



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

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

Our ref: RFI 5577
Date: 22nd July 2013

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: BOVINE TB HOTSPOTS AND POPULATION SIZES OF BADGERS AND FOXES

Thank you for your request for information about the estimated up-to-date population size of badgers and foxes in the UK, and the locations of main bTB hotspots in the UK, which we received on 23rd June 2013. As you know, we have handled your request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).

The EIRs apply to requests for environmental information, which is a broad category of information defined in regulation 2 of the EIRs. Public authorities are required to handle requests for environmental information under the EIRs. They give similar access rights to the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

As the questions raised are devolved issues, information relating to Wales and Scotland will need to be requested from the relevant Government.

The badger population of England is estimated to be in the region of 190,000, based on national surveys of badger populations carried out in the 1980s and 1990s. The Food and Environment Research Agency (Fera) estimate that there are likely to be between 100,000-150,000 in the TB endemic areas in England, which includes South West of England. Defra is currently funding a badger survey of England and Wales (Defra Project SE3129). This is complemented by a Defra-funded project to generate estimates of typical badger social group size in different landscapes (Defra Project SE3132). These projects are scheduled for completion in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

A report on a badger population survey carried out by the Peoples Trust for Endangered Species carried out between 1994 and 1997 can be found at:

http://www.ptes.org/files/2067_changes_in_the_british_badger_population_1988_to1997_fullsearchable.pdf

Defra Project SE3129 can be found at:

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=18014&FromSearch=Y&Publisher=1&SearchText=3129&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description>



Defra project SE3132 can be found at:

<http://randd.defra.gov.uk/Default.aspx?Menu=Menu&Module=More&Location=None&ProjectID=18396&FromSearch=Y&Publisher=1&SearchText=3132&SortString=ProjectCode&SortOrder=Asc&Paging=10#Description>.

Defra has not made an estimate of the population of foxes. Fox population figure estimates for British mammals, published by the Mammal Society in 2004, indicate that the pre breeding adult fox population in Great Britain was around 258,000, 33,000 of which live in urban areas. Fox populations fluctuate from year to year. Estimates indicate it was stable or slightly increasing between 1995 and 2004. Urban Foxes rarely move to rural areas. Mortality rates vary for both adults and juveniles, 50-60%. More info can be found in the 'Mammals of the British Isles: hand book 4th edition', published by the Mammal Society.

Bovine TB is endemic in large areas of the West of England, South West of England and a pocket in East Sussex. Most of the North and East of England have a very low and sporadic incidence of bTB breakdowns. A map showing the uneven geographic distribution of bTB in England can be found on page 14 of the draft strategy for achieving 'Officially Bovine Tuberculosis-Free' status for England, which is currently out for consultation. The document can be found at: <https://consult.defra.gov.uk/farming/tb/>.

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

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

If you have any queries about this letter, please get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Defra TB Programme
Ccu.correspondence@defra.gsi.gov.uk

Annex A Copyright

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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 under section 17(7) of the FOIA or under regulation 18 of the EIRs, as applicable, within 40 working days of the date of this letter. Please write to Mike Kaye, Head of Information Standards, Area 4D, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR (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, section 50 of the FOIA and regulation 18 of the EIRs gives you 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



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