

The answer to this Parliamentary question, we must admit, had passed us by. But our eagle-eyed friend Francis Tusa of Defence Analysis spotted it, so we just have to share:

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much fish was procured by his Department and at what cost in each of the last five years, broken down by species; and what amount and value of such fish met the Marine Stewardship Council standard in each such year, broken down by species.

Mr. Bob Ainsworth: The amount of fish procured since the start of the current MOD food supply contract on 1 October 2006 is approximately 1,300 metric tonnes. The cost, broken down by species, is as follows:

Species £ October 2006 to September 2007 / £ October 2007 to June 2008

Prawn (including scampi) 661,335 / 414,370

Cod 606,468 / 413,163

Canned fish 485,090 / 301,628

Haddock 197,265 / 145,982

Salmon 184,652 / 113,611

Plaice 134,917 / 75,544

Tuna 41,182 / 26,764

Hoki 30,515 / 28,672

Halibut 28,687 / 23,615

Mackerel 30,219 / 21,996

Hake 28,894 / 16,242

Pollock 16,629 / 16,896

Scallops 21,596 / 9,848

Kippers 15,707 / 8,550

Trout 10,293 / 13,454

Blanchbait 2,787 / 875

River Cobbler 1,890

All fish purchased through the MOD food supply contract is subject to extensive and stringent quality standards. These are comparable to, or exceed, extant EC and legislative standards. Further detailed information in respect of fish procured outside of the MOD food supply contract, such as contract catering/pay as you dine establishments and the spend prior to October 2006 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. The value of fish procured that meets the Marine Stewardship Council Standard is not held.

Blanchbait? River Cobbler? Are they making this stuff up?

And here's a few examples of questions which weren't answered recently because the "information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost":

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many injuries to personnel have been sustained in transit as a result of (a) collisions and (b) other accidents in Snatch Landrovers since 2003.

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been allocated to urgent operational requirement spending on vehicles since 1997.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many and what proportion of residential properties owned by his Department are vacant, broken down by county.

and finally...

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's estimate is of the number of television sets installed in (a) single living and (b) service family accommodation in the UK.

Derek Twigg: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.