



# Ministry of Defence

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FOI 2021/13272

29 November 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Thank you for your correspondence of 1 November 2021 requesting the following information:

*"In relation to the hunting on Salisbury Plains, for each licensee, (The Royal Artillery Hunt, The Tedworth Hunt, Wiltshire Infantry Beagles and Palmer Marlborough Beagles), please will you provide, under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) for each licensee:*

- 1. Copy of each license for 2021/2022 Season, supporting maps and dates showing hunt name for 2021/2022.*
- 2. Following conviction of Mark Hankinson Director of Hunting Office and Judge Tan Ikram stating the 'Mirage of trail laying' (other landowners now stopping trail hunting), what are you doing to protect use of our land? Also please confirm ([REDACTED] Countryside Alliance Police Liaison Office who was also complicit with sharing how to avoid prosecution on the webinar is not on any of your groups, has been removed from other forces.*
- 3. Scent has to be laid as a trail, please share ingredient details of the chemical or animal-based formula (important for protection/welfare of flora or fauna as SSSI site) and origin of substance for each hunt and volume used per day. what evidence do you have a trail is laid? Do you receive details of the route prior to commencement, if not why not?*
- 4. What is the approach for hunting on SSSI areas and how is the area protected from both harmful impact from 'the scent' and pack of hounds (including nesting/breeding times), as hounds have been uncontrolled, (FOI revealed – no. 8 below where a mammal was torn apart during a hunt and another FOI January 2021 shared 5 mammals killed in 5 years).*
- 5. How have MOD monitored hunting activities to ensure compliance with the licence and the Hunting Act and other relevant legislation, both correct area and no illegal hunting, including dates and any actions/advice given? What complaints or notified breaches of the terms of the license have been received since September 2020? If none, what constitutes a complaint as I have provided on several occasions.*
- 6. What are the license regulations related to hunt support vehicles driving off byways and action taken when terms violated?*

7. *Details of when the Licensee has contacted the DIO Local Office to inform nil returns for mammal kills recording for each fixture, any incident resulting in a wild mammal being killed or disturbance, including the timing of this notification in relation to the incident.*
8. *For The Royal Artillery hunt breach of licence for the killing of a rabbit on 31st October (shared through former FOI), not reported in the designated 48 hours licence terms, but 7 days later on 7th November 2020 after evidence was provided to MOD, what process was followed to address this licence breach and also that a 2018/2019 Notification of Mammal Kill Form was used and not the 2020/2021 version?*
9. *Details of training provided to MOD Police and MOD Monitors/Safety Marshalls for detection of illegal hunting and any public awareness communications (as Cumbria Police have) on detection of and reporting of illegal fox hunting."*

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 and at Annex A. However, some of the information falls entirely within the scope of the absolute exemptions provided for at Section 40 (Personal Data) of the FOIA and has been redacted.

1. **Copy of each license for 2021/2022 Season, supporting maps and dates showing hunt name for 2021/2022.**

Please see Annex A (1-9).

2. **Following conviction of Mark Hankinson Director of Hunting Office and Judge Tan Ikram stating the 'Mirage of trail laying' (other landowners now stopping trail hunting), what are you doing to protect use of our land? Also please confirm ( [REDACTED] ) Countryside Alliance Police Liaison Office who was also complicit with sharing how to avoid prosecution on the webinar is not on any of your groups, has been removed from other forces.**

The MOD reserve the right to monitor hunting activities to ensure compliance with the law and the terms of the licence. When monitoring is undertaken, this is primarily to ensure the hunts are in the correct location. This is crucial to keeping the training area safe for exercising personnel, the hunts themselves, and other members of the public. The MOD also reserves the right to suspend or terminate a hunt's licence if it has confirmed evidence that hunt participants have breached the Hunting Act. Decisions on the arrest and prosecution of those taking part in illegal hunting activities are matters for the police and prosecuting authorities.

This information is not held. Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), the MOD would not be aware of the names of participants.

3. **Scent has to be laid as a trail, please share ingredient details of the chemical or animal-based formula (important for protection/welfare of flora or fauna as SSSI site) and origin of substance for each hunt and volume used per day. what evidence do you have a trail is laid? Do you receive details of the route prior to commencement, if not why not?**

No information is held in relation to the ingredients of the scent, or the volume used per day.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), the licence states that, at least seven days before each notified date, the licensee shall confirm with the DIO Local Office that they wish to proceed with the fixture and agree the day and area that the fixture will take place on.

There is no requirement to provide the route or evidence of the scent trail.

**4. What is the approach for hunting on SSSI areas and how is the area protected from both harmful impact from 'the scent' and pack of hounds (including nesting/breeding times), as hounds have been uncontrolled, (FOI revealed – no. 8 below where a mammal was torn apart during a hunt and another FOI January 2021 shared 5 mammals killed in 5 years).**

The introduction of or changes in game and wildfowl management and hunting management is listed by Natural England as an Operation Requiring Consent for Salisbury Plain Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Hunting is listed in section 9 of the *Protocol for Regular Activities Occurring on SSSIs within Salisbury Plain Training Area Requiring Assent/Consent* as written by DIO Technical Services, 2020 and signed by Natural England.

This document provides official assent/consent for all the activities described within it.

The MOD does not hold any information on non-compliance issues or breaches of the SSSI Consenting Protocol. Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance) I can confirm that similarly Natural England have not reported any breaches of this Protocol, initiated enforcement action or informally raised any concerns.

**5. How have MOD monitored hunting activities to ensure compliance with the licence and the Hunting Act and other relevant legislation, both correct area and no illegal hunting, including dates and any actions/advice given? What complaints or notified breaches of the terms of the license have been received since September 2020? If none, what constitutes a complaint as I have provided on several occasions.**

The MOD does not hold information on monitoring. Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), I can advise that the MOD may monitor hunting activities to ensure compliance with the law and the terms of the licence. A visual check may also be undertaken by Training Safety Marshals, to ensure that those participating in the hunt are in the correct area and that the activities do not prejudice the operational use or safety of the MOD property. The Estates Team undertake ad-hoc checks on licensed users, but no dates are recorded for this.

The MOD holds information on two complaints. The first received via telephone from a member of the public in relation to the Tedworth Hunt and the area in which the trail was being laid. The second complaint was received via email and was in relation to the Royal Artillery Hunt and a breach of the red flag area. Both complaints were addressed in full.

**6. What are the license regulations related to hunt support vehicles driving off byways and action taken when terms violated?**

This information is held in para 22 of the hunting licence: 'Up to two support vehicles may accompany the hunt to provide assistance to persons participating in the **Approved Use**, as and when required. These vehicles must only use stone tracks or public rights of way.'

This is monitored by Training Safety Marshalls, Land Wardens and MOD Police to ensure the terms and conditions of the licence are met. Warnings may be issued if the terms of the licence are breached.

**7. Details of when the Licensee has contacted the DIO Local Office to inform nil returns for mammal kills recording for each fixture, any incident resulting in a wild mammal being killed or disturbance, including the timing of this notification in relation to the incident.**

As per the terms of the licence at para 25, 'The Licensee shall ensure that the DIO Local Office is informed of any incident resulting in a wild mammal being killed during the Approved Use, within 48 hours of its occurrence using the Notification of Mammal Kill form attached at Annex C to this Licence. Nil returns for mammal kills should be recorded on the Notification of Mammal Kill form at Annex C to this Licence for each Agreed Day and submitted monthly to the DIO Local Office.'

**Royal Artillery**

Sept Hunts Annex C received 4.10.2021

October Hunts Annex C received 3.11.2021

**Tedworth Hunt**

21.9.2020 Annex C received 22.9.2021

25.9.2021 Annex C received 26.9.2021

28.9.2020 Annex C received 29.9.2021

7.10.2021 Annex C received 8.10.2021

26.10.2021 Annex C received 27.10.2021

**Wiltshire Infantry Beagles.**

Licence issued, however, no hunts have taken place.

**Palmer Marlborough**

29.10.2021 No Annex C received yet.

**8. For The Royal Artillery hunt breach of licence for the killing of a rabbit on 31st October (shared through former FOI), not reported in the designated 48 hours licence terms, but 7 days later on 7th November 2020 after evidence was provided to MOD, what process was followed to address this licence breach and also that a 2018/2019 Notification of Mammal Kill Form was used and not the 2020/2021 version?**

The Land Agent warned the Hunt that if a mammal is killed whilst hunting, the Annex C must be completed in 48 hours. There was a change in Hunt Master, and he was unaware of the need to complete the form. He reported the incident over the telephone within 48 hours and subsequently completed an Annex C form headed 2018-2019. This was signed and dated correctly, and the form headed 2020-2021, is identical. The Land Agent warned the Hunt that if a mammal is killed whilst hunting, the Annex C must be completed in 48 hours.

**9. Details of training provided to MOD Police and MOD Monitors/Safety Marshalls for detection of illegal hunting and any public awareness communications (as Cumbria Police have) on detection of and reporting of illegal fox hunting."**

The MOD does not hold this information.

Under Section 16 (Advice and Assistance), I can confirm that Training Safety Marshalls and MOD Police on Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA) do not undergo training on the detection of illegal hunting. Their role is to uphold 'Safe Place' and to report any suspicions of illegal hunting activity to the Police. The identification of illegal hunting activity is a responsibility of the Police. All allegations of illegal activity relating to the Defence estate are taken seriously and MOD Police will continue to work with partner organisations to ensure that illegal hunting activity is dealt with appropriately. There are no DIO SPTA-initiated "public awareness communications" relating to the detection of and reporting of illegal fox hunting.

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](mailto: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