

[News story: Wildlife criminal jailed for rare bird eggs importation attempt](#)

The smuggling attempt was uncovered by Border Force officers at Heathrow Airport on 26 June 2018 when officers stopped Jeffrey Lendrum after he arrived on a flight from Johannesburg.

Lendrum, 57 and of no fixed UK address, was wearing a heavy jacket which officers thought was unusual due to the very warm weather conditions. When asked whether he had anything to declare, Lendrum stated he had some Fish Eagle and Kestrel eggs strapped to his body. During a full search, he was found to be wearing a body belt concealing 19 bird eggs as well as 2 newly-hatched chicks.

Border Force specialist officers identified that the eggs were protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), the import trade for which is controlled by the issue of permits. Officers ensured that both the eggs and the live chicks were kept warm and quickly transported to the Heathrow Animal Reception Centre, managed by the City of London Corporation. The live chicks and the eggs were later moved to a specialist care facility at the International Centre for Birds of Prey.

Lendrum was arrested and the investigation passed to the National Crime Agency (NCA). Lendrum stated during an interview that his intention was to rescue the eggs after he encountered some men chopping down trees containing their nests. However in court, experts stated that a number of the eggs were from birds that nest in cliffs. Their values on the black market ranged from £2,000 to £8,000.

At Snaresbrook Crown Court on Tuesday (8 January) Lendrum, who has previous convictions for similar CITES offences in Canada, Brazil and Africa, pleaded guilty to attempting to import the 19 bird eggs.

Grant Miller, head of the national Border Force CITES team at Heathrow, said:

My officers are experts in their field and, in this case, their vigilance has stopped a prolific wildlife criminal in his tracks. Their intervention also ensured that the birds and eggs received the immediate care and attention that they needed.

Wildlife crime is a global issue and Border Force officers play a crucial role in preventing offenders from moving the products across borders, stripping them of their illegal profits.

We will continue to work closely with enforcement partners such as the NCA to tackle the international illegal wildlife trade which threatens the survival of endangered animals and plants.

Chris Hill, NCA investigations manager Heathrow, said:

This offence was clearly no accident as Lendrum had gone to great lengths to both source and then attempt to conceal the birds eggs. His claims that he was engaged in an effort to save them from deforestation did not hold water.

Wildlife crime is a cynical business, indulged in by those who have no qualms about the environmental damage they cause as long as there is a profit to be made. This case sends a clear message that we are determined to bring cases like this before the courts

The importation of endangered species into the UK is strictly controlled by CITES, which is an international agreement covering more than 35,000 species of animals and plants. The Heathrow-based Border Force CITES team are specialist officers who work across the UK and who are recognised as world leaders in their field.

Anyone with information about activity they suspect may be linked to smuggling and trafficking of any kind should call Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

[Speech: Audience of the Future launch](#)

I am delighted to be here at Unit 6, a showcase of the UK's world leading contemporary art. Contemporary art is at the cutting edge. Its practitioners are always innovating and engaging people in new ways. So it is fitting that we're here today to launch the 'Audience of the Future' demonstrators, which will be doing the same.

Imagine being inside the world of a Shakespeare play, or in a video game as professional players battle it out for millions of dollars, or immersed in a national museum, solving a detective narrative involving dinosaurs and robots with fellow virtual museum-goers.

These are only some of the experiences that will be afforded to everyone by immersive technology. The number of possibilities is only set to grow with the rate of technological change and our creative expertise.

It is estimated that by 2023 the global immersive technology market will be worth between \$95 billion and \$105 billion. In the UK, we have around 1,000 companies specialising in immersive, generating £660 million in sales. I have a feeling these predictions will turn out to be underestimates.

With our world-class creative businesses, researchers and technologists, and our expertise in arts, design, and computer science, Government has seen the opportunity for the UK to establish itself as the world's most innovative economy.

The Industrial Strategy includes a range of measures to improve our ability to turn new ideas into commercial products – including investing £725m in new Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund programmes.

The Creative Industries Sector Deal was announced in March 2018 and leverages £72 million of this funding to support creative innovation – with a further £50 million being committed by industry.

The Audience of the Future Demonstrators programme is a key part of this Deal, backed by £16 million of Government Industrial Strategy Challenge Funding and £6 million from industry.

The programme will bring together globally renowned intellectual property, storytellers and technology companies to explore and pioneer cutting-edge immersive experiences.

Today, I'm delighted announce the winning Demonstrators for three areas which UKRI have identified as having major opportunities to grow new audiences through immersive technology:

In Performance, the Demonstrator will be led by the Royal Shakespeare Company and involve 15 specialist immersive organisations from theatre, music, video production, gaming and research.

They will explore what it means to perform live, and use emerging technologies like virtual reality, augmented reality and mixed reality.

Using devices such as mobile phones, extended reality headsets and streams into live performance environments, or even in the home, audiences will experience live performance like never before.

In the field of Visitor Experience, the demonstrator will be a pioneering collaboration led by Factory 42 and involving the National History Museum and the Science Museum that will bring dinosaurs and robots to life by placing audiences in new worlds and giving them the ability to interact with them.

Two multi-sensory and interactive worlds will be created in the iconic rooms of the Natural History Museum and the Science Museum, combining mixed reality technology and immersive theatre.

Finally, the Sports Entertainment Demonstrator will focus on esports – which has the fastest growing global live sports audience. The consortium will include ESL, the largest esports content producer in the world, as well as leading academics and innovators across immersive technologies, data-driven content production and broadcast.

This demonstrator will produce a new platform called Weavr to leverage the data-rich environment of esports and transform how the hundreds of millions

of remote esports viewers can use virtual to reality to experience esports. Further down the line, Weavr could even change how we play physical sports.

So I would like to offer my congratulations to the winning Demonstrators. I have every confidence that you will build incredible experiences that will change the way we engage with art, theatre, sports and more.

One of the greatest privileges of the job I do is getting to experience the cutting edge. The experiences are truly transformative, and the more people we can bring them to, the faster we will build the market and the faster we will build more world-leading businesses.

I am thrilled that we here in the UK are able to lead the world on immersive experiences. I'm excited to see what you all do.

[News story: The Chancellor and the Office of Tax Simplification announce Bill Dodwell as new Tax Director](#)

The government has today (10 January 2019) announced the appointment of a new Tax Director of the Office of Tax Simplification (OTS).

Bill Dodwell will provide expert advice, guidance and direction and bring years of experience to the OTS and its Board as a Non-Executive Member. Bill succeeds Paul Morton, who has held the position since March 2017.

Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Mel Stride said:

We are committed to simplifying the tax system and the Office of Tax Simplification is vital in providing informed advice on how to achieve this. Bill Dodwell has the capability and expertise to ensure the OTS continues this valuable work.

I would like to thank Paul Morton for his exceptional work for the last two years. I am confident he leaves the OTS on a strong footing.

OTS Chair, Angela Knight said:

Bill has huge experience and knowledge and is already contributing to the work of the OTS as an advisor. I am delighted to welcome Bill as the new Tax Director.

Paul has made a huge contribution to the work of the OTS and provided an excellent platform for Bill to take forward.

Further information

The OTS was established in 2010 to provide advice to the Chancellor on simplifying the UK tax system and was made a permanent, independent office of HM Treasury in July 2015. It was put on a statutory footing in the Finance Act 2016.

Bill Dodwell joins the OTS with a wealth of experience:

- Bill was head of tax policy at Deloitte until May 2018, responsible for representations to HM Treasury, HMRC, the OECD and the EU
- he is a former president of the Chartered Institute of Taxation and has chaired their technical committee. He is also editor-in-chief of the CIOT's Tax Adviser magazine and a member of the Advisory Panel
- Bill has represented Deloitte and the CIOT at the Public Accounts Committee, the Treasury Select Committee and the House of Lords Economic Affairs Committee
- he has law degrees from King's College London and Queen's College Cambridge and is a chartered accountant and chartered tax adviser
- after retiring from Deloitte, Bill joined the OTS in July 2018 as a Senior Policy Adviser

Notes for editors

The OTS is the independent adviser to government on simplifying the UK tax system, to make it easier for the taxpayer. It does not implement changes – these are a matter for government and for parliament.

The OTS works to improve the experience of all who interact with the tax system. It aims to reduce the administrative burden – which is what people encounter in practice – as well as looking to simplify the rules. Simplification of the technical and administrative aspects of tax are important, both to taxpayers and to HMRC.

News story: Chief Inspector publishes report on the Home Office's safeguarding of vulnerable adults

How well the Home Office's Borders, Immigration and Citizenship System (BICS) recognises and responds to the needs of vulnerable individuals is a test not just of its competence but also of its capacity for compassion, both of which have been questioned in recent months.

Over the past couple of years, a number of my inspections have focused on vulnerable 'groups'. I have reported on the identification and treatment of Potential Victims of Modern Slavery (PVoMS) at the border, on the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPRS), on the workings of the asylum process including the provision of asylum accommodation, and on the Home Office's consideration of the 'best interests' of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. I have also looked at the Home Office's handling of family reunion applications.

This latest report explores both the overall BICS approach to vulnerability and what is happening on the ground when Border Force, UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI), and Immigration Enforcement (IE) encounter vulnerable adults. From this and the earlier inspections, I am in no doubt that the BICS Board, senior management, and the majority of staff are serious about improving the protection provided to vulnerable individuals. A good deal of effort is already targeted at particular, well-delineated 'cohorts', such as children and PVoMS, and other vulnerability-focused work is ongoing across BICS to improve training, raise awareness, and capture information.

However, much remains to be done to develop a consistent understanding of what is meant by 'vulnerability' in a BICS context, and the appropriate response, and progress is too slow.

This report was sent to the Home Secretary on 20 August 2018. Its four recommendations cover: creating a detailed Programme Plan for delivering an effective response to the vulnerability and safeguarding challenges facing BICS; reaching out to other agencies with greater knowledge and expertise in dealing with vulnerable individuals; spelling out to BICS staff their 'duty of care' when they encounter vulnerable adults; ensuring that how each of the BICS directorates assesses and manages risk in relation to vulnerable individuals is fully aligned with the departmental goal of "Protecting Vulnerable People and Communities".

I am pleased that the Home Office has accepted all four recommendations and look forward to checking on its progress in the course of inspections and re-inspections of BICS' handling of various forms of vulnerability planned for 2019-20.

[News story: Reappointment of Paula Sharp as a member of the Boundary Commission for Scotland](#)

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