



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.defra.gov.uk

Our ref: RFI 5623
Date: 25th July 2013

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: BADGER CONTROL PROJECT

Thank you for your email of 5 July, in which you asked a number of questions relating to night-time humaneness monitoring of this summer's pilot badger culls. We have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

Following careful consideration, we have decided not to disclose some of this information.

The following information is however released following your questions, which we reproduce here.

- 1. What qualifications or experience have been specified as being required to be appointed to undertake on-site night-time humaneness monitoring of the pilot badger culls?**

To date, how many specific individuals have been appointed to undertake on-site night-time humaneness monitoring and/ or allocated that role as part of their employment?

The core consists of six permanent staff who have existing experience of the use of firearms, undertaking behavioural observations of wild animals, and experience of working at night. Four staff on fixed-term contracts previously worked on the Randomised Badger Culling Trial (RBCT) and were originally employed in 2012, as were three staff without RBCT experience. This gives a core of 13 staff. Further identifying information about these staff-members is withheld as it falls under Regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to international relations, defence, national security and public safety, as detailed below.

Seven further staff have the experience considered necessary to undertake field observations. While we are withholding their precise experience for security reasons, we can confirm that they have experience of undertaking fieldwork at night, varied experience with firearms, and have gained our confidence in work to date. They also have experience of the trial areas, local contacts, and sensitivities, all of which are important for undertaking the work (something also emphasised by the NFU).



Three staff have been identified to collate and assess data collected from observations; these are the most experienced staff in undertaking welfare assessments. A further four permanent staff members are available as a contingency to provide short-term management support in the field if requested, a role they prepared for last year. Further identifying information about these staff-members is withheld as it falls under Regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to International relations, defence, national security and public safety, as detailed below.

2. What are the recruitment procedures for appointing these monitors?

Wherever possible current staff are being used to run this project.

3. How many of these individuals are:

- **Employees of Natural England**
- **Employees of DEFRA**
- **Employees of other public sector bodies**
- **Employees of the companies holding the cull licences**
- **Employees of other private sector organisations**

We are withholding this identifying information for as it falls under Regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to International relations, defence, national security and public safety, as detailed below.

4. What is the total number (unique individuals) it is expected will be deployed for on-site night-time humaneness monitoring?

We currently have a maximum of 30 staff who may be involved in the field part of the humaneness work, or who will provide management support in the field. Further identifying information about these staff-members is withheld as it falls under Regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to International relations, defence, national security and public safety, as detailed below.

5. What training have these individuals received or will receive?

All staff have undergone, or will undergo, extensive training on the monitoring protocols, and on the observations and measurements to be made.

6. How will their competence be assessed?

Following a search of our paper and electronic records, we have established that the information that you have requested is not held by Defra.

However, under our duty to advise and assist applicants in pursuance of regulation 9, we can confirm that the information is held by Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera), which can be contacted at ccu@fera.gsi.gov.uk. Alternatively, we can transfer your request to AHVLA, but before doing so we need your permission to notify it of your name and contact details. If you agree to this, please either sign and return to us the declaration at the foot of this letter or email us at the address below, quoting the reference number and date of this letter and stating that you

authorise the transfer of your information request.

7. What now is the best estimate of the number of unique night-time humaneness monitoring visits that will occur across the two cull zones?

At least 60 shooting events will be observed both for rifles and for shotguns. Observations will be spread over the whole of the culling period: from week one to week six.

The remainder of the information requested is being withheld as it falls under Regulation 12(5)(a) of the EIRs, which relates to International relations, defence, national security & public safety.

In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. We recognise that there is a public interest in disclosure of information concerning badger control, as there is an interest in transparency and accountability in controversial policy areas.

On the other hand, there is a strong public interest in withholding this personal information because previous experience of some of those involved has been intimidation by animal rights activists, and some threats made to individuals and their families.

As you are aware, badger control is a sensitive and controversial subject. Therefore, to protect the personal security of those involved in this work, the Department routinely redacts all names and other details. We have taken this approach in the information released in response to this request. Therefore, we have concluded that, in all the circumstances of the case, the information should be withheld.

In keeping with the spirit and effect of the EIRs, and in keeping with the government's Transparency Agenda, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. Therefore, the information released to you will now be published on www.gov.uk together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. Please note that this will not include your personal data.

We attach Annex A, which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you.

We also attach Annex B giving contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

Yours sincerely,

Defra TB Programme

Email: ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk



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I, [REDACTED] hereby authorise Defra to transfer my information request to the Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera).

Signature:

Date:

Name in BLOCK CAPITALS:

Annex A

Copyright

The information supplied to you continues to be protected by copyright. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for private study and non-commercial research, and for any other purpose authorised by an exception in current copyright law. Documents (except photographs or logos) can be also used in the UK without requiring permission for the purposes of news reporting. Any other re-use, for example commercial publication, would require the permission of the copyright holder.

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Annex B

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the service you have received in relation to your request you may make a complaint or appeal against our decision within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 1B, Ergon House, Horseferry Road, London, SW1P 2AL (email: requestforinfo@defra.gsi.gov.uk) and he will arrange for an internal review of your case. Details of Defra's complaints procedure are on our [website](#).

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Please note that generally the Information Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have first exhausted Defra's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF