



Animal &
Plant Health
Agency

Animal and Plant Health Agency
Access to Information Team
Woodham Lane
New Haw
Addlestone
Surrey
KT15 3NB

F 01932 357608

www.gov.uk/apha

Our Ref: ATIC1625

Mr Carroll
{By Email}

04 March 2019

Dear Mr Carroll

PROVISION OF REQUESTED INFORMATION

Thank you for your request for information about toxin testing of birds which we received on 19 February 2019. Your request has been handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOI)

The information you requested and our response is detailed below:

“Thank you for your recent response to my freedom of information request ref APHA Ref No. 26-B0088-10-18 - bird deaths at Victoria Park Smethwick West Midlands. As part of this submission it is stated that some of these birds deaths were "suspicious of botulism as the potential cause of death"- but there is no proof of this from the post mortems. It also stated "WORK IN PROGRESS Intestinal botulinum toxin testing." Can you confirm and release the results of these tests if they have been carried out?”

“There is *Clostridium botulinum* toxin testing underway for submission 26-B0088-10-18, but as this test is carried out at an external laboratory it may take a while before we have a result. The Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) decided to carry out diagnostic testing on a few of the submissions from 2018 (which happened to include 26-B0088-10-18) by selecting a few cases that were felt to be representative of the waterfowl die-off incidents during the summer. A negative botulinum toxin test result would not rule out the diagnosis, as the toxin can become undetectable once it is bound to the nerve endings. In the majority of cases a diagnosis of botulism is made from gross post mortem findings without a supportive diagnostic test result, particularly when birds with consistent clinical signs have also been observed. The post mortem findings in all but one of the examined birds were consistent with botulism as the cause of weakness or death. In this case there were also clinical signs consistent with botulism in other birds on the site to further support this diagnosis.

There is more information available on the disease in the attached Appendix 1.

Please see Appendix 2 the third interim report.

The Animal and Plant Health Agency is an Executive Agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs working to safeguard animal and plant health for the benefit of people, the environment and the economy.

Please be aware that some of the information (third party) has been redacted under the Data Protection Act 2018.

Information disclosed in response to this FOI request is releasable to the public. In keeping with the spirit and effect of the FOI and the government's Transparency Agenda, this letter and the information disclosed to you may be placed on GOV.UK, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context. No information identifying you will be placed on the GOV.UK website.

I attach an Annex which explains the copyright that applies to the information being released to you and contact details should you be unhappy with the service you have received.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Access to Information Team at the email address below or postal address at the top of this letter.

Yours sincerely

ACCESS TO INFORMATION TEAM

Email: enquiries@apha.gov.uk

Annex

Copyright

The information supplied to you is Crown copyright, unless otherwise stated, and is protected by the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988. You are free to use it for your own purposes, including for the purposes of news reporting. You can find details on the arrangements for re-using Crown copyright information at:

<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/open-government-licence.htm>

Information you receive which is **not** subject to Crown Copyright continues to be protected by the copyright of the person, or organisation, from which the information originated. You must ensure that you gain their permission before reproducing any third party (non Crown Copyright) information.

Complaints

If you are unhappy with the result of your request for information you may request an internal review within 40 working days of the date of this letter.

If you wish to request an internal review, please contact: The Access to Information Team at enquiries@apha.gsi.gov.uk or at the postal address at the top of this letter, who will arrange for an internal review of your case.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have 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 APHA's own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF