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Policy paper

Summary of badger vaccination in 2020

Updated 27 May 2021

Applies to England



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Background

The government's strategy^{[[footnote 1](#)]} on tackling bovine tuberculosis in England includes badger vaccination.

As the licensing authority, Natural England grants licences under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 to take and mark badgers to enable vaccination to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis in cattle.

Licence holders must have the permission of the landholder where they propose to vaccinate badgers. Before individuals can set cage-traps or vaccinate badgers, they must also prove to Natural England that they have completed the relevant training^{[[footnote 2](#)]}.

Number of badgers vaccinated in England in 2020

The open season for vaccinating badgers runs each year from 1 May to 30 November.

Licence holders must submit to Natural England an annual return of the number of badgers vaccinated during the open season.

In 2020, licence holders vaccinated 1,094^{[[footnote 3](#)]} badgers across England.

County	Licenced area (km ²)	Badgers vaccinated
Avon	5.6	42
Berkshire	12.0	34
Cheshire	43.7	195
Cornwall and Isles of Scilly	26.1	143
Derbyshire	49.8	186

County	Licenced area (km2)	Badgers vaccinated
Devon	3.7	27
Dorset	12.2	63
Gloucestershire	4.1	65
Greater Manchester	0.5	4
Hampshire	1.7	0
Hereford and Worcester	1.5	3
Leicestershire	0.9	14
Nottinghamshire	0.5	18
Oxfordshire	15.2	43
Shropshire	7.0	32
Somerset	15.6	83
Staffordshire	9.4	25
Warwickshire	1.3	0
Wiltshire	6.4	17

Vaccination of badgers in Cumbria

Badgers vaccinated in Cumbria are part of a badger control intervention area, which has been granted a Low Risk Area Badger Disease Control licence. Vaccination was undertaken over a total area of 103km², of which 66.6km² was accessible.

County	Total area (km ²)	Licensed accessible area (km ²)	Badgers vaccinated
Cumbria	103	66.6	100

Field monitoring

Cage-trapping is a long established method of catching badgers and the welfare of badgers captured in cage-traps has been investigated before [\[footnote 4\]](#).

In 2020, Natural England did not conduct compliance monitoring visits due to coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions.

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1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/a-strategy-for-achieving-officially-bovine-tuberculosis-free-status-for-england>
 2. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/bovine-tb-badger-vaccination-training>
 3. Based on a preliminary analysis of the return forms submitted to Natural England in December 2020.
 4. Woodroffe, R, Bourne, FJ, Cox, DR, Donnelly, CA, Gettinby, G, McInerney, JP, and Morrison, WI (2005) 'Welfare of badgers (*Meles meles*) subjected to culling: patterns of trap-related injury', *Animal Welfare*, 14 (1), pp. 11-17.

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