



30 September 2022

Dear [REDACTED],

**Freedom of Information request: FOI2022/00260**

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request received on the 8 August and subsequent clarifications received on the 1, 9 and 14 September in which you requested the following:

**Your request:**

*I am writing to you under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to request the following information. Please could you provide me with:*

- A) *All internal correspondence between staff on the Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) branch of UKRI, including with other UKRI staff, on matters relating to research into the causes of the mass crab die-offs in the North Sea, and the request for funding to look into the issue from a research group being led by Newcastle University.*

*Please carry out two searches:*

*1 - Keywords: "dredging" AND/OR "pyridine" AND/OR "crabs"*

*2 - Keywords: "Newcastle" OR "Newcastle University" AND "pyridine"*

*Date range: 1 October 2021 - present day*

- B) *All internal correspondence between any staff from:*
- the NERC branch of UKRI, and @defra.gov.uk email addresses*
  - the NERC branch of UKRI, and @cefas.co.uk email addresses*
- on matters relating to research into the causes of the mass crab die-offs in the North Sea, and the request for funding to look into the issue from a research group being led by Newcastle University.*

*Please carry out a search using these search terms:*

*3 - Keywords: "dredging" AND/OR "pyridine"*

*Date: 1 October 2021 - present day*

*Please provide the information in electronic form.*

*For searches 1 and 3, I was seeking to acquire information about discussions had more broadly about the causes of the incident between employees in NERC, and with those in DEFRA/CEFAS.*

*With regards to search 2 I am looking for information about any discussions had around carrying out, or funding research, into the mass crab mortalities in Teesside.*

**Our response:**

I can confirm UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) do not hold information relevant to your request.

In considering your request, we conducted the following email searches:

Search 1

Keywords: "dredging" AND "pyridine" AND "crabs" AND (dredging OR pyridine OR crabs)

Date: 01/10/2021-18/08/2022

Locations: All NERC mailboxes

Results: 79

Search 2

Keywords: (Newcastle OR "Newcastle University") AND "pyridine"

Date: 01/10/2021-18/08/2022

Locations: All NERC mailboxes

Results: 125

Search 3

Keywords: (dredging AND pyridine) OR pyridine AND (@defra.gov.uk OR @cefas.co.uk)

Date: 01/10/2021-18/08/2022

Locations: All NERC mailboxes

Results: 95

The results of these searches were reviewed to determine whether any correspondence fell within scope of your request; that of internal correspondence between staff of NERC, or other UKRI staff, or between NERC staff and @defra.gov.uk or @cefas.co.uk email address that relate to the cause of mass crab mortalities in the North Sea, or discussion about any research to look into the issue.

We also interpreted 'present day' to be the day you made the request, 8 August 2022. As such, any internal correspondence between the Freedom of Information team and colleagues which arose from the processing of your FOI request and requesting the searches noted above has been discounted from the results.

I can subsequently confirm that UKRI do not hold any information within scope of your request.

If you have any queries regarding our response or you are unhappy with the outcome of your request and wish to seek an internal review of the decision, please contact:

Head of Information Governance

Email: [foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) or [info@governance@ukri.org](mailto:info@governance@ukri.org)

Please quote the reference number above in any future communications.

If you are still not content with the outcome of the internal review, you may apply to refer the matter to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the review procedure provided by UKRI. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: [www.ico.org.uk](http://www.ico.org.uk).

If you wish to raise a complaint regarding the service you have received or the conduct of any UKRI staff in relation to your request, please see UKRI's complaints policy: <https://www.ukri.org/about-us/policies-and-standards/complaints-policy/>

Yours sincerely,

  
Information Governance  
Information Rights Team  
UK Research and Innovation  
[foi@ukri.org](mailto:foi@ukri.org) | [dataprotection@ukri.org](mailto:dataprotection@ukri.org)