

# Predatory Bird Monitoring Scheme in a Page

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## Scheme Summary

- Chemical surveillance and monitoring in sentinel species.
- Long term (since 1960s) & national scale.
- Funded by CEH, Defra, NE, CRRU, RSPB, SNH & SEPA.
- We measure trends due to changes in use or larger-scale phenomena (e.g. land use change).
- We aim to identify hazards, assess risk, quantify environmental drivers, inform policy, evaluate mitigation, and assess risks to high priority species.
- The data we generate helps meet the evidence requirements needed by various regulators and policymakers.
- The scheme maintains a tissue and egg archive (worth approx. £4.5m) used for monitoring and research.

## How you can help

- We need members of the public to submit dead birds of prey that they find, no matter the cause of death.
- Every bird received is examined and a report is sent to the contributor along with an electronic copy of our annual reports.
- If you find a dead bird of prey, contact **Lee Walker on 01524 595830** or visit our website at <http://pbms.ceh.ac.uk> or just **google PBMS** to find us.
- Licensed egg collectors are allowed to submit addled and deserted eggs to the scheme. However it is illegal for an unlicensed individual to visit the nests of most species of predatory bird.

## Factoids

1. The PBMS receives between 300 and 400 birds per year.
2. The majority of birds that the PBMS receives have died due to accidents (being run-over or flying into windows, overhead wires etc.) or starvation/disease.
3. We analyse contaminants in species that are sentinels of terrestrial, marine and freshwater ecosystems.
4. PBMS samples are also used to monitor wildlife diseases that can pass to humans, such as West Nile Virus.

## Chemicals currently monitored

**Brominated flame retardants (BFRs):** BFRs have been widely used as flame retardants in furniture foams and plastics. Concerns over rising environmental concentrations and toxicity have led to phasing out or bans of some BFRs in North America and Europe since 2004. PBMS monitoring of these compounds helps determine whether these restrictions are effective in reducing contamination of the environment.

**Second Generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs):** SGARs are widely used to control pest rodents and provide economic and health benefits, but they can be toxic to all mammals and birds. In response to conservation concerns over the potential impacts of SGARs on predators, the PBMS has monitored trends in exposure to SGARs in a sentinel species, the barn owl since 1983.

**Lead (Pb):** The PBMS measures the exposure and risk to wildlife to lead from lead shot and ammunition, thereby informing the work of Defra's Lead Ammunition Group (LAG).

**Mercury (Hg):** Global transport and deposition of Hg is set to rise due to increased coal burning in developing countries. The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recently initiated the Minamata Convention on Mercury, a treaty to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of Hg. An overarching aim is to control man-made releases of Hg to the environment. The PBMS, through monitoring Hg accumulation in sentinel wildlife, is a key means by which the impact of the Minamata Convention in Britain can be assessed.