

What is Nighthawking?

Nighthawking is the common name used to describe the illegal activity of metal detecting on land or protected historic sites *WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE LANDOWNER.*

Despite the name Nighthawking can occur both during the day or night.

Sadly we are seeing this activity take place on farmland, historic sites and scheduled monuments within Gwent.

It is not to be confused with the lawful activity of responsible metal detectorists who do so only on land where they are permitted to be by the landowner or custodian.

The Law

Removal of any object from land without the landowner's permission may amount to an offence of theft.

Travelling to a potential site where there are no permissions in place, with metal detecting equipment, intending to locate and take items from that land, may amount to an offence of going equipped to steal.

Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979:

It is an offence to damage a protected archaeological site or Scheduled Monument, or even to use metal detecting equipment on a Scheduled Monument without the correct licence and authority in place.



What should you do if you find Nighthawkers on land?

Whether day or night, if you find suspected Nighthawkers on land call the Police. This could be a crime in progress.

If the land appears to be a protected site such as a castle, churchyard or historic remains they are highly likely to be Nighthawking!

Do not approach them as this could scare them off or lead to confrontation or aggression towards you.

If possible gather information such as registration numbers of vehicles and descriptions of those involved and pass these details to the Police.

Often evidence of recent Nighthawking is only discovered during day light hours after the event has occurred.

This is most likely to be in the form of holes dug in fields with no obvious explanation. There may be other subtle signs such as footwear marks, vehicle tracks, discarded items etc.

If you suspect that Nighthawking has occurred on your land you should contact the Police by either:



This will enable us to ascertain the scale of the problem and identify areas where this activity is occurring.

The Rural Crime Team can give advice on this criminality and can be contacted by e-mailing ruralcrimeteam@gwent.pnn.police.uk



BE NIGHTHAWKING AWARE



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