

Keeping People Safe



FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



Request Number: F-2022-00041

Keyword: Operational Policing

Subject: Big Cat Sightings

Request and Answer:

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1) (a) of the Act we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does hold information to which your request relates. The decision has been taken to disclose the following.

Request 1

In relation to the 2021 calendar year, on how many occasions were the police informed that there had been a sighting of a 'big cat', i.e. a wild cat, which was significantly larger than a domestic cat and was thought could have been a puma, leopard, lynx or other large member of the cat species?

Could you please state how many of the sightings were confirmed to be

- (a) false
- (b) true or
- (c) unable to be confirmed one way or the other?

Answer

PSNI can confirm that in relation to the 2021 calendar year, there was one report of a sighting of a 'big cat'. This sighting was unable to be confirmed one way or the other.

Request 2

In relation to the last three sightings that you logged in 2021, please provide me with a summary of the sighting. This should include:

- (i) what was alleged to have been seen,
- (ii) the location of the sighting and,
- (iii) what if any police response there was to the sighting?

Answer

In relation to the one reported sighting, the description provided was a Puma like animal in the Limavady/Castlerock area. An officer was assigned and a search was conducted however no animal was located.

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 Corporate Information Branch, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

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 Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing foi@psni.pnn.police.uk.

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, 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', or use the ICO self-service portal available at www.ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/officialinformation-concerns-report/official-information-concern/

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 their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ www.psnipolice.uk

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