

Press release: Appeal after hen harrier disappears on north Yorkshire moorland

Mick, a young male, fledged in Northumberland last summer. He was fitted with a satellite tag in July by a hen harrier expert from Natural England. His tag stopped transmitting on 21 December 2016 in the Thwaite area of North Yorkshire. A search of the area has been carried out but no trace of the bird or equipment has been found.

Natural England reported Mick's disappearance to North Yorkshire Police and is working closely with wildlife crime officers, local landowners, the Moorland Association and the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority.

The loss of another juvenile hen harrier brings the total to five within four months across northern England – and is a serious blow to the small English hen harrier population. Interference with hen harriers is a criminal offence.

Rob Cooke, a Director at Natural England, said:

The disappearance of a hen harrier is deeply concerning to all who appreciate these rare and impressive birds. Any information that can shed light on what has happened to Mick will be gratefully received by North Yorkshire Police.

David Butterworth, Chief Executive at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority said:

It's incredibly disappointing that the Yorkshire Dales' reputation as a wonderful place to visit is being damaged by incidents like this. We have pledged to provide whatever support we can to help the Police and Natural England find out what happened in this particular case.

Anyone with any information which could help police with their enquiries should contact North Yorkshire Police on 101, or Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111. Please quote reference number 12170014975 when passing information.