

08 November 2017



BM 6283  
London  
WC1N 3XX

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Dear -----

### **Access to information – Request No RFI 4007**

Thank you for your request for the information detailed below which we received on 14 September 2017. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

Your request has been broken down into the specific questions asked and our responses are beneath each one:

#### **1. DAILY CULL OF BADGERS**

**Please send to me for each year and zone over which badgers have either been trapped or shot in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.**

- a. The year.**
- b. The name given to the cull zone. (In 2016 this was given by the name of the county followed by a number.)**
- c. The day's date on which the badger cull took place.**
- d. The number of badgers trapped/shot on that day in that zone.**

The information that Natural England holds has been provided in the attached spreadsheet named 'RFI 4007 Q1 Daily Returns 2013-2016'. The dates which licensed badger control took place are being withheld under the exception in Regulation 12(5)(a) of the Environmental Information Regulations 2014.

#### **Regulation 12(5)(a) states:**

"...a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that its disclosure would adversely affect..."

(a) international relations, defence, national security or public safety;"

Any disclosure made under the Regulations is in effect a disclosure to the world at large, as any other applicant would be entitled to the same information on request. As such we take this into consideration when making any decisions as to whether it is in the public interest to disclose or withhold requested information.

#### **Harm Test**

This information is being withheld as it can be used alongside other information already in the public domain to impede licensed operations and put contractors and other individual's associated with the licensed activity at risk from harm and/or harassment. In view of this risk we have decided not to disclose the requested information.

#### **Public interest**

In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. Whilst Natural England believes in openness and

transparency, as a public body, Natural England also has a responsibility to protect the safety of individuals. We are satisfied that the release of this information would allow parties to identify individual participants.

We feel that by releasing this information, participants could be more easily targeted for the purpose of objection. Animal rights activists object to this policy and target participants. Releasing this information will result in a higher risk of unwanted contact or interference from persons wishing to object to the project and harass/harm the participants involved. It is not in the public interest that participants are subjected to unnecessary harassment or put at risk. Whilst it is a public right to object, that right has to be balanced against issues of security and safety. We believe that these are legitimate concerns sufficient to allow Natural England to engage this exception and withhold the information.

**2. AREA OVER WHICH NO BADGERS WERE TRAPPED/SHOT**

**Please send to me for each year and zone over which badgers have either been trapped or shot in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016.**

- I. The year.**
- II. The name given to the cull zone.**
- III. The total area of polygons in which no badger was trapped/shot. This may be determined by summing the number of badgers trapped/shot in each polygon over all days badgers were trapped/shot in that year and zone.**
- IV. The total area covered by polygons in that zone.**
- V. The percentage of polygon area over which no badgers were trapped/shot in that zone over all days badgers were trapped/shot in that zone and year.(This should equal the value of Item C divided by the value of Item D multiplied by 100)**

**If there is no issue, I will prefer you to use accessible areas rather than treatment areas when calculating the areas in Items C and D listed above. Please see your response to Request No RFI 3224 for definition of these two types of area.**

This information has been provided in the attached spreadsheet named 'RFI 4007 Q2 & Q3'.

- VI. The total number of badgers collected but not included in the count of badgers trapped/shot in that zone and year.**

Natural England holds the following data in relation to this question

<b>Year</b>	<b>Licensed Area</b>	<b>Number of badgers collected but not included in the count of badgers trapped/shot</b>
2015*	West Gloucestershire	1
	West Somerset	1
2016	Area 2 - Somerset	4

**3. PROPORTION OF TREATED AREA WHICH WAS ACCESSIBLE**

**Please send to me for each year in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 and 2017.**

- I. The year.
- II. The name given to the cull zone.
- III. The total accessible area in that zone.
- IV. The total treatment area in that zone.
- V. The percentage of treatment area in that zone which was accessible. (This should be equal to Item iii divided by Item iv multiplied by 100.)

This information has been provided in the attached spreadsheet named 'RFI 4007 Q2 & Q3'. We have taken treated area to mean licensed area.

#### 4. PROPORTION OF HIGH RISK AREA WHICH WAS TREATED

Please send to me for each year in 2013, 2014, 2015 and 2016 and 2017.

- I. The year.
- II. The total treatment area over all zones.
- III. The total High Risk Area.
- IV. The percentage of High Risk Area which was treated. (This should be equal to Item II divided by Item III multiplied by 100.)

The proportion of the High Risk Area (HRA) that is covered by licensed Control Areas for each year requested is provided below. The figure for the HRA is that currently held by Natural England.

Year	Total Licensed Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	High Risk Area (km <sup>2</sup> )	Percentage
2013	567	39174	1.45%
2014	567	39174	1.45%
2015	790	39174	2.02%
2016	3806	39174	9.72%
2017	8571	39174	21.88%

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Bovine TB Licensing Unit by emailing [btb@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:btb@naturalengland.org.uk). As you may be aware, under the legislation should you have any concerns with the service you have received in relation to your request and wish to make a complaint or request a review of our decision, please contact the Bovine TB Licensing Unit, Natural England, BM 6283, London, WC1N 3XX. Email: [btb@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:btb@naturalengland.org.uk). Under Regulation 11(2) this needs to be done no later than 40 working days after the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of that complaint or the internal review, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the internal review procedure provided by Natural England. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. Telephone: 01625 545 700, [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely

*BTB Team*

Bovine TB Licensing Unit