

## Five people fined for illegally hunting a hare in Co Mayo

Each defendant was ordered to pay €600 to the Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

Oct 3rd 2019, 6:17 PM 27



Hare in a field.  
Image: Shutterstock/Mriya Wildlife

FIVE PEOPLE HAVE been ordered to pay a fine of €600 each for the possession of a dead hare, according to the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

The defendants all pleaded guilty to possessing the dead animal after a van was stopped containing one dead hare and a number of lurcher dogs.

The Irish hare is a protected animal under the Wildlife Acts.

The case was concluded on 11 September at Belmullet District Court in Co Mayo. Five individuals were summoned for illegally hunting hares with dogs and also being in possession of a dead hare in the Mullet Peninsula in Co Mayo on 9 January 2018.

Judge Lydon ordered each of the defendants to pay €600 to the Irish Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to be paid within five months.

Failure to pay the fine within this timeframe would incur a fine of €750.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) works with gardaí to tackle the illegal hunting of hares. This is an issue of concern for the department who said it can lead to the decline of hare populations.

It was [confirmed](#) last month that a contagious virus that kills rabbits and hares within days of infection has been found in six counties in Ireland.

After the first hare was found with Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease Virus 2 on 9 August, the catching of hares in nets, transportation in boxes and the collecting/holding of the animal in confined areas was suspended until the disease is more clearly understood.

### About the author:



Orla Dwyer  
[@orladwyer](#)  
[orladwyer@thejournal.ie](mailto:orladwyer@thejournal.ie)  
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