



Convictions in Mayo and Wexford for illegal hare hunting

October 11th, 2019

An Garda Síochána and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) have secured successful convictions relating to illegal hare lurching in counties Wexford and Mayo.

On 30 September, an individual was convicted in Wexford District Court of hunting the protected animal without a licence in November 2017.

Members of An Garda Síochána and the NPWS gave evidence of witnessing hares being hunted with lurcher dogs at the North Slob hare reserve. The defendant claimed to be hunting foxes on that date.

John Griffin, Conservation Ranger with the NPWS, provided expert evidence into the differing hunting methods used for hares and foxes along with the habits and habitats of both species.

The Wexford North Slob is an important reserve for hares where hunting of the protected species is not legal under any circumstances. Judge Brian O'Shea convicted the individual and fined him €500.

On 11 September, five individuals appeared before Belmullet District Court for illegally hunting of hares with dogs and also for possession of a dead hare in the Mullet Peninsula in Co Mayo on 9 January 2018.

The five defendants all plead guilty to possession of the dead hare and were ordered to pay €600 to the Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

According to data released to *The Green News* under Access to Information on the Environment regulations, the NPWS brought 19 cases linked to illegal hare hunting between 2010 and 2018. The highest fine ordered was for €1,000, with the majority of fines issued below €300.

The Irish hare is legally protected since 1930 in Ireland and is listed as an internationally important species in the Irish Red Data Book. However, it is also classified as a game species and can be hunted or captured for coursing under licence at certain times of the year and provided strict conditions are met.



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Yesterday, the [EU's top court upheld](#) strict species protection rules in a case brought to try and stop the capture and killing of the threatened wolf population in Finland.

The ECJ ruling reaffirmed that member states cannot grant derogations (such as for hunting) from the prohibition of the intentional killing of protected species unless a very strict set of conditions are met.

The European Environmental Bureau (EEB) – the bloc's largest network of environmental groups – welcomes the judgement. The EEB's Sergiy Moroz said: "The court has today reconfirmed that hunting should only be allowed under very strict conditions.

"With the nature crisis we are facing around the world, the importance of upholding the EU's strict nature protection rules has never been greater."

About the Author



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