



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

T: 03459 33 55 77 or
08459 33 55 77
helpline@defra.gsi.gov.uk
www.gov.uk/defra

Your ref:
Our ref: RFI 6871
Date: 12 September 2014

Dear [REDACTED]

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION: MONK PARAKEETS

Thank you for your request for information about monk parakeets, which we received on 17 August. 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).

Monk parakeets are an agricultural pest in their native range. They can carry diseases and they have the potential to cause biodiversity impacts through competition for resources. They nest communally, often on man-made structures such as electrical utility structures (e.g. pylons and substations) where they can cause power outages. In the USA, where they have also been introduced, the cost of nest removal alone to reduce the risk of power outages was estimated to be \$1.3m to \$4.7m over a 5 year period.

The decision to remove monk parakeets from the wild in England was taken after considering all the evidence on the threat they pose to economic interests and taking a precautionary approach to any potential threat to biodiversity. The evidence base for the decision included advice from key agencies and principally, a peer-reviewed Risk Assessment for the species. The Risk Assessment, available from <http://www.nonnativespecies.org>, made clear that this species is capable of causing severe local damage to crops and of causing damage to artificial structures as a result of colonial nest building.



INVESTORS
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In England, even at their current small population size, they are causing a hazard to householders due to the droppings below their colonial nests and they have already built nests on a mobile phone mast. The current and potential problems are likely to become increasingly significant if the population is left to grow.

Since 2009/10, the Government has spent £259k on the monk parakeet eradication programme. Details of actions undertaken are contained in the table below.

Year	Birds	Eggs	Nests
2011	41	36	19
2012	6	81	0
2013	11	52	1
2014	4	43	1
Total	62	212	21

All of the birds in the table above were removed using cage trapping, whoosh netting and capture by net/hand at the nest.

The removal of feral monk parakeets on the Isle of Dogs is ongoing using egg control to prevent eggs hatching, the capture of mature birds and the removal of some nests. 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.

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 contact the address below.

Yours sincerely,


Defra FOIA and EIRs Team
InformationRequests@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