



Derbyshire Mammal Group

News

Autumn
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Annual Membership £5

The Derbyshire Mammal Group
is affiliated to
The Mammal Society



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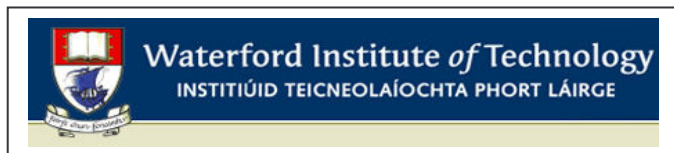


Cheshire Mammal Symposium

The Cheshire Mammal Group will be holding a one-day symposium on British Mammals on Saturday 1st December at the Lecture Theatre, Chester Zoo, commencing at 9.30 am. Presentations will cover a range of topics of both national and local interest; the morning will mainly be dedicated to species related topics such as water voles and bats. The afternoon session will consist of speakers from the Cheshire and other local mammal groups who will describe some of the projects currently being undertaken in their region, there will also be a selection of display material. Refreshments and lunch will be provided on the day.

At the same time, there will be an exhibition of artwork by the well-known wildlife artist David Quinn, some of which will be used to illustrate the forthcoming book on Cheshire Mammals, due out in 2008.

For further information contact Val Cooper on 01925 604503 (home) 07947 808853 (mob) or e-mail val.rose54@btinternet.com



PINE MARTEN – THE INVISIBLE MAMMAL?

A workshop on tracking Britain's most elusive mammal.

Friday June 15th to Sunday June 17th
2007

Waterford Institute of Technology,
Waterford, Ireland.

Pine Marten Workshop

Shirley Cross

In June 2007 an enthusiastic group from Snowdonia, Cumbria, N. Yorks, VWT, Ireland and a few other places gathered in Waterford to discuss methods for confirming the presence of and monitoring pine marten populations where sporadic records occur but regular field signs cannot be found.



Pine Marten
Photograph courtesy of WIT

Waterford was chosen because it has a high density population, making field signs easy to find and a laboratory for DNA testing of scats. The various methods looked at include nest boxes in Cumbria and Wales, feeding tubes and camera traps in Ireland and scat surveys. VWT explained their questionnaire survey when members of the public report seeing a pine marten. One of the hotspots from the survey is S. Yorks/NE Derbys, particularly the Derwent valley woodlands from Holloway to Crich.

The first morning was spent hearing about the work done in Waterford testing DNA techniques. It is very important to place the scats into a small plastic bag without handling them; contamination has been a major problem. Some scats which look like fox have proved to be pine marten and vice versa, even the 'experts' make mistakes. Using this method the current survey in Ireland has extended the known range to include large numbers of 10km squares, even in the hills around Dublin.

In the afternoon we visited a local woodland, open to the public complete with burnt out cars from the local hooligans. This wood had a good population of pine martens and lots of scats were found. We were shown the baited hair tubes and camera traps set in the wood (later we saw the pictures too).

That evening we enjoyed a meal in a typical Irish pub with music and the odd drink with lots of time to exchange ideas and hear how other groups are trying to solve the problem of tracking this elusive mammal.

On Sunday morning we heard from Snowdonia – nest boxes, NE England – scat surveys, Staffordshire – reports and photographs, and Cumbria – nest boxes. All more or less convinced there were animals out there. Some may be small populations just hanging on some perhaps animals released from captivity but we shall never know if we don't go out and look.

So next time you see a scat check it carefully, put it in a bag using a stick and we can send it off to Waterford for analysis, it may just be the record we need. One guy showed us how to make chop sticks in about 30 seconds just right for handling those objects we don't want to touch, so I'm off to the woods to practise.

European Mammal Assessment

Dave Mallon

The first full assessment of all Europe's mammals has recently been completed by 150 experts, commissioned by the EU and the World Conservation Union (IUCN). This shows that more than a quarter (27%) of all 231 European species are declining in numbers, and only 8% are identified as increasing. The latter include the largest terrestrial species, European bison, as a result of proactive conservation measures. The full text of the report and analysis is available, free, as a PDF file (about 1Mb). It can be downloaded from:
http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/conservation/species/ema/docs/ema_publication.pdf

The fur of the little musk ox,
Is finer than beaver or fox,
They comb it in May,
And send it away,
And it comes back as hand-knitted sox.

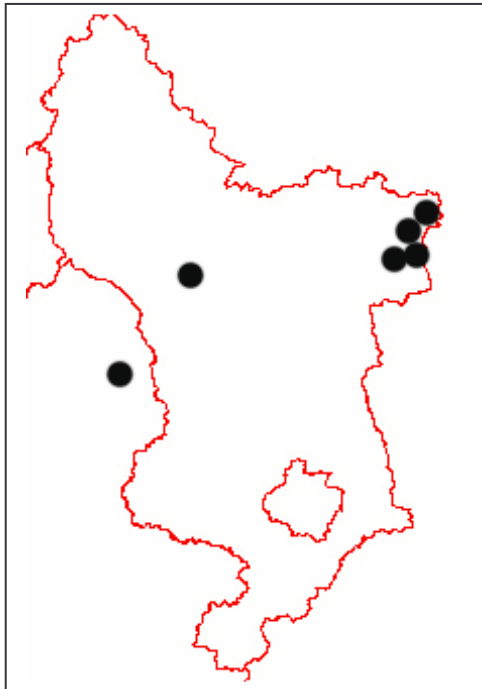
Liz Lonsdale

Lynx in Derbyshire

Dave Mallon

The archaeological record, in the form of bones recovered from limestone caves, shows that the Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) formerly occurred widely in Great Britain. The conventional view was that it became extinct in the Mesolithic period, 5000-6000 years ago. However, recent research^{1,2} based on advances in radio-carbon dating techniques, indicates that this is not the case and that lynx in fact survived into historical times, and even until the post-Roman era.

Lynx bones have so far been reported from 25 sites in Great Britain. Five (20%) of these sites are located in Derbyshire. Four of them are on the Magnesian limestone of the northeast: Steetley Cave, Langwith Cave, Robin Hood Cave and Dog Hole Fissure (the last two both at Creswell Crags). The fifth site is Cales Dale Cave, in the upper part of Lathkill Dale, on the Carboniferous limestone of the White Peak. There is another site nearby in the White Peak, at Beeston Tor in the Manifold Valley, Staffordshire. These sites must reflect the presence of limestone, and therefore caves suitable for preserving animal remains, rather than the ancient distribution of lynx in the county. Only one of the Derbyshire remains has been carbon-dated. This is the bone from Dog Hole Fissure which has a date of around 9600 years BP (before present).



Sites where lynx bones have been found in Derbyshire and the Peak District

The latest British specimens originate in the Craven area of the Yorkshire Dales, which has produced 9 of the 25 known British lynx remains. Two lynx bones from Craven have been radio-carbon dated at 1850 and 1550 years BP, that is 150 and 450 AD respectively, and far later than previously thought. Some linguistic and literary evidence suggests that lynx were still being hunted in the Lake District in the 7th century, and were present in Scotland until the late medieval period. Given that Craven lies not far north of the Derbyshire boundary, and at a similar altitude, it is quite likely that lynx survived in Derbyshire until much later than the date suggested by the Creswell bone.

On the current evidence, the lynx certainly became extinct in Britain well before the bear and the beaver, and a thousand years before the wolf³. It has often been suggested that climatic changes were responsible for the disappearance of the lynx, while some people have advanced fluctuations in mountain hare populations as a possible cause. It now seems more likely that a combination of wide-scale deforestation, hunting of deer, and persecution were the most likely cause of the demise of the lynx. Britain lost a larger proportion of its forests, and earlier, than the rest of northern and western Europe.

As a 'native' species, lynx become a potential candidate for reintroduction. While it is virtually impossible to imagine lynx returning to Derbyshire under current circumstances, several proposals have been put forward for an official reintroduction to Scotland, where experts confirm that ample suitable habitat and prey numbers exist. Sadly, formidable obstacles would have to be overcome, as is clearly demonstrated by the ease with which a few big landowners have succeeded in thwarting the long-planned and widely-supported reintroduction of beavers to Scotland. On the other hand, a few wealthy landowners have put forward ambitious plans to reintroduce lynx, alongside other extinct species, into huge fenced estates in Scotland, so there is some cause for hope!

¹ Hetherington, D. 2006. The lynx in Britain's past, present and future. *ECOS* 27(1): 66-74.

² Hetherington, D., Lord, T. and Jacobi, R. 2006. *Journal of Quaternary Science* 21: 3-8.

³ Yalden, D.W. 1999. *The History of British Mammals*. Poyser Natural History, London.

There once was a moose called Bruce,
Who feasted on willow and spruce,
He did it all day,
Without any hay,
And his droppings were exceedingly loose.

Liz Lonsdale

A Mammals Masterclass in the Highlands of Scotland

Sue Jones

I traveled up to Scotland on Sunday 13th May 2007 with seven other members of Derbyshire Mammal Group. We arrived at the Aigas Field Centre near Beaulieu, just north of Inverness, mid afternoon.



House of Aigas
(Ed.)

House of Aigas looks like a mini Balmoral. It is a Victorian sporting lodge and since 1977 has been the family home of the charismatic Sir John Lister-Kaye, a leading naturalist and nature writer. In addition to the main house the estate has a large arboretum, formal gardens, native pinewoods, birch woodland, moorland and agricultural land and a picturesque freshwater loch. We had an hour to spare before our official welcome and introduction so having settled in to our comfortable wooden log cabin accommodation we went on a walk round the loch.



Loch Cuil na Caillich
home to the Aigas
beavers
(Ed.)

We were rewarded with first hearing wood warbler and then getting good views of it. We also saw felled trees, evidence of the beavers that live there. Bill Oddie had been there the previous week but his camera team had failed to get enough footage. That evening by 8pm we sat in the second hide along the loch side opposite a platform where the BBC film crew were ensconced. A beaver swam across the loch to our right and straight in front of the first hide we had passed. It then made its way back and kept appearing distantly for both us and the film crew. By 10pm the light levels were dropping and the film crew departed. Within five minutes a beaver swam right past the platform they had just left.

Monday started with a lecture entitled Ice, Fire, Rock and Water - an introduction to the geology and ecology of the Highlands. This was followed by a guided walk around

the estate. As we approached a hide on stilts we came across wild boar, which had young, including one runt who was very small, and desperately trying to keep up with the others. I saw my first dragonfly of the year, which turned out to be a four spot chaser. Siskins vied with chaffinches for pole positions on the bird feeders until a great spotted woodpecker scattered the smaller birds and some members of our party were lucky enough to spot a wood mouse picking up crumbs. After our packed lunch we visited a nearby osprey nest where we were at just about eye level with the bird. Later I was to have one of these beautiful birds circling just above my head on its grey-brown wings, which span five feet, displaying the snow-white plumage on its underside. We then drove to the Black Isle. At Chanonry Point if the tide is right the fish swim very close in and bottle nosed dolphins know this and close views can often be had. Today the tide was not right but we saw an arctic skua chasing terns in front of Fort George. A flock of golden plover flew by and dunlin and ringed plovers scurried along the shore edge. We parked at North Kessock underneath the end of the road bridge over the Moray Firth hoping for otter but not finding any. That evening we visited a nearby hide where peanuts and jam are put out to attract pine marten. One paid a fleeting visit around 10pm and Steve Lonsdale was also lucky enough to see a badger approach up the hill towards the hide.

Tuesday was a 6am start with a return trip to Chanonry Point. This time the tide was right and a pod of dolphins were fishing very close in to shore, one making a spectacular leap out of the water. Red breasted merganser were in the bay and later from the mini bus Liz Lonsdale spotted a red kite which I just managed to see as we went round a bend. We journeyed back along the shoreline ten pairs of eyes all scanning for otter. My attention drifted to the far shore and I looked up at two mountains with snow and one between them without. Suddenly my eye caught a movement in the water.

At first I thought it was a seal but no it was the one and only otter seen on the trip. We watched it for over half an hour, turning the bus along the road as it swam back and forth. We returned late for a well-earned breakfast. Our main guide for the trip was David Dixon, a marine biologist, who was a mine of fascinating information. He had studied and written a paper on lunar-related reproductive behaviour in the badger (*Meles meles*). This work had involved using stealth cameras and proved of great interest to members of our group who would like to buy some to study nighttime behaviour of mammals locally. His talk and CD footage held us fascinated until it was time for lunch in the dining room. On the menu today was wild mushroom soup with marsala, salmon quiche and an array of salads. The food at Aigas is superb, overseen by Cordon Bleu trained Lucy Lister-Kaye. All of the evening meals were three courses and for breakfast there was porridge, a great choice of fruits and cereals followed by toast with jams, marmalade, honey and peanut butter.

In the afternoon we revisited the pine marten site to set up a stealth camera. The site was too steep for me so I explored on my own, my first find being a pearl bordered fritillary. I wandered back along the track we had driven up and down to a quarry we had passed where two roe deer were seen and we had been told a barn owl was nesting. Although I did not see the deer again they were very vocal as were the birds, particularly willow warblers which seemed to be all around. That evening we had the loch to ourselves and this time had much better views of two beavers. A heavily pregnant female and her kit from last year swam around, eventually clambering out onto the bank directly across from the hide, where we had good views with the scope.



Beaver Signs
(Ed.)

Wednesday started with a talk on red deer and golden eagle from Aigas Field Officer, Dr Ieuan Evans and then we were off to Glen Strathfarrar, a private estate similar to nearby Glen Affric to look for these and other species. Remnants of Scotland's ancient Caledonian Pine Forest remain and it was on the edge of one of these that we searched in vain for crested tit. Dippers flitted over the fast flowing stream and goosander and whooper swans were seen. During a stop to eat our packed lunch we heard peregrine screaming but despite desperate scanning of the hillside could not locate it. We did however see a raven fly onto its nest and through the telescope could see the red gape of its chick as it was fed. Golden eagle was proving difficult to find but at last one was spotted flying over a ridge. It then landed part way down on the mountain side and we were able to observe it through the scope. At the other end of the scale in the natural world Ian Wildbur found a rock with the larval cases of stoneflies and Liz Docker a cockchafer or may bug. Red deer were numerous as they are farmed in the strath.

That evening was the last for two of the three groups of people staying at Aigas and we were all piped into the magnificent baronial dining room by a local piper in full ceremonial attire. Later we again visited the pine martin hide with two members of the photography course. The barn owl was sitting out on the quarry face as we passed by. This time a pine marten appeared at around 9.15pm and it sounded as if World War Three had begun as the photographers digital cameras with large lenses swung into action. We all sat transfixed for around ten minutes as the animal enjoyed its supper and then departed.



Pine Marten
Photograph by Steve Lonsdale

On Thursday after breakfast Sir John drove us in a four by four over fields where hares were lolling. Unfortunately later he found a leveret which had been attacked by dogs. We were on our way to see a capercaillie which was part of a breeding project that had not gone too well. They had started with two females and two males but only one male had survived. An additional twenty eggs had only raised eight chicks and only two had survived and been taken away to be raised before re-introduction to the wild.

Ieuan was still working hard as he drove me to the railway station pointing out a peregrine on its regular perch and trying desperately, without success, to locate the redstart which was singing constantly in a tree right by the station.

For quite a long way south the East Coast Mainline railway follows the coast and I was able to watch the sea as I reflected on a wonderful trip with so much packed into just three short days. We had sightings or signs of 21 species of mammal and 82 birds were seen or heard. A number of magic moments, the dolphin leaping out of the water, the osprey just above my head and the pine marten so close, being just a few. I can well recommend a trip to Aigas if the fancy takes you for a wonderful wildlife experience in the Scottish Highlands.



DMG Members with Aigas Guides
Photograph courtesy of Aigas Field Centre

Deer and Antlers

Liz Lonsdale

Deer are related to antelope, sheep and cattle, but an obvious difference is that deer have antlers, and the others have horns. Antlers are shed and re-grown each year, whereas horns are permanent features, which continue to grow.

Except for female reindeer, only male deer grow antlers. Antler growth is stimulated in the spring by the changing day length. This causes a drop in testosterone, which in turn causes the old antlers to be cast and the new antlers start to grow. The whole process of antler production takes two to three months, with the full set completed and hard by July.

The newly formed antler has a covering of 'velvet', which is full of blood vessels carrying the vital nutrients for the production of bone. At this stage, the antlers are vulnerable and sensitive, and the deer avoid conflict so as not to damage the antlers. At this time you may see deer 'boxing' with their front hooves, rather than using their antlers. The rich supply of blood is attractive to midges, and the deer move to higher ground away from the areas where midges are prevalent. Once the full set of antlers is complete, the blood supply is cut off and the stags begin to clean the antlers by rubbing them against trees and bushes to remove the velvet.



Young Antlers
Photograph by Steve Lonsdale

Size of the antlers is determined by the age and vigour of the animal. Strong, well-fed stags produce the largest and heaviest antlers. In the Highlands of Scotland, where the land is impoverished, the antlers are in general smaller and of lighter mass than those of animals kept in lowland parks.

Second year stags have knobbly antlers known as Knobber or Brocket. The antlers continue to develop more times each year until a full classical set in the seventh to ninth years. A full head with twelve points is known as a 'Royal'.

The antlers demonstrate the fitness and dominance of the stag. They are used to fight with rivals - their shape has evolved to allow them to lock together, and the stronger deer will use his strength to overpower the weaker one. Sometimes antlers inflict serious injury, and can lead to death.

Memories of Aigas

Liz Docker

In May 2007 I was part of a group of DMG members visiting the Aigas field centre in the Highlands of Scotland (see centre pages for full trip report). Although the wildlife sightings were memorable, the guides were knowledgeable, and the company was great, I think the thing I will remember the most is the atmosphere at Aigas, largely due to the ethos created by Sir John Lister-Kaye.

Many of the guides were participating in Sir John's training programme. As he explained one evening, it is so hard to get your first job with no experience, and just as hard to gain experience with no job - so he takes graduates in appropriate subjects, trains them as guides then gives them the opportunity to work at Aigas for the next season. Without exception these were delightful young (and not so young) people, full of enthusiasm for the subject, gaining knowledge about the wildlife but also learning about hosting guests, solving problems, and other skills which they will take forward to whatever else they do in their lives, touched by the magic that is Aigas.

Profits from the adult courses/holidays are used to subsidise an educational programme for schoolchildren. All ages are accommodated with material tailored to fit with curriculum requirements, and it is all delivered with respect for the local wildlife. As we were guided round the estate one morning we crossed paths with a group of children, about 9 or 10 years old, obviously having a terrific time in the fresh air, and being inspired by the beautiful surroundings.

We saw foundations for what is to become a purpose built education centre - this will have a turf roof, a wind turbine to generate its own energy requirements, and a sewerage system feeding into a reed bed. Sir John is clearly looking forward to this being finished - he said he hates the place to be untidy, and having up to 5,000 children passing through the main house every year is putting a strain on the fabric of the building. But clearly none of that dented his commitment to introducing the next generation to their environment, both to appreciate it, and to protect and conserve it.

As adult guests, we were looked after extremely well, fed at regular intervals with delicious food cooked by Lady Lucinda Lister-Kaye, served by her and the guides, and couriered around the area to find the elusive mammals that we were there to see, but we were also expected to do our bit - we were encouraged to return the wrappings from our packed lunches for recycling, and there were polite notices in the cabins about turning off lights - energy saving bulbs, of course.

So, I will treasure my memories of seeing dolphins and an otter, red deer and a golden eagle, beavers and pine marten, but seeing these while staying at Aigas was the truly memorable thing.

We Need Your Mammal Records!

Steve Docker

The county of Derbyshire is home to about forty different species of wild mammals. Most are under considerable pressure and although some are holding their own many are thought to be in decline. To find out more, the Derbyshire Mammal Atlas Project was launched in 2006.

The aim is to undertake a large-scale, comprehensive survey of Derbyshire's mammals. In order to manage the project the county has been divided into 10km squares and a "square steward" allocated to each square to co-ordinate activities.

We are hoping to involve as many people as possible in the project so why not become a mammal detective and help with the survey? You can take part in a number of different ways including letting us know about any mammals you see when you are out and about in the county or sending us any records you already have of mammals dating back to 1990.

Whilst some mammal species are rarely seen others, like rabbits and grey squirrels, are seen quite often. Sadly, sometimes mammals are also found as road casualties or brought in by cats, these all count as mammal records. Furthermore, you don't always need to see a mammal to know it's paid a visit; many species leave characteristic field signs such as molehills or discarded deer antlers. These too form the basis of a mammal record and we would be glad to receive details for the atlas project.

However, for a record to be included we need four essential pieces of information known as the Who, What, Where and When. Simply note down the following information:

The name & contact details of the observer (Who).
The species, field sign etc (What).
A description of where the observation was made and if you can, a six figure grid reference (Where).
The date of the observation (When).

Then, send your mammal record to the Derbyshire

Mammal Group. The easiest way is to fill in a mammal recording form, which can be found on the Derbyshire Mammal Group website at <http://www.derbyshiremammalgroup.com>

Our target year is 2010, so we still have at least two years for recording, surveying and data gathering. The end product will be a useful and detailed work of reference, a baseline for future surveys and the supporting database will also be an important conservation tool. Please help if you can.

Website Update

Debbie Court

The Derbyshire Mammal Group has recently updated its website. It now includes identification and distribution information on 32 mammal species found in Derbyshire. These include how to recognise mammals from their nests, feeding remains and droppings. There is also the option to use an interactive mammal identification key. The key takes you through a series of questions to arrive at a mammal species.

The Group has designed the key to increase the amount of mammal records sent in by naturalists and the general public.

So far 12,000 records have been entered onto the Derbyshire Mammal Group database. This shows significant progress towards mapping mammal records for the Mammal Atlas by 2010. There are still three years to go until the Group publishes their Atlas and therefore plenty of time to submit records for inclusion. All recorders will be listed in the publication. To try the key and find out which species of mammals have been recorded in Derbyshire, visit the website at www.derbyshiremammalgroup.com.

First published in Derbyshire Biodiversity News (Vol 3, Issue 3) which you can download from <http://www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk/news/other.php>.

Derek Whiteley has decided to stand down as group recorder after five years dedicated effort. During that time Derek has inputted over 10,000 mammal records on behalf of the group as well as dealing with enquiries and liaising with many individuals and organisations. A big thank you to Derek from all members of the DMG for such a significant contribution. (Ed.)

Finding Maurice!

Just for fun, Maurice the mountain hare - the mascot of the Derbyshire Mammal Group - has been hidden somewhere within the pages of the newsletter. So, look out for Maurice!

"The Weather and Feather" Quiz

A written quiz sheet is on sale raising funds for the Derby Local Group of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. It features a mix of cryptic clues and puzzles and there are general knowledge questions all with a weather theme.

The closing date for entries is Saturday January 12th 2008. To obtain a copy send SAE and cheque for £1 payable to "RSPB" to Weather and Feather Quiz, 12 Chertsey Road, Mickleover, Derby DE3 0RA

New species for Derbyshire

A barbastelle bat has been recorded recently at Kedleston Park, confirmed by sonogram. This is a new species for the county.

Derbyshire Bat Conservation Group has a new website:

www.derbyshirebats.org.uk

www.wildaboutbritain.co.uk

Henmore Otters

For the first time since I began monitoring the Henmore Brook (Dec 02) otter spraints were recently found at all five monitoring points along the watercourse, from the River Dove upstream to Hognaston, a distance of about 10km (6 miles). Ben Young - Head Ranger at Carsington Water - reports that footprints and spraints have also been found near the settling ponds at Tailbay just below the dam wall. (Ed.)

**A colour copy of this newsletter may be
downloaded from our website
www.derbyshiremammalgroup.com**

Useful Contacts

Mammal Society: Tel: 02073 502200
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Water Vole & Otter Projects: Tel: 01773 881188
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Debbie Court www.derbyshirebiodiversity.org.uk

Many thanks to all those who contributed to this issue of Derbyshire Mammal Group News.

Also, a special thanks to Liz Docker who helped with the layout and design, to Steve & Liz Lonsdale, the Aigas Field Centre and the Waterford Institute of Technology for their excellent photographs and illustrations and to AES Ltd for the use of their reprographic facilities.

Please send material, details of forthcoming events, comments etc to Steve Docker: Tel: 01335 345253 or email: steve@busypeople.force9.co.uk

Whilst every effort is made to ensure that material is factually correct opinions expressed are those of individual authors and may not represent the views of the Derbyshire Mammal Group.

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Derbyshire Mammal Group

Small Mammal Trapping Sessions 2007

Steve and Liz Lonsdale

Results are summarised in the table below. The four areas trapped were:

- Willington: Reclaimed gravel workings – hedgerow / scrub / grassland.
- Old Tupton: Livestock farm – buildings / hedgerow / meadow.
- Hopton: 7 x 7 grid with two traps set at each point in the grid (5m between points) – deciduous woodland with understory of nettles, bramble, and hogweed.
- Nutwood: Local Nature Reserve on an old tip – rough grassland / hedgerow / scrub / riverside.

Apart from the Nutwood session, traps were laid at dusk on the first evening, and left *in situ* for approx 36 hours; the traps were checked every 12 hours or so. At Nutwood we trapped for one night only. Animals caught were identified, weighed, sexed, aged, and their breeding condition noted; those caught on the first morning session, and the evening session, were also marked by clipping their fur; animals were released at or near the point of capture. The following table shows the total number of catches at each site.

Location (number of traps used)	Common Shrew	Pygmy Shrew	Water Shrew	Wood Mouse	Bank Vole	Field Vole
<u>Willington – April (120)</u>	24	5	4	26	6	4
<u>Old Tupton – May (120)</u>	3	1	0	60	25	0
<u>Hopton (1) – July (98)</u>	2	0	0	17	7	0
<u>Nutwood – August (99)</u>	2	0	0	21	3	2
<u>Hopton (2) – September (98)</u>	14	0	0	29	60	0

(Steve Docker is analysing the results of the grid at Hopton).

Trapping for 36 hours is time consuming, and so we investigated the results for the last four years to see if trapping for shorter periods would be as effective in terms of the number of species caught. A further advantage of a single overnight session is that traps can be left in areas where they would be vulnerable during the day. The following table lists the percentage of times a species was first caught in each session over the last 4 years (e.g. for Field Vole, at sites where it was caught, 79% of the time it was first caught in the first morning session, and 7% of the time it was not caught until the second morning session):

	% of Sessions Species was First Caught		
	First AM	Evening	Second AM
Wood Mouse	95%	0%	5%
Bank Vole	91%	9%	0%
Field Vole	79%	14%	7%
Common Shrew	82%	9%	9%
Pygmy Shrew	44%	33%	22%
Water Shrew	33%	17%	50%

This suggests that, when present, Wood Mouse, Bank Vole, Field Vole, and Common Shrew are likely to be caught in a single overnight session; it appears that Pygmy Shrew and Water Shrew in general need longer trapping periods. The intention of the sessions we have run over the past 3 or 4 years has been to train those who are interested in the techniques of small mammal trapping. The Group now has access to around 120 traps, and in our view these would be better utilised by being split and used by smaller groups of people, thus enabling us to cover more areas of the county. To that end we do not intend to put any specific sessions in the programme for 2008, but will ourselves be carrying out various surveys from April through to September. The Group's traps are available for loan to those who have experience in small mammal trapping. If anybody wishes to undergo training, or have a 'refresher', please contact one of us and we will arrange it.

Suggestions for potential sites for surveying are always welcome.