



Making Northern Ireland Safer For Everyone Through Professional, Progressive Policing

## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** F-2009-01433

**Keyword:** Operational Policing

**Subject:** 'BIG CAT' SIGHTINGS

### Request and Answer:

#### Question 1

Please specify all incidents reported to the police where 'big cats' had been sighted in Northern Ireland in the last 10 years.

#### Question 2

Please specify the date, type of animal and area/DCU where the animal was sighted.

#### Answer

The cost of retrieving and manually summarising 10 years of sightings would exceed the "appropriate limit" as stated in the Freedom of Information Regulations 2004, which is currently set by the Secretary of State at £450(18hrs). However technical staff were able to refine your request to bring it under cost and provide 5 years of sightings.

Please see attached document below.

Numerous reports have circulated about 'big cats' in various parts of the Province. In recent times, none of the reports have resulted in any such animal being captured or killed.

Local people may remember that police shot a Lynx on the 18th of February 1996 at Garvallah Road, Fintona.

Wildlife experts advise that any big cats that may be in existence tend to avoid areas of human habitation.

If anyone does spot what they believe is a dangerous wild cat, they should not approach it, but should instead take a note of the location and inform the police or the USPCA straight away.

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Freedom of Information Team, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this email.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible, or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Head of Freedom of Information, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [FOI@psni.pnn.police.uk](mailto:FOI@psni.pnn.police.uk)

If following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision maker, you were to remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request you may make a complaint, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PSNI has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act. You can write to the Information Commissioner at Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out, however the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ <http://www.psni.police.uk/>

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.

DATE	TYPE	AREA
02/03/2004	Large Black Cat/Panther	Down
21/03/2004	Big Black Cat	Ballymoney
22/03/2004	Black Panther	Lisburn
12/04/2004	Large Black Cat	Ballymoney
25/04/2004	LARGE SANDY COLOURED CAT	Belfast North
07/05/2004	Panther/Lynx	DOWn
04/06/2004	Large Black Cat	Limavady
06/06/2004	BLACK PUMA	MOYLE
08/06/2004	Large Black Cat	Cookstown
14/06/2004	Large Black cat	Cookstown
19/06/2004	Large Fawn Coloured Cat	Magherafelt
05/07/2004	Large Black Cat	Strabane
19/07/2004	Large Black Cat	Armagh
23/07/2004	Black Panther	Armagh
13/08/2004	Large Black Cat/Panther	Newry and Mourne
15/08/2004	Black Cat/Panther	Ballycastle
25/08/2004	Large Wild Cat Honeycomb	Armagh
05/09/2004	Large Cat	Omagh
02/11/2004	Large Black Cat	Moyle
02/12/2004	PUMA	Limavady
01/02/2005	Large Back Cat	Carrickfergus

14/02/2005	Very Big Black Cat	Strabane
24/03/2005	Large cat	Antrim
30/03/2005	Large wild Cat	Newtownabbey
28/05/2005	Large Cat - sandy mountain lion	Cookstown
28/05/2005	Large Black Cat 3' by 5'	Cookstown
21/06/2005	Large Black Cat (Panther)	Dungannon and South Tyrone
25/07/2005	Black Panther	Armagh
14/06/2006	Large Black Cat	Dungannon and South Tyrone
26/09/2006	Large Wild Cat Fawn	Newry and Mourne
11/01/2007	Large Dark Coloured Cat	Cookstown
25/01/2007	Large Tawney Cougar	Armagh
29/01/2007	Large Cat	Dungannon and South Tyrone
05/04/2007	Large Black Cat	Ballymoney
15/04/2007	Black Panther	Lisburn
10/06/2007	TIGER/PUMA	FOYLE
20/07/2007	Large Black Cat	Moyle
11/09/2007	Large Cat Tiger	Armagh
27/01/2008	Large White Cat Leopard	Belfast North
20/03/2008	Four Foot Long Black Cat	Antrim
26/06/2008	PANTHER	DOWN
28/08/2008	Puma	Cookstown
26/02/2009	LARGE CAT PUMA	Ballymoney
22/04/2009	FAWN COLOURED LARGE CAT	Strabane