



Derbyshire Mammal Group

Newsletter

Winter 2017/18 Issue 30

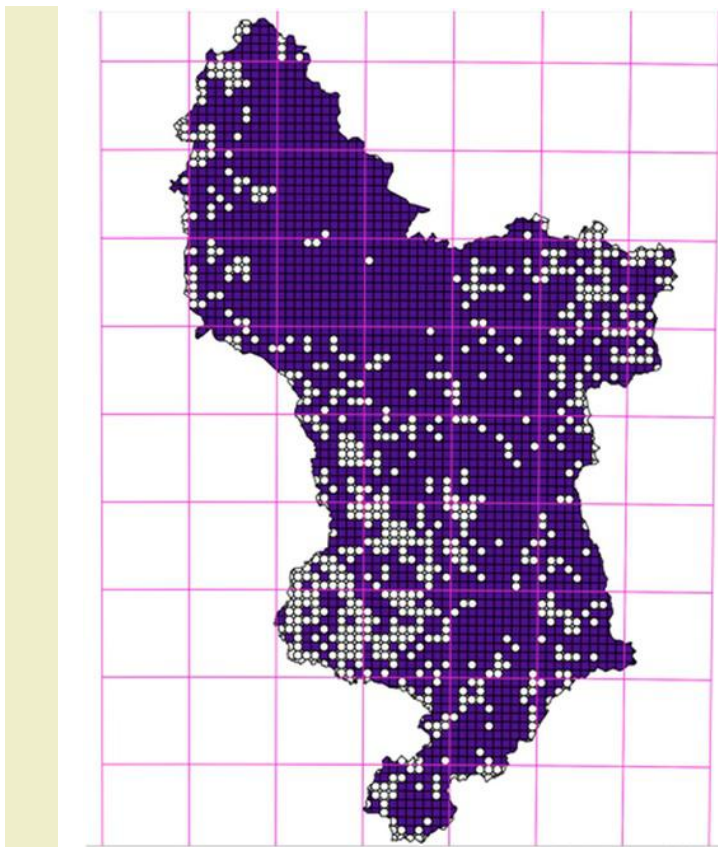
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Small Mammal Trapping is still going strong. Sessions are planned for spring and summer. Definite dates so far are at The Avenue, 30th June and Jim Mart Reserve 31st August/1st/2nd September. Contact Jo Bissell for more information.

We are going into our 13th year of monitoring at the Dormouse site. All data is added to the PTES national monitoring scheme. We have 2 official checks per year in June and October but also a few maintenance days over the winter. If you want to come along please contact Jo Bissell to register your interest.

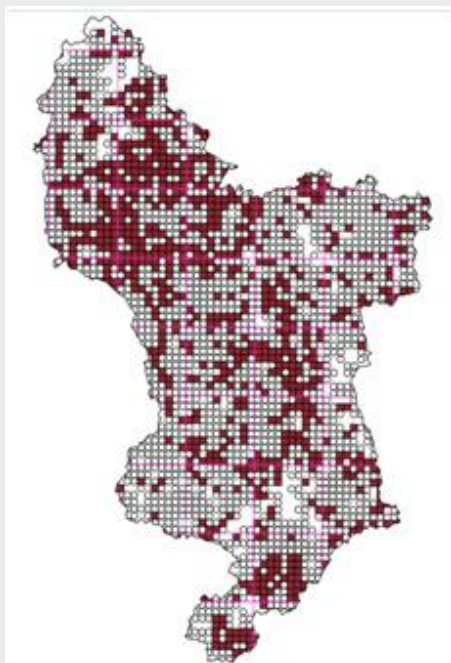
Mammal Recorder's Update



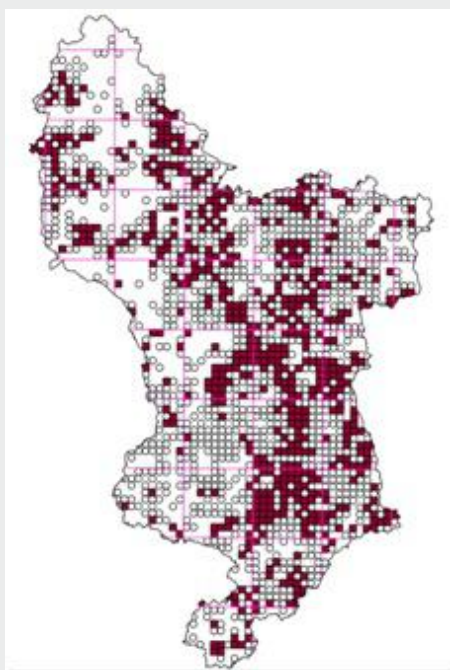
In November 2016 I set the ambitious target of reaching 110,000 on our Derbyshire Mammal Database by 1st January 2018, with prizes for the most 2017 records submitted by an individual DMG member, household members and by an external organisation. In reality this meant receiving over 2,400 records.

So, did we reach that target? Yes, of course we did and more! The map above shows the distribution of mammal records across the county. There are the usual gaps in the south western area of the county as well as the north east which is a little surprising.

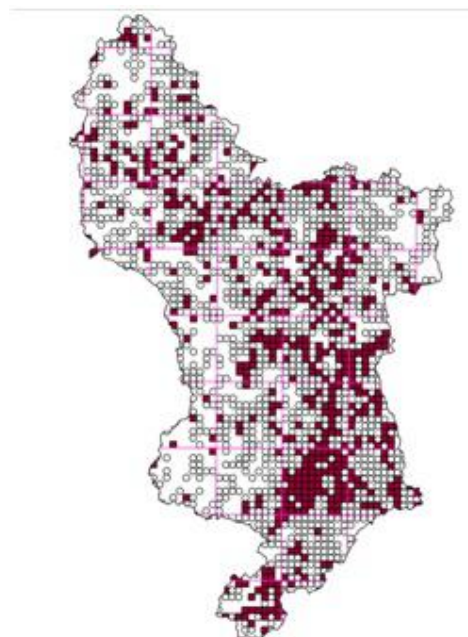
The records came from all sorts of organisations and individuals, from iRecord, the Mammal Tracker app, Facebook, Twitter, as well as the more traditional methods of an end of year spreadsheet.



Mole



Grey squirrel

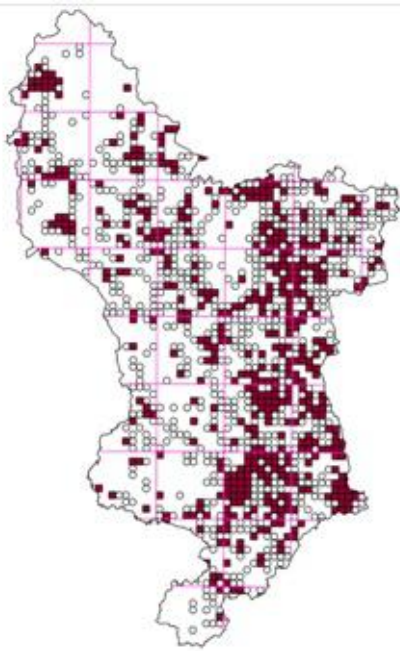


Fox

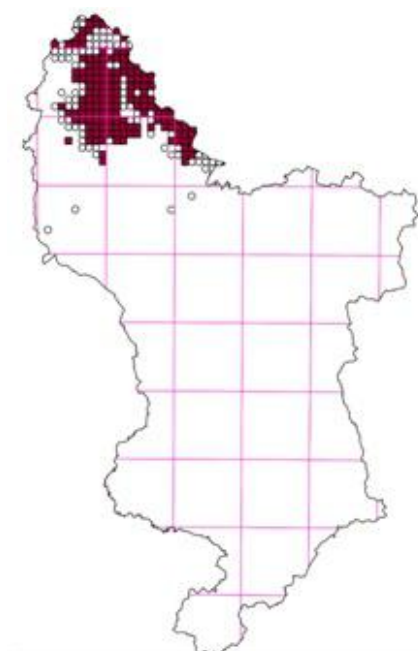
Local organisations who have sent records this year include the Hope Valley Wildlife Group (c/o Helen Perkins), Sorby NHSoc, Moors for the Future project (concentrating on Mountain and Brown Hares), Findern Footpaths Group, Dronfield and District Natural History Group. Data from national organisations were downloaded from the excellent NBN Atlas website. These included the National Trust, BTO, Mammal Society and PTES. I'm going to keep you in suspense a little longer by revealing the winners of the various prizes at the AGM in April, but will say that our total number of records stands at 127,948!

Taking all the mammal records since we closed the database for the Mammal Atlas at the end of 2010, our top ten most recorded mammals in reverse order are Brown Hare, Mountain Hare, Badger, Brown Rat, Wood Mouse, Mole, Hedgehog, Fox, Rabbit and Grey Squirrel. There are many ways to send in records to get us towards our next milestone, for details check the page on how to send in mammal records on our website <http://www.derbyshiremammalgroup.org.uk/records.html>. To inspire you I have created some species maps on QGIS left and below, to show the distribution of a few species using our records and you see that there are still plenty of gaps!!

As ever, I look forward to receiving your mammal records and pushing our total to 130,000 by the end of 2018.



Hedgehog



Mountain Hare

Debbie Alston - County Mammal Recorder

Bushnell Trail Cameras

Last year DMG purchased 10 Bushnell trail cams. During the summer and autumn they have been placed in different locations throughout the county, in gardens, nature reserves and on farmland.

This has been a great way of recording the presence of mammals rather than the usual tracks and signs. By using the cameras we have been able to get records of mammals like weasels and stoats, that often don't leave obvious signs.



At one site, water vole had not been recorded for a couple of years after mink had been known to pass through. A camera was positioned at water level facing a mink raft and managed to get photos of water vole on the raft. The timing of every photo of the water vole was around 01.00 with no sightings in the daytime, so we would still not have known it was there without the camera.



Another camera was positioned hoping to get a picture of bats, going into/out of a potential bat hibernaculum, but instead got this picture of a stoat..

If you know of anywhere where cameras could be placed for a monitoring project during 2018, either with the group or just as an individual then please get in contact with me. Email: jo.ian@live.co.uk



Ian Wildbur

There will be a talk by Lorna Griffiths, of the Notts Dormouse Group, followed by the AGM on 18th April.

The venue has been confirmed as The Poets Corner, Ashover, as in previous years, starting at 7:30 pm.

Exotic in Glossop

On 9 January 2017, a member of the public contacted a local branch of the RSPCA to report a 'badger' with a spring trap attached to its front right leg at Moorfield, on the southern edge of Glossop. The animal in fact turned out to be a raccoon dog, likely to have been kept as a pet that had either escaped or been abandoned. The animal was taken to the RSPCA's Greater Manchester Animal Hospital, where the trap was removed under sedation.



Raccoon dogs (*Nyctereutes procyonoides*) are carnivores, native to Japan, Korea, northern China and eastern Siberia. They have been widely bred for their fur and – as with American mink – some animals have escaped and established feral populations. The species is established in several areas of eastern Europe and is spreading westwards. Also similar to American mink, the species can be invasive and cause damage to indigenous wildlife populations.

By coincidence, the location where the injured was found is very close to the point where a different, but related species, the racoon (*Procyon lotor*) was photographed in November 2012. Racoons are also adaptable carnivores, native to North America and sometimes kept as exotic pets in the UK. The origin of this animal is not known for sure, but the most likely source is indicated in a report in the Manchester Evening News in January 2013. This referred to three pet racoons that had escaped by chewing through the bars of their cage, in Dukinfield, Tameside, a few miles east of Glossop. Two females were recaptured close to their home, but the third animal, a male, was eventually found in a shed at a farm in Charlesworth on the western side of Glossop. If this was the same animal, it had travelled a few miles to the south side of Glossop, then back north-west to Charlesworth, avoiding or crossing several roads and busy traffic on the way.



Dave Mallon

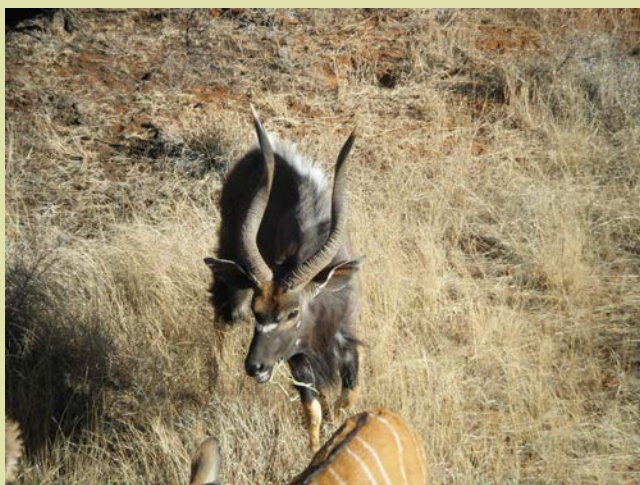
South Africa:

North Cape August 2017

When some friends had to cancel their holiday we took the opportunity to visit the Northern Cape specifically to look for the nocturnal mammals. We started in Witsand nature reserve famous for its flowing white sand dunes, of more interest to us lots of Bush duiker (*Sylvicapra grimmia*) and Yellow mongoose (*Cynictis pencilata*) but we failed to find the Ground pangolin (*Smutsia temiminkii*). Next stop Augrabies with Greater kudu (*Tragelaphus strepsiceros*) and other antelopes and rock hyrax in the hotel garden. Moving north we reached Kgalagadi where the night drives produced lots of Bat-eared foxes (*Otocyon megalotis*) and Spring hares (*Pedetes capensis*). We thought we were prepared for the cold but zero centigrade in an open 4x4 at 05.00 in the dark with wind-chill was very cold. (The animals thought so too, not much in evidence).

Our final destination was Marrick Safari Farm; this is one of a growing number of farms in South Africa which are starting to farm the native animals rather than traditional sheep or cattle because the natives are much better suited to the arid conditions. This gives a wonderful opportunity to see Roan (*Hippotragus equinus*), Nyala (*Tragelaphus angasi*) and Sable (*Hippotragus niger*) very close and not just running off to the horizon as is more usual. The area is also home to some of the specialities that we particularly wanted to see; these are free to come and go as they please so are not guaranteed.

In the farmhouse garden lives a family of Meerkats (*Suricata suricata*). They are right by the kitchen door and happily take handouts but they also wander off into the neighbouring grasslands to look for their own food. It was interesting to see they still had a lookout on duty in the garden and left a babysitter to look after the youngsters when they went foraging. The very over weight dogs took no notice of them whatsoever.



Nyala



Meerkats

We had 3 night drives booked, so set off eagerly on the first night to see what was out there. First up was an Aardvark (*Orycteropus afer*), not the best view, more of a large round moving rock with long ears. The dry grass was quite long making viewing difficult unless the animals were close. A Large-eared mouse (*Malacothrix typical*) right by the vehicle was a good find. Lots of Cape hares, Bat-eared foxes and Spring hares kept us amused but no more specials. The second night produced a distant Aardwolf (*Proteles cristata*) and several of the by now expected foxes and hares.

During the next day we visited a neighbouring property to search the koppies for small mammals. We eventually found a Western rock elephant shrew (*Elephantulus rupestris*) which obligingly sat for photos and ran up and down the rocks. That night we held our breath as we searched again for that elusive species. Finally, nearly buried in the long grass we found a Black-footed cat (*Felis nigripes*). They are very small, can't say I saw the feet. It is actually the pads which are black. The legs are short so it looks even smaller but they have a lovely spotted coat with some stripes. According to the recent BBC series on 'Big' cats it has a hit rate of 60% the highest for any cat, no wonder the mice looked worried. It was a brief view (our guide was disappointed) but we were thrilled.

Our host said we could have an extra night drive for our last night, we cut it short because we had to leave early to drive to Johannesburg and fly home the next morning. This gave us a better view of the Aardvark and the Aardwolf but no more cats.

A great holiday, in total we saw 51 mammal species and 173 birds plus a few reptiles. Must try to go back some time to find that Pangolin.

Shirley Cross



Black-footed cat



Western rock elephant shrew

The next newsletter will be published around August 2018. Please send any articles to Dave Alston. Email: newsletters@derbyshiremammalgroup.org.uk Thank you to all those who have contributed to this newsletter. Apologies to anyone who sent something to me but hasn't had it appear in this issue. It will be used in the next issue.

The next Derbyshire Mammal Group event will be our Mountain Hare walk in the dark peak on 18th March. We'll be looking out for sightings and signs of them, as well as those of other mammals.

Contact Dave Mallon for more details.

Not weasely photographed but..

Some excellent photographs of a weasel taken by a neighbour of Jo and Ian.



The weasel was in Jo and Ian's garden. Their neighbour is a proper photographer and describes these as 'quick snaps'. Definitely better than any serious attempt I've made to photograph anything really..

Thanks to the photographer, Brian Corless for giving permission for these to be used!

New for 2018! Mammal recording walks in various under-recorded parts of the county. Join us for some mammal recording sessions taking place throughout the year, as we attempt to boost the number of records in the database, particularly in those areas where there are very few. Most are on Sundays, but one or two will be Wednesday evenings.

Coming up are:
Bradley Nook Farm, nr. Ashbourne - 14th April
Cromford Canal (Codnor area) - 16th May

Contact: Debbie Alston

Harvest Mouse Survey at Ogston Reservoir



A good turnout on the 6th of January for the first DMG event of 2018, on a bit of a cold and showery day, although pleasant enough when the sun was out.

A total of six Harvest Mouse nests were found during the morning. We also recorded signs of Field Vole, Mole and Badger and collected some Barn Owl pellets for future analysis.



Clockwise from top left: Searching for nests, two of the nests and Field Vole droppings.

Incidentally, one of the very first DMG events was a Harvest Mouse Survey, back in 2003!

Dave Alston

Small Mammal Surveys

2017 small mammal trapping sessions took us from farms near Matlock to parks in Derby city, with the usual mammals that we would expect i.e. wood mice and bank voles but with some surprises like a water shrew at Sinfin Moor park, a good catch of pygmy shrews (15 individuals) but best of all was the trapping session at Meaden Bridge in Bakewell where we caught 7 Water Shrews in one weekend, this is more than we would normally see in a whole year.



Water Shrew

Jo and Ian



Small mammal trapping at
Jim Mart Reserve

Don't forget the group has a twitter
account @derbysmammals
now with 496 followers!



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