

The countryside, enjoyed by so many people and their pets, is also home to wildlife and farmed livestock.

Some animals, large or small, can cause problems for countryside businesses and the environment. Where pests need to be controlled, a wide range of methods including pesticides, trapping and shooting may be used.



Pesticides help farmers, landowners and gamekeepers manage the challenges of pests (including insects, rats and mice), weeds and diseases. However, these products must be used responsibly.

Spilt slug pellets in fields, or gardens, pose a risk to pets, especially dogs.

Slug pellets protect crops but must be spread thinly and evenly and never left in piles.



The **UK Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS)** monitors suspected poisoning incidents involving wildlife, pets, livestock and honeybees whether pesticides have been used correctly or not. In England, around 250 potential incidents are reported each year and about half warrant detailed enquiry. A third of the cases involve accidental or illegal pesticide use, such as careless slug pellet application or poisoning of pets and predators. Sometimes, birds of prey are harmed by eating poisoned rodents.

Such poisonings can be avoided, by storing, handling and using pesticides correctly.

Pesticides play an important part in the countryside by:

- protecting growing crops from weeds, pests and diseases;
- preventing spoilage of stored produce;
- controlling rodents to stop spread of livestock disease.



Countryside users can help by being alert to suspicious incidents and reporting apparent misuse of pesticides

### What to look for in the countryside

- Dead animals staked out which may be laced with poison
- Several dead birds or other animals found close together
- Animals that have died without obvious reason or lying beside something they may have eaten
- Pet dogs becoming ill after a walk in the countryside
- Spilled slug pellets or uncovered rodenticides.



**Do not touch any suspect poison**

### If you suspect animals have been poisoned with pesticides or are at risk:

- Do not touch suspect bait or dead animals - warn others to keep away
- Cover the evidence if possible, but don't disturb it
- Note the location and phone the **WIIS Hotline - 0800 321600**
- Always seek immediate veterinary advice if you suspect a pet or any other animal has been in contact with poison
- If your vet suspects pesticide poisoning make sure they report the incident together with your details to the WIIS Hotline

### Never put yourself or others at risk

#### How WIIS works

Anyone finding a wild or domestic animal that they suspect has been poisoned or finding anything that may have been used as poison bait, should contact the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS) which focuses on use, misuse and abuse of pesticides.

Outside office hours, you may have to leave a message. Be sure to give your daytime contact details.

An initial telephone interview by a Natural England Wildlife Officer will record information about the incident to establish if illegal or accidental poisoning is likely; or if an animal could have died from causes beyond WIIS remit, e.g. road kill. Where appropriate, carcass post mortems and tissue analysis for pesticides will be undertaken.

Any further action, including prosecution, depends on the findings of the investigation.

Further details on WIIS are available at:

[www.pesticides.gov.uk/environment.asp?id=58](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk/environment.asp?id=58)

# WIIS Hotline 0800 321600

*Why not store WIIS hotline number on your mobile phone?*



Larsen traps use decoy birds to legally trap crows, magpies and other corvids.



Tunnel traps are used for small pests, such as rats and grey squirrels.



Snares used legally must be checked daily.

### Respect legal traps

Most traps in the countryside are legal, selective and safe. Please respect these traps and those who use them.

- If you suspect a trap is illegal:
  - DO NOT touch it;
  - DO contact the police.

**caip**, funded by Defra through the Chemicals Regulation Directorate (CRD) of HSE, aims to reduce the frequency of poisoning incidents by:

- **prevention** of pesticide poisoning - accidental or illegal - of wildlife, pets and livestock;
- **education** to ensure legal control measures, especially those involving pesticides, are understood, observed, and respected;
- **detection** of any poisoning of wildlife, pets and livestock involving pesticides.

More detailed information is available from the caip website. – [www.caip-uk.info](http://www.caip-uk.info)

### Useful contacts

- [www.caip-uk.info](http://www.caip-uk.info)
- [www.pesticides.gov.uk](http://www.pesticides.gov.uk)
- [www.defra.gov.uk/paw](http://www.defra.gov.uk/paw)
- [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)



**WIIS Hotline**  
**0800 321600**



## Protecting pets and wildlife from pesticide poisoning

A countryside users guide

