



## Man prosecuted in Limerick for possession of 26 animal traps



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A man was prosecuted for the possession and offering for sale of 26 leghold traps at Newcastle West court, Co Limerick earlier this week.

The prosecution case was brought by the National Parks and Wildlife Service as the traps, nine of had serrated edges, are prohibited under the Wildlife Act.

The jawed spring-operated traps found for sale at a poultry market at Portlaoise Equestrian Centre on 15 October 2017 are designed to capture an animal by the foot or leg.

The elderly defendant entered a guilty plea, although the defendant's counsel pleaded to Judge Mary Larkin that his client is given the benefit of the Probation Act.

The defendant's counsel said that he was trying to catch mink and foxes that could potentially eat chickens he was keeping for his grandchildren.

Kieran Buckley, a conservation ranger with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS), told the court that such traps impact animal welfare and can potentially trap birds of prey.

The judge convicted the defendant on both counts of possession and offering for sale and fined him €600.

According to Emma Higgs of Wildlife Rehabilitation Ireland, there is “no excuse for the use of these barbaric traps”.

“This is sadly only the tip of the iceberg in terms of wildlife crime activities in Ireland,” she said.



Traps seized by NPWS Photo: NPWS

### **Sophisticated criminals**

Wildlife crime in Ireland is quite varied, and also includes the likes of deer poaching, off-licence hare coursing, and badger baiting.

Such activities include regular trespassing on lands throughout the county, leading to damage to livestock and, on occasion, assaults or harassment of landowners.

Last month, [\*The Times reported\*](#) that two men were convicted at Portlaoise district court following a two-month NPWS investigation.

The men were found in possession of 22 wild goldfinches, tubes of banned rat glue and other devices for trapping birds.

Mr Buckley, who also led this investigation, told *The Times* that the birds may have been lined up for sale in markets in Belgium or France.

“The trappers know what they are doing is illegal and it is somewhat sophisticated in terms of selling them,” Mr Buckley told *The Times*.

“When you catch someone with 22 goldfinches, it is not lovable Mr Greengrass in Heartbeat chancing his arm.”

The Garda Síochána [launched a new training course in September](#) for officers to tackle gangs involved in wildlife crime across the country. A Garda inspector in each division will now work with their opposite number in NPWS district offices.

#### About the Author



#### **Niall Sargent**

Niall is the Editor of The Green News. He is a multimedia journalist, with an MA in Investigative Journalism from City University, London