Background Quality Report
Military Aid to Civil Authorities 2017

1. Introduction

Overview

The Military Aid to Civil Authorities (MACA) bulletin provides information on the number of vessels boarded by the Royal Navy Fishery Protection Squadron within British fishery limits, and the convictions and Financial Administration Penalties (FAPs) arising from these boardings.

Due to a change in the format of the UK Defence Statistics (UKDS) Compendium publication in 2013, this bulletin is the successor to Chapter 7.

Defence Statistics (formerly known as DASA) has published statistics on Military Aid to Civil Authorities since 1992.

Methodology and Production

Data are provided annually by the Marine Management Organisation (MMO).

The data supplier completes a standard template for Table 1 and Table 2 using data derived from the UK Fisheries Monitoring, Control and Surveillance System (MCSS). This database is manually updated by MMO Marine Officers and Royal Navy Marine Enforcement Officers.

Table 1 and Table 2 each provide a time series of statistics from 1999/2000 to 2016/17. The 2016/17 figures for convictions and Financial Administration Penalties are provisional, and planned for revision in the next addition of the MACA bulletin.

Both tables have been checked for any obvious anomalies, but Defence Statistics cannot make an authoritative independent assessment of the data or their quality. Table 1 and Table 2 are not National Statistics, which is explicitly marked in the bulletin.

Definitions and explanations of the terminology used are provided in the glossary.

Contact details

The Head of Defence Statistics (Web Development & Surveys branch) is responsible for the MACA bulletin.

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Defence Statistics welcome feedback on this background quality report or any of the statistics mentioned. Statistical outputs produced by Defence Statistics can now be found on the Statistics at MOD page[1] of GOV.UK.

2. Relevance

The main users of the MACA bulletin will be those interested in Ministry of Defence (MOD) activities, in particular MOD support for fishery protection. This is most likely to include UK Fisheries Administrations, politicians, the media and members of the general public who are situated in areas with a fishing industry.

While internal systems may be sufficient for internal use, the publication of these statistics in a bulletin format makes this information available publicly, regularly and as a time series. The tables include information to set the data in context, so can be understood by a lay audience as well as those with professional interests.

3. Accuracy

The statistics are drawn from MMO administrative data systems and provided to Defence Statistics.

Both the MMO and the Royal Navy have undertaken quality assurance checks on the data in this bulletin. They have also been subjected to a "sense check" by Government statisticians.

4. Timeliness and Punctuality

As an Official Statistic, the release date for the MACA bulletin was pre-announced on the MOD's Calendar of Upcoming Releases[2] on GOV.UK in accordance with the guidance set out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Following guidance from an assessment carried out by the UK Statistics Authority (UKSA) on UKDS, the different chapters of UKDS have been separated and released as individual statistical bulletins. This is to allow information on various topics to be published as soon as the data is available, rather than waiting for all the other chapters to be completed, as was the case with previous editions of UKDS. A key benefit of this change is that timeliness of the statistics is improved, reducing the amount of time between the reference date of the statistics and the time of release.

5. Accessibility and Clarity

The MACA bulletin is published on the Military Aid to Civil Authorities page[3] on GOV.UK where it is available as a PDF file. The data underpinning the tables are also available in an Excel file to enable the figures to be reused.

A brief introduction to the bulletin is provided on the front page, which states that this publication updates figures released in the 2016 bulletin. A high-level summary of key points is included, as well as the contact details of the responsible statistician.

The key findings section includes graphical representation of the statistics, provides further detail about the trends in the data and draws attention to contextual information that has affected these trends. The background information section assists with the accessibility and clarity of this bulletin by setting out the context of the statistics and giving information on methods and data quality.

Within the tables there are further detailed notes and footnotes to clarify definitions, advise users of caveats in the data and explain changes from previous years.

6. Coherence and Comparability

The tables in this bulletin cover the years 1999/2000 to 2016/17 (1 April to 31 March), providing an 18-year time series. The reasons for the break in series for boardings in 2013/14 and convictions in 2008/09 are clearly explained in the bulletin.

The statistics in Table 1 and Table 2 cover boardings and convictions respectively, made by the RN Fishery Protection Squadron operating under a service level agreement to MMO, who undertake a range of delivery functions of the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). Boardings carried out by the Scottish Executive Environment Directive and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development for Northern Ireland are not included. Therefore, this is a partial picture of both boardings and convictions. It also excludes the sea areas of the Faroes, Rockall and West of Scotland.

7. Trade-offs between Output Quality Components

None identified.

8. Assessment of User Needs and Perceptions

Defence Statistics has previously held regular consultation meetings with users of Defence Official Statistics, which provided a forum for user feedback on their needs and perceptions. Proposed changes were set out at the consultation meetings in order to gain feedback from both internal and external users.

Defence Statistics invites users to provide feedback to the statistical output teams on any of their publications or reports using the contact information on the front of the statistical bulletin.

9. Performance, Cost and Respondent Burden

The outputs are produced from the administrative data provided by the MMO. The benefit of Defence Statistics publishing these statistics is that these administrative data are placed in the public domain. Although they are not National Statistics, they are produced using the same methods that ensure their adherence to quality standards and independence from political interference. The small burden that this places on the data suppliers is considered to be worthwhile to achieve this and the consequent public accountability provided by their publication.

10. Confidentiality, Transparency and Security
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The MACA bulletin does not contain any identifiable personal data.

All MOD, Civil Service and data protection regulations are adhered to. All data is stored, accessed and analysed using the MOD's restricted network and IT systems.

We adhere to the principles and protocols laid out in the Code of Practice for Official Statistics[4] and comply with pre-release access arrangements. The Defence Statistics Pre-Release Access lists[5] are available on gov.uk. This bulletin is subject to the pre-release access arrangements.

11. References

	Reference	Website Location
1	Statistics at MOD Homepage	https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence/about/statistics
2	MOD's Timetable of Future Releases of National and Official Statistics	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mod-timetable-for-future-releases-of-national-and-official-statistics
3	Bulletin 5.01 Homepage on gov.uk	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/military-aid-to-civil-authorities-statistics-index
4	Code of Practice for Official Statistics	http://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/assessment/code-of-practice/code-of-practice-for-official-statistics.pdf
5	Defence Statistics Pre-Release Access lists	https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/defence-statistics-pre-release-access-list

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