

BREACH OF THE CODE OF PRACTICE FOR OFFICIAL STATISTICS

This document reports a breach of the Code of Practice for Official Statistics, or the relevant Pre-release Access to Official Statistics Orders, to which the Code applies as if it included these orders.

1. Background information

Name of Statistical Output (including weblink to the relevant output or 'landing page')

The British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) / Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) / Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) Breeding Bird Survey (BBS)

JNCC Official Statistic hosted by BTO.

<https://www.bto.org/volunteer-surveys/bbs>

Name of Producer Organisation

JNCC

Name and contact details of the statistical Head of Profession (Lead Official in an Arm's Length Body) submitting this report, and date of report

Ken Roy - Head of Profession for Statistics - Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)

Lawrence Way - JNCC

2. Circumstances of breach

Relevant Principle/Protocol and Practice

Protocol 2: Release practices

8. Ensure that no indication of the substance of a statistical report is made public, or given to the media or any other party not recorded as eligible for access before publication. Report to the National Statistician immediately any accidental or wrongful release, and investigate the circumstances.

Date of occurrence

6 July 2016

Nature of breach (including links with previous breaches, if any)

Indication of the contents of the report passed on internally from one Defra policy official to five others, nothing made public.

Reasons for breach

Insufficient embargo marking and insufficient Pre-Release Access (PRA) list checking.

3. Reactions and impact (both within the producer body and outside)

No external impact, access maintained within Defra. Very little internal impact – brief message known to more than needed to know, but no consequential action.

4. Corrective actions taken to prevent reoccurrence of such a breach (include short-term actions, and long-term changes made to procedures)

Short term

Immediate phone calls to halt further spread and communicate seriousness of strict adherence to the code.

Long term

Briefing for Policy planned for Director birdtable meeting for all staff 14 July. Improved “Embargo” marking to be implemented. Increased advance checking of PRA list.