



What is PAW NI?

The Partnership for Action Against Wildlife Crime NI (PAW NI) brings together statutory agencies, non-statutory agencies and interested parties with the common goal of combating wildlife crime through publicity, education and campaigning. PAW NI partners include key government departments, PSNI and other enforcement agencies, environmental organisations, animal welfare groups and country sports associations.



What to do if you suspect or see illegal activity?

If you are a landowner, ask the pilot to stop flying from your land but explain your concerns.



- Note any details eg. vehicle registrations.
- Use 'No Drone/UAVs' signage at popular spots.

Where there is evidence of illegal wildlife disturbance or the drone is a danger to the public:



Move away from the activity and find a safe place. Any information about wildlife crime should be passed immediately to the PSNI*. Call 101 or 999 in an emergency.

Describe your call as a potential Wildlife Crime and try and relay the following if known:

- Give details of the (potential) crime.
- Location and time.
- Description of the person(s) involved.
- Vehicle registrations, makes & colours.
- Ask for & retain an incident reference number.

*Information can also be given anonymously via Crimestoppers.

Northern Ireland
CrimeStoppers.
0800 555 111
 100% anonymous. Always.

www.wildlifecrimeni.org

**WATCH OUT FOR
 WILDLIFE
 CRIME**



Wildlife Disturbance and Your Drone



There are many positive uses of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones. Their functionality is increasing continuously, costs are decreasing making them more accessible. Whether a professional UAV pilot or a hobbyist you require registration with the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) in the UK to fly any device greater than 250g. This advice applies to pilots of model aircraft too.

To prepare for flying an UAV the pilot should undertake pre-flight checks, risk assess for public safety and think about the potential impacts on wildlife. Follow the CAA Drone Code: <https://dronesafe.uk/drone-code/>

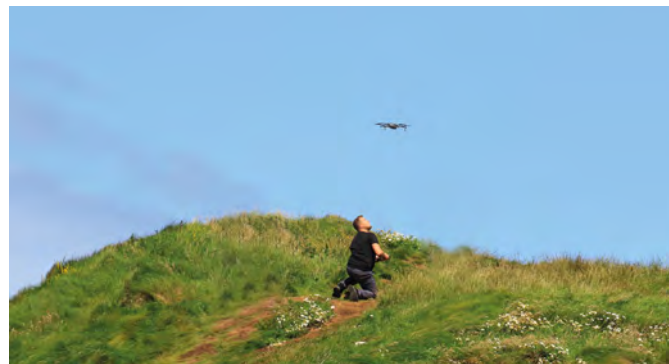
Let's take a common sense approach to this and think before you fly:

It may be illegal to launch, fly or land in a designated nature reserve (www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/protected-areas) especially an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI), Special Protection Areas (SPA) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC). ~95% of NI's coastline is designated*. You should have landowner permission regardless where you are.

It is fair to say that not all species or even individuals react negatively to UAVs.

All wildlife can elect an alarm response when scared. With drones/UAVs, you may see behavioural responses such as running or flying away, or more subtle alterations eg. Reduction in feeding rates increased vigilance. They may exhibit more discrete physiological changes such as an increased heart rate even suffer stress that could disrupt their reproductive

success. They may abandon young, or decide to avoid specific areas as a result of frequent drone encounters. This could fragment and ultimately damage the local population. Equally some birds may fly too close to the drone when investigating it, collide with it become injured and damage your equipment.



Is it Spring or Summer? - birds will be on nests or have young chicks to care for.

Colony nesting birds' defensive strategy is to leave the nest, mob the attacker en masse, leaving eggs/chicks exposed to weather, predators, and wasting their energy.

In the panic the birds can collide with each other, objects or knock egg/chicks from nests.

Even solitary nesters will try to drive off danger.

In winter, days are short and cold, animals struggle to gather enough food for energy - disturbance disrupts this causing them to stop feeding or flee; wasting energy.

Herd animals, even domestic livestock can panic and stampede when startled. This can be dangerous for them and people around them.

Resting or mothering seals and pups are vulnerable to disturbance and panic - leading to abandonment of young, drowning or crushing of smaller animals.

The Law

The Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 (as amended) protects all wild birds and listed animals, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird or protected animal.
- take, damage, destroy or disturb a nest whilst it is being built or is in use.
- obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest.
- disturb any wild bird whilst it is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young.
- damage or destroy, or obstruct access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection.
- disturb any such animal while it is occupying such a structure or place.

If convicted of an offence, fines of up to £5000 & or 6 month imprisonment per offence can be applied. *Lands designated under the Environment (NI) Order 2002 as amended or The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations (NI) 1995 as amended.



Preflight Checklist:

Know the Drone Code:

- Check with landowner - get permission.
- Ask about Environmental designations & sensitive wildlife and livestock.
- "Think Wildlife" - Am I likely to cause a disturbance?

During the flight

- Where you notice a disturbance; retreat and stop flying in that area.
- Report collisions or incidents to the NIEA Wildlife Officer - Tel: 028 9056 9551 or Email: elmswildlife@daera-ni.gov.uk

Licensing

Under some circumstances it may be possible to obtain a licence from the DAERA and with the landowners permission, to undertake drone flights within sensitive areas. Enquires should be made by email: CDP@daera-ni.gov.uk

