

Suffolk Badger and other Mammals Group



Jun 2012

Issue 7

Welsh Government listen to science & opt to vaccinate badgers!

After a comprehensive review of the science, the Welsh Government has decided to vaccinate badgers against bovine tuberculosis (bTB). This is the only sensible, practical way forward; culling would have made “no meaningful” contribution at great cost to the Welsh taxpayer.

Following the review, the Minister concluded that a cull of badgers is not necessary & would not bring about any substantial reduction in the incidence of bovine TB. Vaccination represents a safe & satisfactory alternative, that can start this year. The Badger Trust now calls on Caroline Spelman to reconsider her costly, counter-productive cull plans for England.

English Judicial review date announced.

A date for the Badger Trust’s Judicial Review of the Coalition Government’s decision to kill badgers in England has been announced.

Two trial culls were due to commence in the Autumn, in Somerset and Gloucestershire, but have been delayed by the trust’s legal action. The judicial review will be heard in the High Court of Justice, Queen’s Bench Division, in the Administrative Court on June 25 and 26.

The Trust will ask the court to overturn DEFRA’s decision on the basis of three grounds.

Kiln Meadow Update

On March 13th, Kiln Meadow in Ipswich won a vote to make it a Local Nature Reserve. Well done to all who contributed to save this precious site, of value for its toads, dormice, birds and reptiles.

Special points of interest:

- Chairman retires after 27yrs!
- Suffolk Badger update
- Dormice in Wolves wood
- Worms!
- Latest from the Margaret Grimwade Hide!
- Have you seen a hedgehog?
- Surveyors wanted!

AGM 2012

This years Annual General Meeting will be held on Saturday 8th September at Culford Village Hall.

Please make a note of the date in your diary!

Unlike previous years, we will be meeting in the afternoon **to get updates on Suffolk’s Mammals.** Then in the evening we will be learning how to identify Bat calls, before heading out to Lackford Lakes to hopefully, see & hear, these amazing animals amongst the other wildlife at the reserve.

Suffolk Badger Update

Adrian Hinchliffe

We are now well into British Summer time, hence the cold conditions for the Jubilee bank holiday weekend!

The weather has certainly been very mixed; a second very dry Winter resulted in Hose pipe bans, but then after the announcement we had the wettest April for more than 100yrs! Flooding caused chaos at the Margaret Grimwade Hide as can be seen later.

Its been an extremely busy time with the all too common Badger Road Casualties continuing to pour in. However this year in addition I have had reports of at least 6 dead Otters on Suffolk roads. Its important to try to collect these before too much damage occurs as the bodies are sent to Cardiff University Otter project team (www.otterproject.cf.ac.uk) who carry out detailed post mortems and research. According to their newsletter; out of 1908 casualties tested, 85% of these deaths were attributed to road traffic collisions. The remaining 15 % were as a result of drowning and juvenile abandonment.

Many thanks go to Suffolk Police who regularly report Badger casualties and have assisted in the collection of Otters such as one in the middle of the A12!



Whilst visiting SWT's Lackford Lakes at the beginning of April, I came across an injured Otter being taken to the visitor centre by a member of public. It had a deep cut under her chin and despite the best attempts of East Winch RSPCA she had to be put to sleep several

weeks later. She had vision problems as well as behavioural issues, probably as a result of a large blow to the head (presumed to be from a car).

Many thanks to Alec Sutenwood who continues to assist me with injured Badgers, unfortunately many of these end up being euthanased. A few days before I was due to head up to Scotland however, a report of a lone wandering Badger cub came in.

Upon investigating, the quite healthy looking cub was returned to its sett and things seemed to be looking good. Literally the day before I was leaving I received a further email from Eva Shepherd saying "I am afraid I have just found a pair of them in my goat shed."



The Suffolk Badger & Other Mammals Group aim to promote the conservation of Badgers and other mammals in Suffolk through recording their distribution, studying their ecology, raising awareness and providing advice.

Please continue to support our group and get involved in whatever way you can.

We are looking for SB&OMG members to help us promote the profile of our group and give advice, knowledge, and recruit new members of the public at various events and functions in the future. If you think you would like to get involved please get in contact with Adrian.

Planning can often conflict with Badgers but if Setts are located and flagged up in advance or at an early stage in the planning application, the Badgers and their homes can often be mitigated for and any delays for the builders minimized. Please get in contact if you think a Badger sett will be directly affected by any building work. **Please don't assume we already know about it.**

Seen a dead Badger?

Please send in any Suffolk Badger casualty records or sett reports to:
adrian@wondersofwildlife.co.uk

Suffolk Badger Update

Adrian Hinchliffe

It would appear that the returned cub had found its sibling & taken shelter in some straw. Both were now slightly dehydrated, so a decision was made to remove them, give them fluids & rehydrate before taking them down to "Wildlife Aid" Rescue in Surrey.

Simon Cowell did an amazing job raising the 3 cubs found last year in Essex, so I knew they would be in superb hands. On returning from Carna, an email awaited apologising for the delay, but reporting a dead Badger several weeks prior. It was in the very location where the cub was found! This Sow was more than likely the cubs mother, so thankfully the cubs rescue was just in time, with all credit to Eva and her dogs vigilance!



Visiting the "wildlife Aid" website you will see the Badgers are making great progress along with other orphans and all being well, will be released later in the year in smaller groups. These cubs certainly made their presence felt despite their small size in more ways than one!



Whilst I was away another badger in Suffolk was given a second chance by members of the N.E. Essex group. Judy (Hotline 07751 572175) knew I was away & called in local members Les and Rose Rutt to a casualty at Boxford. They took her to Ardmore Vets who decided that it was pure concussion & that a good sleep was all that was required, However this sow had cubs! She was taken to the NEEBG rehab pen and was still comatose at 11pm, but by 7am she had eaten all the food and dug the soil out of a tyre. She had then retired back to bed. That afternoon around 6pm she was put back in the cage and taken back to Boxford to be released. Interestingly Judy, Les & Rose met up with the lady and her daughter who had found the badger on the road & showed them a badger sett. However, not getting the desired response from the badger they

looked around and found another. This time she very excitedly couldn't wait to go home. Well done all!

Unfortunately its not all been good news for our Badgers. In March I had the horrific incident of a family, whilst out walking in the countryside, having their tranquillity shattered by the screams from a badger. It was caught in a Drag Snare! These devices are still legal unfortunately and I had no option but to have the badger despatched on the spot due to its horrific injuries. The drag had become wedged in some roots and the badger in its attempts to free itself, was left hanging from a bridge! Everyone involved were left stunned and shocked that we can inflict such suffering on our wildlife. This incident could quite easily have been a someone's pet. Defra are currently consulting on the humaneness of snares and so I have written and sent pictures too graphic for here, for hopeful inclusion.

Despite having to cancel an earlier survey in Haverhill due to snow, there are now several opportunities to help record our mammals here in Suffolk (see flyers later).

Many thanks to all of our members who give up their time freely to get involved and also to all those who continue to kindly donate & support our group, it is much appreciated!

Whilst on a thank you spree I would just like to say a special thanks to Richard Woolnough who has retired from Chairman status after 27years! As my "Guru" I know he will still be a valuable part of the Working Group and will no doubt heckle me even more at future Agm's! (New Chair please take note!)

The Working Group now consist of Martin Hancock (Chair), Julie March (Secretary), Alan Miller, Arthur Rivett, Simone Bullion, Richard & myself.



Suffolk Badger Update

Adrian Hinchliffe

Jubi "Lee" - a Royal weekend Rescue!

At 7am on Bank Holiday Monday dog walker Peter Evans found a very wet and cold, Badger cub lying alone in the grass. He informed friend Peter Hobbs who then went out with his wife Jackie to see if the cub was still there. After finding the shivering, wet bundle of fur, they took the decision to remove it and warm it up as it was clearly in difficulty. The cub was very close to a Sett but unfortunately some rabbit proof fencing had been erected between the field and the sett and despite the cub obviously getting around the fencing at one end (presumably following its mum) it had become disorientated and had been left out in the open exposed to the elements rather than the warmth of its sett. After speaking to Jeff Hayden of the Badger Trust, Mr Hobbs was put in touch with myself and so began the task of rehydrating the very



lethargic cub. After several feeds and consulting with Simon & Lucy from Wildlife Aid rescue, the decision was taken to reintroduce the cub back to its sett.

I have to say I was very nervous and concerned about this, as the cub was now getting used to feeding and had picked up considerably. The worry of whether or not the cub would be accepted back to the clan after human contact was a huge potentially life threatening risk. If it worked however the cub would be much better off being with its own family. At dusk Mr Hobbs and myself carried the cub back to the sett. As we approached there was already an adult Badger out on one of the spoil heaps, but thankfully the wind was in our favour and we went unnoticed. Nervously we put down the cage and as soon as the cub smelt the soil and grass he went into hyper mode! I was trying to tie up a string pulley to the cage door so that once any theoretical interaction between the badgers and cub looked ok, I could open the door, but the cub had other ideas, it was on its back feet scratching and whimpering to be released - it was a great sign!

As instructed by Simon, several handfuls of dirt and grass were rubbed over the cub rather unceremoniously to try to remove any foreign scent before taking the plunge and asking Peter to release him.

As Peter removed the cage door the cub shot out & ran straight up a badger pathway & then **turned right** "oh no its going the wrong way" we thought, but no, it stopped at an entrance we **hadn't spotted, sniffed & then shot down** another entrance next to that. We both stood & listened hoping not to hear any fights & thankfully all was quiet. We waited several minutes & then departed with large grins and much relief!



The Suffolk Badger Group's remote camera has been put to the test again this year. The Pro Stalk unit supplied at Discount to us from Gardenature has proven very useful. It is used to monitor injured badgers in rehab, Otter activity and most recently it was used to investigate a troublesome badger under a summer house. The camera's footage was to prove that actually it

gardenature
WILDLIFE CAMERA SYSTEMS

"Gardenature" have very kindly agreed to give our members a 10% discount off any of their wildlife / nestbox camera systems (excluding accessories and other products).

(<http://www.gardenature.co.uk/>)

wasn't a badger collecting prized garden plants for bedding, but instead revealed it was a play area for a vixen and her 4 fox cubs!

The below pictures were taken after Mr Storey was keen to see what was foraging in the straw he'd put out behind his garden. In just one 24hr period the camera photographed by night; One pair of Roe Deer, two pairs of Foxes, several Badgers, and by day; Wood Pigeon, Mallard, Pheasant, Collared Dove, Grey Squirrel, Moorhen and Rabbit to name but a few!



Dormice discovered after 40years.

After an absence of 40years, Dormice have been located at Wolves Wood near Hadleigh. The RSPB recently announced their arrival and believe this fantastic news is a direct result following improved management of the size and quality of the woodland.

Worms!

Did you know there are 26 native Earthworm species? Forming up to 65% of a Badgers diet the Earthworm not only plays an important role in its ecology but are crucial to soil fertility. Earthworm species that live in the soil can be divided into 3 groups: Litter Dwellers, Deep Burrowers, and Shallow burrowers. *Lumbricus terrestris* being the largest .

Earthworms have no eyes, but have skin cells which can detect light. They also breathe through their skin and need moisture to absorb oxygen.

Do you have an interesting story / comment / picture with reference to a mammal? If you could kindly send them in to me then they may well appear in the next edition of the newsletter.

(adrian@wondersofwildlife.co.uk)

Chairman Retires after 27 years!



Apparently I chaired my first annual meeting of the Badger Group in 1984 and I definitely chaired my last meeting in 2011. That is 27 years and as a firm believer in a maximum term of 5 years for any Chairperson I find that slightly embarrassing!

Of course for the majority of that time I had no choice in the matter and no power. I worked out of County and was only home at weekends and Margaret Grimwade ran the Suffolk Badger Group. She gathered around her a fantastic team of volunteers but insisted that I should chair the

annual meetings. She rang me in advance to consult over the programme but I never had to do much but agree. On the morning of the meeting I would be handed the running order and who to thank – and to be honest it was a bit of a doddle.

Of course with Margaret's untimely death in 2007 things changed and it took a whole team to do what Margaret had done single handed. Fortunately she had earmarked Adrian to carry on much of her work and he does an excellent job. Matt and Judith who came forward to be part of the original team have also retired this year, along with Dorothy Casey and I give them my personal thanks for their assistance.

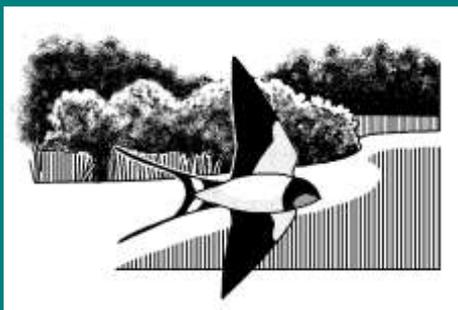
Martin Hancock is your new Chairman and I know that the Group is in good hands – and of course Margaret would have approved of his appointment. I shall stay on the Committee and hopefully be actively involved in matters mustelid for a few more years.

It is encouraging that badgers are now present throughout the County and doing well and otters have returned to most of their previous haunts. A much better situation than the early 80's when badgers had a much more restricted range in the County and otters were near extinction. However this brings its own challenges and there is still much work to do to ensure their conservation.

With the benefit of hindsight my most important contribution to badgers and otters in Suffolk was to appoint Margaret to the job of badger coordinator back in 1982.

Richard Woolnough June 2012





Little Ouse Headwaters Project

www.lohp.org.uk

10th Anniversary Biological Recording Weekend Saturday 23rd & Sunday 24th June 2012

The LOHP land holding now covers a total of 65 hectares, over 11 diverse sites. To assess our wildlife gains and losses ten years on, and to help evaluate the impact we've made on the valley's wildlife, we are organising an informal 'stock-taking' weekend of biological recording:

You are welcome to join us for any part of the weekend – we will use **Blo' Norton Village** Hall as a base, and provide an introduction to the project and the local area for anyone visiting for the first time.

Information, maps and drinks will be available at the hall between 10 a.m. and 5 p.m.

- At 5 p.m. on the Saturday we will be hosting a barbeque for all attending the weekend, and our other regular volunteers. It would be helpful if you can let us know if you will be coming to the barbeque.

More information is available on our recently re-launched website (www.lohp.org.uk), which also holds more information about the project, including maps of our sites, and details of local accommodation. Camping is also possible on a local field.

If you are interested in attending please contact us at enquiries@lohp.org.uk, or phone Jo Pitt on 01379 898684 or Helen Smith on 01379 687680

Please pass this information on to anyone you think may be interested in the event.



The LOHP is a registered charity, established in 2002 by local residents keen to take practical action to help protect and restore threatened aspects of the local landscape and its wildlife. It is located on the Norfolk/Suffolk border at the headwaters of the Little Ouse River (which forms the county border). As well as managing sites for the benefit of wildlife, we are committed to increasing public access and enjoyment of the project area by creating new footpaths, providing guided walks, and encouraging people to become involved as volunteers.



North Sea

BECOME A VOLUNTEER



SURVEYOR OR RECORDER.

As a leading charity in the proactive conservation of marine wildlife, **the charity "MARINE life" relies on a diverse team of highly-valued** volunteers to undertake shoreline, small boat and ferry-based surveys for whales, dolphins and seabirds in the North Sea, Channel, Irish Sea and Bay of Biscay and Supporters sending us their whale and dolphin sightings from the seas around the UK.

To train volunteers in what to look for in identifying marine wildlife in UK waters, MARINElife are running a training day for new volunteers:

Location: Dunwich Village Hall

Date & Time: Sunday 1st July from 10.30 to 15.30

Cost: £30 (£25 for Suffolk Wildlife Trust Members)

So if you are enthusiastic, reliable and want to make a positive contribution to our **crucial work, please join MARINElife's Training Day**

PLEASE CONTACT TRICIA DENDLE TO BOOK YOUR PLACE

tricia.dendle@marine-life.org.uk



Orford Ness Bio-Blitz – August 4th

On Saturday August 4th this year, I am planning a “Bio-Blitz” mass biological recording event on Orford Ness.

The largest vegetated shingle spit in Europe, Orford Ness is a SSSI and has multiple other designations, either alone or as part of a larger area: it is a National Nature Reserve and a Ramsar site as well as an SPA, AONB, SAC & ESA. It was home to an experimental military base for the RFC and RAF and later the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment for much of the 20th century, which limited access and provided a degree of protection to the site before it passed into the ownership of the National Trust in 1993.

Being such a significant site, a good deal of biological recording has taken place over the last 18 years or so, particularly with respect to birds and moths, but there is still great scope for additional recording of all kinds, both of common species and the more unusual. There is a good population of Water voles, Hares, Weasels, Stoats, & Chinese water deer with evidence of Otters and Harvest mice to be found on the site as well. In addition, Common seals, Grey seals and Harbour porpoises are occasionally seen from the shore. New species of invertebrates are frequently recorded here. Reptile records are, perhaps surprisingly, rather lacking, whilst plant communities are changing in composition and coverage over time. Altogether, despite the dedicated work of our regular volunteers, there are a number of significant holes in our current records, and a frustrating lack of detail with many of the older records that we do have.

Although vegetated shingle and lichen heath form the most significant habitats on the site - and the most difficult to access without causing undue damage – there are also grazing marshes, salt-marshes, reed-beds, mud-flats, river walls, brackish lagoons and a good quantity of “brownfield” hard-standing and abandoned military structures on the site. I hope to make sections of all these habitats available to explore around the central section of the 16km long spit.

Some Bio-Blitz events are entirely open to the public. However, access difficulties and the sensitive and hazardous nature of Orford Ness preclude this and will mean the event must be restricted in numbers. Booking will be required, and I would like to focus on those who have a genuine interest in the habitats and species available on the site. I would urge anyone interested in participating to get in touch as soon as possible.

As well as the Bio-Blitz, Orford Ness will be open to the public as usual on that Saturday. Normal visitor access is limited to a number of clearly marked trails, and these will remain in place on this day, with Bio-Blitzers alone having access to other parts of the site. The ferry – which provides visitor access to the site - will be in use by the public from 10.00am onwards, so I would like to bring all BBers across before then.

Our regular ringers should have mist nets and a moth trap in operation whilst the Suffolk Moth Group will have been recording the evening before, which will hopefully provide some early records on the day.

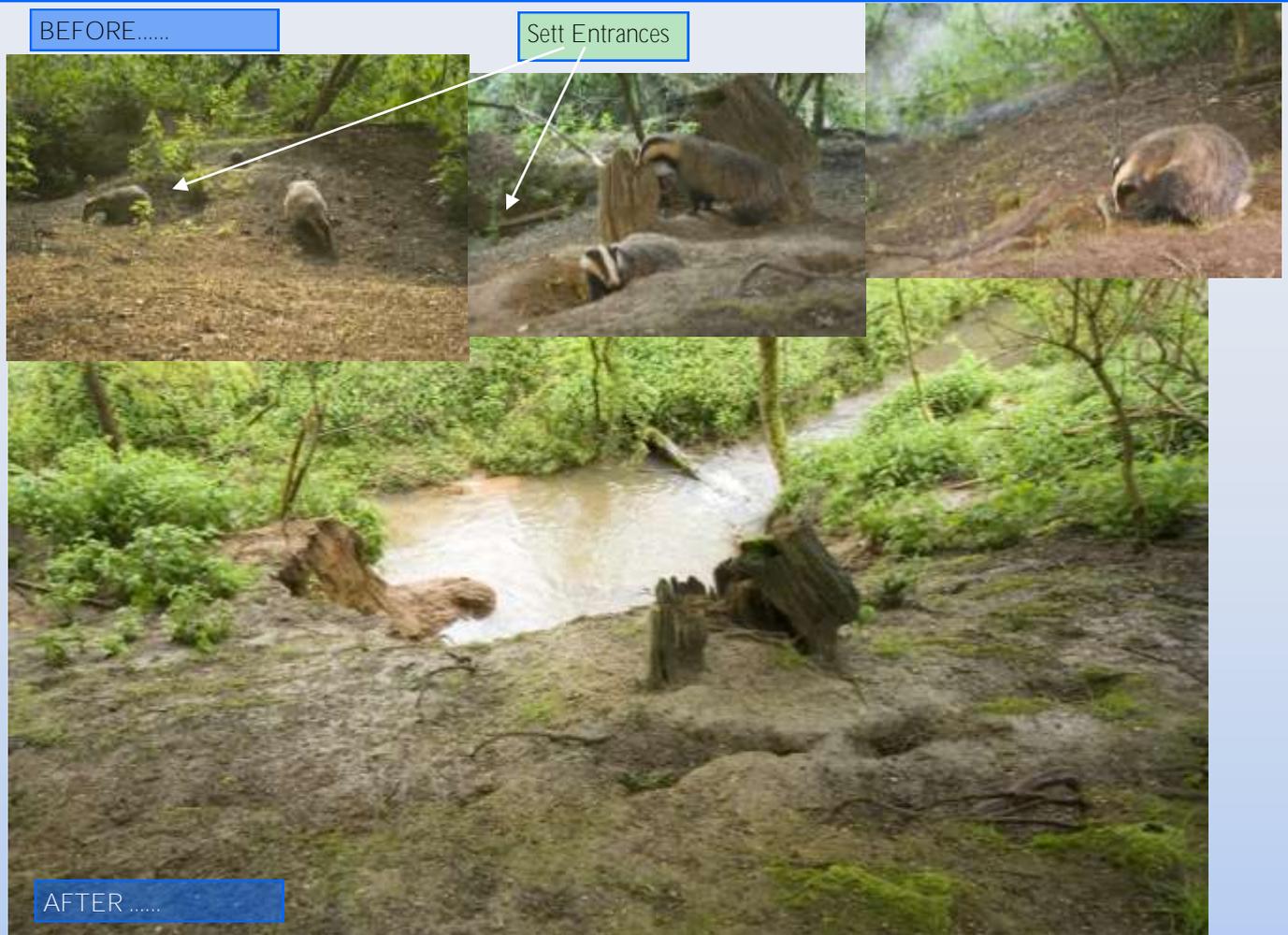
Although anyone participating in the event will be free to leave at any time, I would hope that some at least would enjoy staying all day until around 5.00pm, when we will round up and head back to the mainland. Towards the end of the afternoon, I would hope to present a summary of the more interesting and unusual species that have been found on the day for the benefit of our general visitors as well as BBers.

On the Sunday, following the main day, a select few invitees (even more heavily restricted by access difficulties and sensitivity of habitat) will, I hope, head down by boat to the southern end of the spit to carry out further recording on the vegetated shingle in that section, which has come under increasing pressure in recent years from unauthorised visits by boaters and anglers. Records from this area in particular are rather scarce and we would like to gather as much information as possible now as part of a process to monitor and prevent further damage and decline.

If you would be interested in coming along for this Bio-Blitz day or would simply like to know more about the event and the site in general, please contact me either by phone on 01394 450900, or by email:

david.fincham@nationaltrust.org.uk

Latest From the Margaret Grimwade Badger Hide....



As the winter drought continues causing hose-pipe bans across much of our region, floods have wreaked havoc at the Margaret Grimwade hide!

Last year saw the welcome return, after several barren years, of Cubs at the hide. However, this year, just a few days after the hide had opened to the public, a torrent of water came down the normally small stream, washing away one of last years breeding chambers. Approximately 30sqM has been lost downstream!

With an immediate risk to health and Safety the Suffolk Wildlife Trust were quick to act & fencing has been erected to prevent access to the previous much loved area where the badgers used to feed. The focus is now to the right hand side of the hide as well as a smaller area in the front. However, as a bonus, keep an eye out for the blue and orange flash of a Kingfisher as it has been quick to find the new sandy cliff face.



Thankfully Cubs have emerged again this year so be quick to book yourselves a trip to the hide and experience the joy of watching these bouncing humbugs!

Exposed Sett Tunnels

Bat Care—a personal view (Suffolk Bat Group newsletter—Pipspeak)

Nick Woods

The following is just a comment on the issue in light of recent shifts in the emphasis in bat conservation and attitudes to it within different groups. As I understand it, the Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT), under which the Suffolk Bat Group (SBG) operates, has a policy of not engaging in welfare issues and not encouraging the handling or display of captive wild animals.

This may be corporate policy, but in my view it should not influence what individual members of SBG (who are not obliged to be members of SWT) may choose to do. Caring for injured bats is one of the very best ways of learning about the animals, and provides a good opportunity for contact with the public and spreading the word about bats in general. Bat-care does not require a Natural England (NE) Licence, but it is vital that prospective carers seek guidance on techniques, including human health issues, and are aware of the legal implications of having protected species in their possession.

Several of the long-time members of the SBG have spent many hours on bat-care, have gained insights into bat biology and amassed experience on the best ways to handle injured or sick bats. **Certainly, I'm glad I got involved in this way. However, we all have to make decisions** on how to spend our resources for best purpose, and many eventually decide that effort is better put into bat-conservation issues in general, rather than travelling miles to pick up the next doomed cat-caught Pipistrelle.

Hedgehog Tracking Tunnels

Have you seen a hedgehog? I spotted my years first Hedgehog (unfortunately dead) during February this year . In a bid to monitor populations, the mammal society have joined forces with two universities to trial the efficacy of using hedgehog footprint tracking tunnels. The tunnels are baited with (& I thought peanut butter was elaborate for Pine Marten!) HOT DOGS! These can only be reached by going down the tunnels and walking through the ink pads leaving their prints on the paper. The tunnels are proving to be easily deployed and cost £9.95 making home use very affordable.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Please note that all subscriptions are now due. If you wish to continue to support the Suffolk Badger & Other Mammals Group, and receive newsletters, and other information after this years AGM, please complete the slip below and return it together with a minimum donation of £5.00 to (cheques made payable to “Suffolk Badger group”) Martin Hancock, Treasurer, Suffolk Badger & Other Mammals Group, c/o SWT, Brooke House, Ashbocking, Ipswich, IP6 9JY or bring it along on the day of the AGM.

Name.....

Address.....

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Post code..... Email address.....

Donation.....

Thank you.