you in the area around Buxton, Combs or the surrounding countryside around this time?

Did you see anything unusual or suspicious?

Did you see any vehicles or people in the area that may have been relevant?

Even if you are unsure whether the information you have is relevant, please get in touch. Something that may seem insignificant could assist with our enquiries.

*If you have any information, please quote 26*431851 and report by calling 101.*

ENDS

My commentary:

Given the extent of what looks like a traumatic fracture of the ulna, shown in the two X-rays, I'd say it would seem unlikely that this Red Kite would have been capable of flying a long distance from where it was shot.

Yet another raptor persecution victim, in an area where gamebird shooting is prominent and in a so-called National Park well known for crimes against birds of prey.

An important scientific paper published in the journal *British Birds* in 2018 demonstrated the association of land managed for driven grouse shooting in the Dark Peak with the persecution of birds of prey, notably Peregrines and Goshawks, between 1995 – 2015.

Since then, there have been many raptor (and Raven) persecution crimes in the Peak District National Park, most involving shooting or poisoning (e.g. see here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here, here).

Apart from the conviction of a gamekeeper in 2011 (which was later upheld after an appeal in 2012), I can't recall any subsequent convictions for raptor persecution crimes committed in the Peak District National Park over the subsequent 15 years.

Not only is police enforcement failing, but long-term attempts at so-called 'partnership-working' was also an abject failure, with the Peak District Bird of Prey Initiative collapsing after 12 years of consistently failing to meet its targets because raptor persecution was so rampant.

The only effective measure that I've seen was from the National Trust, who withdrew two grouse shoot tenancies on its moorlands in the National Park after seeing evidence of suspected (here) and confirmed (here) wildlife crime.

I'll be making this point in my submission to Defra's Call for Evidence on gamebird shooting.

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6 thoughts on “Red Kite dies after being found with gunshot injuries in Peak District National Park – Police appeal for information”

martinjmknight
September 28, 2026 at 6:41 am

Which wing? One of the x-rays has probably been reversed.

Reply

Jeremy Moore
September 28, 2026 at 9:08 am

Why do the police wait for nearly three months before putting out an appeal for information?

Reply

Lance Moore
September 28, 2026 at 3:19 pm

Hello heroic Raptor Persecutio. I salute you in your work. The shot red kite Buxton. I notice police don’t ask if anyone Heard a gunshot. Waiting three months seems deliberate to allow theatrical to cool. Regard Lance moore.NE17

Reply

Jimmy O'Byrne
September 28, 2026 at 6:13 pm

These so called NP's are more a haven for wildlife criminals then they are for most protected wildlife – an omnishambles that no government appears interested in addressing

Reply

Murmur
September 29, 2026 at 8:24 pm

The conservation aspect of national parks is frequently over-stated, as more often than not they are there for recreation purposes, with a veneer of conservation pasted on.

Peak District is the one I had most dealings with back in the day.

I mean, think how poorly protected SSSIs and the like are.

It's long been a thin fiction of conservation having legal bases, rather than serious conservation intent.

Reply

Murmur
September 29, 2026 at 8:19 pm

Well after the event? Check!

Vague about the location? Check!

Just like always happens about urban crime…

Reply

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