



## HAM NEWSLETTER - SUMMER 2008

### “Blog the Hog” and “Find the Mole in the Hole”

#### 2008 Surveys

Hedgehogs and moles, like many of our native species, have suffered from the fragmentation that has occurred to our countryside. Like foxes they have adapted well to living in semi-urban environments. However moves towards impenetrable garden boundaries, tidiness and aesthetics appear to have had an affect on their population too.



Although hedgehogs and moles are present in a wide range of habitats they are easier to locate in areas of short grass such as garden lawns, playing fields and permanent grazed pastures. It would also appear that these areas are especially favoured by hedgehogs for feeding, particularly on mild damp nights, so the chance of finding them is enhanced.



HAM would like to encourage the general public to take part in our hedgehog and mole surveying scheme, by asking you to look for signs and record it on our form and send back in to HAM. If you would like a survey form to complete, or send in, then please contact

Fiona McLoughlin at [hamnewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:hamnewsletter@hotmail.com) or 07799221177

Jessica Lamerton

### Mammals on the Map spring 2008

#### Saturday 24th April, Weir Gardens, (National Trust Site)

This annual action packed evening started off with talks on different surveying techniques. Followed by a demonstration of the Longworth (live) traps for small mammals by Rachel Price and looking at signs of badgers, otter and foxes with Ned. Sadly on this occasion the traps were empty, but Ned's otter conveniently left a spraint on a brick in the Weir boathouse!



The final stage of the workshop was the pipistrelle bat roost from the eaves of the Gate House at the entrance of the Gardens using bat detectors to measure the different frequencies, and then finished off with further detection down by the riverside of the Wye. We had the excitement of detecting the rare lesser horseshoe bat that evening.

The evening was well attended and generated 6 new members for HAM, welcome to those new members.

Jessica Lamerton



#### Volunteers needed on

Friday 13 June at

The Weir Lodge, Hereford

We really would love to see as many people as possible at the Weir this Friday to help out at a bat count. So please come along if you can!

Please call Dave Smith on [01885 400310](tel:01885400310) or [07905 849842](tel:07905849842) if you can come along

### Help is needed by HAM members!!!

#### NDMP surveys

At Haugh Wood, Woolhope Dome and Mathon and licensed help at Welsh Newton.

#### Tube surveys

Near Ross-on-Wye, on the Doward, Golden Valley (National Dormouse Monitoring Project sites).

Tube surveys at Stretton Grandison, near Hereford.

Please contact Hilary Smith as soon as possible – details at the back of the newsletter.

# Dormouse Surveys in Herefordshire



A quick survey of what is happening on the dormouse survey and monitoring front in the county has found:

8 National Dormouse Monitoring Project (NDMP) box schemes although two have not been checked for a while, as there appeared to be no dormice in the past.

8 Dormouse surveys using tubes

5 woods with Dormouse boxes for conservation purposes, and local monitoring

17 licensed dormice handlers involved in voluntary dormouse surveys and Monitoring.

## Bat News

### Winter Bat box counts –

#### Lea and Paget's Wood, (HNT Nature Reserve), Fownhope

We had a very interesting visit on the 2nd March, with a group of noctules in the same box as last year, an empty dormouse nest in another, and whilst taking a photo of the nest, spotted three pipistrelles roosting above it.....it must have been warm! A quick look in the old lime kilns revealed three lesser horseshoe bats.

#### Astwood

We had 2 counts at Astwood in March results for these were:

Sunday 9 March - 6 common pips, 2 dormouse nests, various bat droppings

Sunday 13 March - 6 soprano pips, 3 common pips, 1 long eared bat, various bat droppings

**Canon Frome Court Hibernation Count** – A very civilised hibernaculum complete with electric lights. Lesser horseshoe bats hang amongst the household goods stored in the cellars.

Come along in the summer to count how many fly out!

### VWT Bechstein survey

As part of the local biodiversity action plan for Herefordshire, the Vincent Wildlife Trust will be carrying out a series of surveys for Bechstein's bats throughout the summer. These are one of Britain's rarest bats, and are usually only found in south east Wales and parts of southern England. These surveys will involve the use of an acoustic lure and mist nets. The surveys will be led by Dr Henry Schofield, and there will be an opportunity for HAM members to take part, in small numbers. If you would like to get involved, please contact Dave Smith.

Dave Smith

### Useful Information:

Bat Conservation Trust Helpline Officer:  
Laura Robson 0845 1300228

## Mammal Society Easter Conference 2008

(Hilary Smith)

For those mammal enthusiasts who have never been to a Mammal Society or Bat Conservation Trust, they are a good way to meet lots of other enthusiasts, buy books and other publications, catch up on the latest research, get new ideas for surveys and activities, network if you are looking for work in the field, eat a lot, and generally have an enjoyable weekend!

### Leaflet Distribution

Volunteers for leaflet distribution required! If you have some free time please contact the news letter team.

**Mice and Vikings** – An entertaining and award winning presentation on research into the spread of the house mouse from the middle-east to Great Britain and Europe, using DNA analysis.

PS – the researcher would like more house mouse bodies for analysis, so if you have one contact Eleanor Jones at [ej5@york.ac.uk](mailto:ej5@york.ac.uk)

## Hedgehogs in Britain.

Now a BAP species as a result of evidence of significant decline. Results of HOGWATCH survey (20,000 records received) showed higher population densities in arable lowlands in the east and north, with lower populations in the south west and London. This could be related to the presence of badgers as 2 – 3 main setts in 10km sq can wipe out hedgehogs, or type of grassland.

## Lugg Meadows Walk – May 2008

Mid May is the ideal time for a walk on the Lugg Meadows. Flowers are blooming, and birds are singing! As I walked through the meadow, there was a sea of buttercups, clover and hedge parsley. All the flowers had grown tall with all the recent rain, combined with warmer weather.

There were birds aplenty, herring gulls and pigeons aside! Mallards busily swarm about in search of food, blackbirds singing in the trees. (They seem to be particularly numerous in woods and gardens everywhere this year).

On the opposite side of the road, the Lower Lugg Meadows, I noticed a sign on the gate, asking people not to walk this particular area until July, as Curlews are ground nesting birds, and at this time of year, it is important that they are not disturbed. As the sun was setting low in the sky, all around was quiet and calm, a pair of swans slowly gliding up the river added to a serene atmosphere.

It is often surprising, when walking anywhere, in woods by a river or up a mountain, if you pay particular attention to the surroundings you are in, quite how much wildlife, and signs of wildlife can be seen. So next time you are out and about, take a little time to note down what you see. Don't forget to take a pair of binoculars and a camera, you never know what you might find!

Yvain Walker

## Bat Swarming – John Altringham

Research based in cave systems in the Yorkshire Dales and North York Moors

If you are surveying a possible swarming site the peak activity time varies with the month, but is generally at least 3 hrs after sunset in late August, 4 hours in September and 3 hours in October.

Distance travelled and species composition varied throughout the season. Main species caught were Natterer's, Brandt's, Daubenton's together with other Myotis species, long-eared bats and Barbastelles.

In one cave there was an estimated 4000+ Natterer's bats, with 3 – 400 bats visiting a night from a 60 km radius catchment area.

Important features of good bat caves were found to be: Big, long caves with varied internal structures including big chambers, the entrance size, shape, water content and surrounding habitat type were not found to be significant.

Caves and mines are very important for bat conservation and if lost can affect the population of a number of species in a large area;

## Mammal Recording in Herefordshire

As reported in the last newsletter a number of **Otters** have been killed on our roads in the past few months. Please if you find one telephone the Environment Agency on 02920 245 168 (their Biodiversity team). Once notified, they will collect all otter carcasses for analysis at Cardiff University. They also use this evidence to try to address 'Black Spots' and in planning applications. They will want a grid reference and a clear description of the locality. Please send me the data also for HAM's database.

Thank you for records you have sent in – please continue. We plan to produce maps at our AGM to see if we have made progress in producing a realistic distribution of our mammals. Remember **everyone** can contribute in one or more ways:

- **Look at what the cat brings in!** Potentially a fantastic source of information, you may even get a Harvest Mouse or Water Shrew. Small mammals are not easy to identify especially if they are young, so take a photo to send in with your record. Or pop the body in the freezer and we can look at it later.
- **Late to bed and early to rise.** Summer gives us early mornings and late evenings when mammals are likely to be active and be seen. Walk quietly, or sit or stand quite still - it can be very rewarding!
- **Look out for road kills of all species (and see above).** Again a camera is an advantage and essential to confirm some species.
- **Adopt a square/s.** Record **all** the mammal species in a given kilometre square(s) convenient for you; no more than two records per year of common species are needed. Again use your camera for footprints or droppings.

Recording sheets can be obtained from me or in an Excel format from HBRC. Any other queries about recording contact me.

Val Jermy

# Fallow Deer: Dama dama

Identification: There are four main colour variations, the most common being tan/fawn colour with white spotting which become indistinct in winter, with a white rump patch outlined with a characteristic black horse-shoe.

Life span: 15 years, males rarely exceed 8-10 years.



The fallow deer was introduced into Britain by the Normans in the 10th century and are now widespread in England and Wales still patchy in Scotland. The habitat the deer occupies is mainly mature broadleaf woodland with under-storey, open coniferous woodland and open farmland. Where they feed on grass, herbs, foliage, acorns, berries, fungi and bark. These one's locally pictured are grassing on mixed grassland.

The peak for their activity is dawn and dusk, most hours of the daytime is

spent "lying up", in undergrowth. Fallow deer rarely drink and get all the water they need from dew and moisture in the plants they eat. The males are known as bucks and the females are known as does, outside the mating season the bucks roam around in their own herds separate from the does.



During the mating season, known as the rut, which usually begins in October and lasts about a month but can start sooner and run longer dependent on the environment, season and population density. A single buck will defend a rutting stand and mark his territory by scraping the soil with his hooves and antlers, urinating and rubbing his head against saplings, fraying the bark as you walk around local woodland you may see signs of this as pictured below. The intent of all this is to attract and mate with as many females as possible within his territory.

When out walking you may see other signs of deer without seeing them pictured below is a Fallow Deer slot (footprint) and Deer pellets. These are characteristic in there shape.

Tim Barber



## More Animal Fun Video's

Click on the below links to see some animal action, you will need sound!!!

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hkqgMPPg2VI> – Dramatic Lemur

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FzRH3iTOPrk> – Sneezing Panda

Jessica Lamerton

## Dates for your Diary

We have lots of exciting events coming up this summer so if you have time and can come along please get involved!

Dormouse Box Checks, Queenswood

Thursday June 19th (contact Trevor for June 19th only)

Wednesday July 16th Wednesday 20th August

Wednesday 17th September Wednesday 15th October

Contact Hilary to check date and times for all other checks

## JUNE

20th June, Tuck Mill.

About 3 miles West of Hereford . Lots of helpers required for this count. We have recorded over 1,200 pips at this property in the past

8th June, Fromes Hill

One or two volunteers are needed to do bat counts at sites which have not been surveyed for some time.

The first is at Fromes Hill and has a preliminary date of Sun 8th June (this could be changed if someone in the area is keen but can't make that date).

15th June, Lyonshall

Bat count which can be counted between 6th and 15th June.

If anyone would like to get involved in either bat count at Fromes Hill or Lyonshall please contact Dave on 01885 400310 or 07905 849842

11 June (Wednesday) Holm Lacy Hotel

Lesser Horseshoe Bat Survey

Lots of people needed to cover the exit and several flypast points

Contact Hilary Smith for specific details and confirmation of dates. Tel 01432 357 732

12 June (Thursday) Ledbury

Lesser Horseshoe Bat Survey

The second survey of LHBs in Ledbury is scheduled.

Contact Kate Wollen on 07786 526 280 to reserve your place and to confirm location and time

13 June (Friday) The Weir Lodge - Please come along! Lots of volunteers needed!

No specific dates finalised yet (but between 6 - 25 June)

Volunteer helpers will be required if the count is confirmed

## JULY

Wednesday July 3rd and Tuesday 15th July, Lugg Meadows.

Noctule, serotine, pipistrelle transect. 2-3 people needed

## AUGUST

Various NBMP Daubenton's Bat Surveys on Riverbanks around the county.

Contact Dave (see HAM contacts).

To be confirmed..

Water Shrew Survey at Humber Full details including date to be confirmed - please contact Hilary for more information

Have a great summer everyone and hopefully we will see you at one of the events coming up over the next few months. The next newsletter will be out in September, if you have any events or articles you wish to include please send them in by August 21st to the newsletter team: [hamnewsletter@hotmail.com](mailto:hamnewsletter@hotmail.com)

If any HAM members wish to contribute articles, stories or photographs of interest then please do send them in to the Newsletter team at: [hamnewsletter@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:hamnewsletter@hotmail.co.uk)

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## HAM CONTACTS

**HAM Main email:** [herefordmammals@bigfoot.com](mailto:herefordmammals@bigfoot.com)

**HAM Website (currently dormant):** <http://hambb.mysite.wanadoo-members.co.uk/>

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