



**Ministry
of Defence**

Secretariat
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28 January 2019

Ref. FOI 2018/16229

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your email of 26 December 2018 requesting the following information:

"It has been brought to my attention the DIO has granted licence to Hunting packs in Wiltshire, namely, The Royal Artillery Hunt (Foxhounds) and the Wiltshire & Infantry Beagles. The licence permits these two pack of hounds to hunt, apparently, undeterred by the confines of the Hunting Act 2004 across DIO land.

The packs hunt in direct contravention of the Hunting Act 2004. They do not lay trails and kill indiscriminately. Exempting Hunting should is also not applicable thus should not be applied to Hunting Packs on the Salisbury Plains, because, no wild mammal can be considered a pest on land which is principally used to train our Armed Forces, and b) the plains around Wiltshire are becoming sanctuaries for many wildlife species due to urbanisation of the surrounding countryside immediate to DIO land. I would like to know please:

- 1. What actions have the DIO put in train to ensure the hunts do not stray onto SSSI sites within DIO land, and and if so, the frequency and description of this monitoring and how it is conducted.*
- 2. Whether reports are compiled and submitted for review as a result of contraventions to the Hunting Act 2004, Chapter*
- 3. If there is any income generation as a result of permitting Hunting on DIO land*
- 4. If there is any income generation from permitting Hunt Kennels to keep their hounds on DIO property."*

I am treating your correspondence as a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA).

A search for the information has now been completed within the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and I can confirm that some information in scope of your request is held.

The information you have requested can be found below:

1. Two beagle packs and two fox hound packs are licensed by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to hunt across some areas of the Defence Estate in Wiltshire. This

includes across some Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), but excludes Scratchbury & Cotley Hills, Great Cheverall Hill, Bratton Downs and Upton Cow Downs. Ad hoc monitoring for breaches of licence conditions, including straying into areas not included within the licence is carried out by the department. The monitoring involves prolonged periods of observation to check there are no breaches of licence.

2. No information in scope of this item is held.
3. The hunts are required to pay a fee for their licence to hunt to cover costs to the MOD, this is a fee set nationally.
4. The Royal Artillery Hunt Kennels are located on MOD property. All associated costs and building maintenance is covered by the hunt.

Under Section 16 of the Act (Advice and Assistance) you may find it helpful to note that all licences granted by the DIO are in line with the Hunting Act 2004 and are legally compliant. Licensed hunts are required to report any incidents or mammal kills which occur and any suspected contraventions of the Hunting Act 2004 would be reported to and dealt with by civilian police.

If you have any queries regarding the content of this letter, please contact this office in the first instance.

If you wish to complain about the handling of your request, or the content of this response, you can request an independent internal review by contacting the Information Rights Compliance team, Ground Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.gov.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review should be made in writing within 40 working days of the date of this response.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may raise your complaint directly to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not normally investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website at <https://ico.org.uk/>.

Yours sincerely,

DIO Secretariat