

3 February 2020



Mr P A Gadd

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BM 6283  
London  
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Dear Mr Gadd

**Access to information – Request No RFI 4902**

Thank you for your request for the information detailed below which we received on 09 January 2020. Your request has been considered under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.

You requested the following information, and our response is provided below:

**This request relates to the badger cull for 2019 across all authorised zones.**

**1/ Please provide the number of badgers culled for each zone in 2019**

**2 Please provide the breakdown of culling methods for each zone in 2019**

**i/ The number killed by free shooting in each zone**

**ii/ the number killed by caged shooting for each zone.**

The information you have requested is being withheld under EIR Regulation 12(4)(d) – in course of completion.

**Regulation 12(4)(d)**

This exception states:

*“...a public authority may refuse to disclose information to the extent that-*

*(d) the request relates to material which is still in the course of completion, to unfinished documents or to incomplete data;”*

Whilst Natural England believes in openness and transparency, as a public body, Natural England has a duty to ensure that the data it releases is scientifically accurate and not misleading. The quality assurance process on the data is not yet complete.

In view of this we have decided not to disclose the requested information at the moment. In applying this exception, we have had to balance the public interest in withholding the information against the public interest in disclosure. These are the factors we considered in deciding where the public interest lay.

We believe that, in this case, the public should be informed of the results of the licence activity. However, we feel that the release of this information before the data has been quality assured, analysed and audited could mean releasing information that is incomplete and possibly inaccurate and/or misleading.

We feel there is little public interest in releasing this information prior to completion of the quality assurance process, and believe this is a legitimate reason to allow Natural England to engage this exception and withhold the information. The information will be published once this process is complete. This process has taken longer than in previous years, however will be published in due course.

If you have any queries about this letter, please contact the Specialist Licensing Team by emailing [SpecialistLicensing@naturalengland.org.uk](mailto:SpecialistLicensing@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 Specialist Licensing Team at the above postal address or email address. 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: 0303 123 1113, [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

Yours sincerely

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