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Dormouse on the A30

Image by Miroslav Hlavko. www.hlavko.webnode.cz/



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A word from our chair – Dave Groves

So far this year we have managed to run a good range of events and work closely with a number of local and national organisations to further the Group's aims:

- **To raise awareness of mammals, their ecology and their conservation needs, particularly in Cornwall.**
- **To promote and carry out studies and surveys of Cornish mammals and their habitats on sound scientific principles and, where appropriate, to publish the results.**
- **To further an interest in, and understanding of, mammals amongst the membership and the general public.**

We are continuing this with our Biodiversity Action Plan Dormouse Event in September, our Harvest mouse-themed AGM in Ponsanooth on October 31st and our December Christmas Quiz as well as assorted surveys and talks.

In addition to this we are now supporting individual member's projects through our equipment loans and small projects grants. And if that isn't enough, we also now have our own insurance for all events for members and for Group equipment (subject to certain conditions of course) as well as for a limited number of events open to the general public.

I hope many of our newer members who have joined through recent events will enjoy our events over the coming year and that all of you will continue to come along and support the Group, get involved, and promote your own mammal interests.

Thanks, Dave Groves

Events for Autumn and Winter 2015:

Oct 4th – Bodwannick small mammal survey – lead Steve A.

Oct 14th – Hawkins Arms, Zelah. Next CMG committee meeting. ALL WELCOME. Lead Dave G.

Oct 19th – Bude CWT group talk. Lead Dave G.

Oct 27th-28th – Exeter Mammal Society Autumn Symposium. Full details on The Mammal Society website.

Oct 25th – Mabe Community Hall, TR10 9HB. **CMG AGM.** 1pm start with a **talk on Harvest Mice**, lunch and field visit. Lead Sarah H.

Nov 24th – Carrick U3A talk. Lead Dave G.

Dec 2nd. Hawkins Arms, Zelah. Christmas Quiz. Lead Paul D.

Jan (date & venue TBC). Badger talk. Lead Kelly M.

Feb (date & venue TBC). Talk by Robbie McDonald. Lead Paul D.

Cornwall Mammal Group Committee – Do you want to join us?

Over the last few months there have been some committee changes;

All of us would like to thank Phin Frewin for her session as Group Secretary. Phin has had to resign due to her work commitments and we have tried to make some changes to reduce the workload for our next secretary. I am currently holding the fort for some of the role and Steve Adams has taken on the new Membership Secretary – Steve will be co-ordinating our membership list and adding new members. We are hoping to improve our record keeping and make sure the database is up-to-date.

Kelly Moyes has joined the committee. Kelly is a lecturer at the University of Exeter Centre for Ecology and Conservation at Penryn with a particular interest in red deer and badgers. Kelly will take on the responsibility for the CMG kit – keeping track of where it is and co-ordinating with members who wish to use our display material or survey kit.

Angie Nash has taken over as Newsletter Editor for a while and also will act as liaison with the Seal Group. We are keen to connect more closely with other relevant groups locally and there are already several members of the Cornwall Bat Group on the committee but we wanted to try and ensure we can share expertise and events where possible.

Kate Hills also links us into the Mammal Society, where she is Honorary Secretary, but if you feel we should have closer ties

with other organisations please get in touch.

Would you like to join the committee?

We could still use more help in keeping the group running – not only help with administration, but also organising events. If you have some spare time to support the Group we would love to hear from you.

The committee meets 3 or 4 times a year (outside of events) but we are in touch by email too so people can also be involved at a 'virtual' level as well as we appreciate that getting to meetings in a county the size of Cornwall is not always easy.

One area where we seem to struggle is with our digital presence – we have a Facebook page, which is well used, and a website, which is sorely in need of love and attention, help with either or both would be great.

The committee tries to organise a range of events to engage, entertain, and educate – so if you feel there is an area (geographic or subject) that we have overlooked and you would like to help us fill the gap, get in touch.

- Dave Groves

Your Opportunity - Small Grant Scheme

Have you got a great idea?

Further to the success of the Atlas (still available from all good bookshops...see below) Cornwall Mammal Group has started a Small Grant Scheme to support projects of CMG members. We are basing this on a similar programme that has been run successfully by Devon Mammal Group for some time. We want to encourage members to follow their own interests and ideas and we are keen to support unusual or innovative ideas that are not suitable for funding elsewhere. Applicants do not have to be students or academics. The project might be an investigation of a particular mammalian species or habitat, a novel way of looking at behaviour or ecology, or new ways of recording or record keeping. The project might be field-based or it could be all achieved without leaving the computer keyboard or the library. It might be to help you disseminate your work at a meeting or in print.

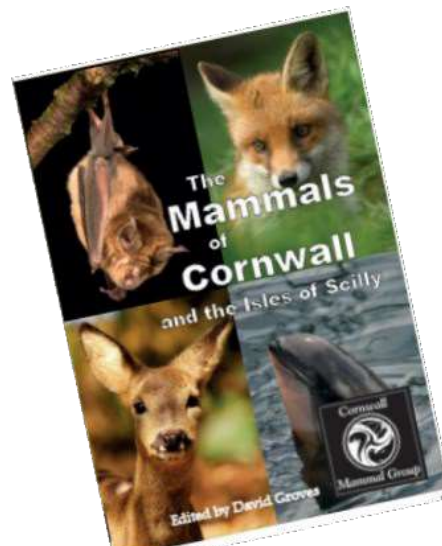
How to apply

We are keen to make the application process as simple and straightforward as possible so you can write to the Chair, Dave Groves with;

- a short description of your project
- what you hope to achieve
- how this would meet the aims of the Cornwall Mammal Group.
- how much support you need from CMG and if anyone else is supporting the project.
- Don't forget your contact details

The application will be discussed at the next committee meeting and we can provide **up to £500 for each project**, subject to available funds of course, if the committee agree the project is suitable. The decision of the committee is final and priorities may vary, and we hope to make the best use of our resources for the Group and its membership.

In return for CMG support we would hope that any recipients would share their results with the Group either through the newsletter or at a Group meeting and that the Group would be acknowledged in any publications or subsequent grant applications.



Our Atlas - The Mammals of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly.

Still available from all good bookshops or direct from <http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/shop> or by mail; Please send a cheque for £13.50 made payable to **Cornwall Mammal Group** to Cornwall Mammal Atlas, c/o Gimblett's Mill, Laneast, Launceston, Cornwall PL15 8QQ

Please include your full address, telephone number and email (if available)
Please allow 28 days for delivery.

OK – now it's over to you to get your thinking caps on and see if we can use the grants to put us on the front page of BBC Wildlife magazine.....

In order to start the process and try and iron out the problems we have already awarded two small grants: the first of £210 to Cornwall Seal Group in order to licence Adobe Photoshop software to evaluate it for helping them to count seals. Sue, Kate, Dan *et al* have been great supporters of Cornwall Mammal Group over the years and work incredibly hard on the practical and academic aspects of seal conservation, this is a great opportunity for us to help them.

The second grant was for £100 to North Cornwall bat carer Sally Caudle. Sally has been rather overwhelmed with rescued juvenile bats this year and the grant will go towards bat boxes and heated pads which are critical in ensuring young bats thrive until they can be released. Inevitably some of the bats are insufficiently developed or have injuries which prevent them from being released, Sally takes captive bats out to educational visits (for people, not the bats!) across North Cornwall and helps to build understanding and appreciation of bats in the community.

- Dave Groves

Seal pupping season 2015/2016.....now underway!!



Image by Sue Sayer

The first pup rescue of the season took place at the end of August from Bryher! Well done to British Divers Marine Life Rescue Marine Mammal Medic Heike Dorn for a highly successful rescue.

Huge thanks to Bryher Boat Services and the Isles of Scilly Travel Company for getting the pup to the Cornish Seal Sanctuary at Gweek. A GREAT team effort!

Sadly the story didn't end happily as the pup died just before arriving at Gweek. To avoid this story being repeated it is vital to give all seals a much wider berth than usual and to avoid sea caves and beaches known to be frequented by seals between August and December.

- Sue Sayer

Now that the seal pupping season is underway, it's worth remembering that...

- Mums about to give birth can be moved on by people, and if they stampede over boulders can actually injure their unborn pup or end up giving birth in inappropriate/unsafe places
- Mum/pup bonds are most vulnerable with new-borns and new mums may leave when they see people nearby
- If pups leave their birthing beach because of people or dogs then their mums are unlikely to find themor if people and dogs leave scent around a pup its mother may not be able to tell if it's hers and so leave
- Pups are dependent on their mum and if their usual ideal feeding cycles are not kept to (because people appear at feeding time) then pups don't put on weight as fast as they should, don't build up enough fat reserves and may end up underweight on weaning. They are then destined to die as they cannot teach themselves to feed fast enough, before their fat reserves run out.

- Sue Sayer

If you see a seal that appears injured or abandoned then please contact British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) on;

Telephone: 01825 765546 (Office Hours only)

Out of Office Hours Rescue Only line: 07787 433412

News about shrews

Hands up if you've seen a water shrew?
Hands up if you've seen a *live* water shrew? If the answer to both is yes, then you're a very lucky person indeed, as the water shrew (*Neomys fodiens*) is one of the UK's most elusive mammal, as well as one of its most striking, and few people have seen a live animal.

As its name suggests, the water shrew is most often found in wetland habitats, although it often travels several miles from the nearest river or stream. It has a voracious appetite and spends much of its life rootling in the undergrowth for beetles, earthworms and other insects as well as hunting in the water for aquatic invertebrates and larvae.

Perhaps its greatest claim to fame is its venom: the water shrew (along with some other shrews) is a rare example of a

venomous mammal and has toxic saliva that it uses to stun animals much larger than itself. Its teeth are unlikely to pierce our skin (although a bite can leave a nasty rash!) but a frog should certainly keep a safe distance!

With its glossy black upper fur and silvery-white underbelly the water shrew truly is a spectacular mammal.



So why is it so rarely seen in the UK? Did it used to be more common than it is today? And how exactly does it live its life?

Thanks to a national water shrew survey conducted by The Mammal Society in 2004/5, we now have answers to some of these questions, greatly enhancing our knowledge of this fantastic mammal.

So firstly, why is it so rarely seen? The answer lies partly in the fact that water shrews are not very social. They are highly territorial and fiercely defend their patch from intruders, so they naturally live at lower densities than some of our other small rodents. They are also largely nocturnal and very secretive, so while many of us will have passed close to a water shrew at some point (and maybe even heard their high pitched squeaks), we are unlikely to have seen one.



Was the water shrew once more common than it is today? The answer to this

question is unclear. Water shrews, like many other aquatic mammals, are thought to be vulnerable to habitat loss and increases in pollution and pesticide use. To assess whether numbers have declined in the UK, the mammal society recruited an army of over 500 volunteers who conducted bait tube surveys across the UK. This involved leaving tubes baited with blow fly casters in likely habitat, collecting them a few weeks later and analysing any droppings found. This survey found that

water shrews are actually not doing as badly in the UK as once feared.

Water shrews were detected on approximately 17% of sites and their distribution across the UK is widespread and appears similar to historic surveys. However, whether numbers have declined is still unclear, as it's difficult to compare historic records with current ones. To really get a clear picture of whether numbers are declining, we need further surveys and more records.

How does it live its life? The answer to the final question is still a mystery. Whilst we now know a little more about where water shrews are found, and what types of habitats they prefer, we still know very little about their behaviour. We know they are feisty, we know they live alone, we know they are voracious predators, but that's about it. We have a beautiful, secretive *venomous* mammal right here in the UK and we know almost nothing about it. Someone should go and study it!

"I saw my first water shrew while Longworth trapping with Cornwall Mammal Group in 2009. Since then, I've found water shrews on several occasions, always in Longworth traps, always away from water (strangely!) and always an absolutely delight to see."

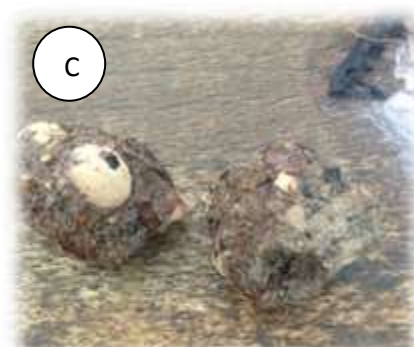
So if you want to see a water shrew, come along next time CMG run a mammal trapping event (details in the events list, on our Facebook page and on our website). They're not guaranteed, but I can promise that if we do catch one, you won't be disappointed!

- Sarah Hodge

Whose poo are you?

This summer there has been an abundance of wild fruit available to our wildlife. In particular, the animals around me seem to really, REALLY like cherries. Several times I've headed to my local woods in the hope of collecting some only to get there and find the trees stripped bare.....but I've tracked down the culprits!

Can you identify which species likes their cherries as much as I do from their poo?



Images by Angie Nash

There is no scale to the images, which does make it trickier, but the clues are there so have a go. Answers are at the end of the newsletter and on our Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/groups/cornwallmammalgroup>.

At this time of year, whilst there is still plenty of fruit on our trees and shrubs (blackberries, elder berries, apples etc) please remember that it won't last for much longer and our wildlife desperately needs it too. Please forage sustainably and ensure you are leaving plenty behind for our wildlife to get through the cold winters.

If you want to learn more about how to identify different species from their tracks and signs then join us for one of events.

Angie Nash

Bat Rescue Experiences

At the end of last year I responded to an appeal from Bat Conservation Trust for more bat carers in Cornwall. Although Sue and Chris Harlow in Truro, and other carers across the county do amazing work in rescuing and rehabilitating grounded and injured bats there is always more demand than there is capacity to respond, especially as the pups start to leave the roosts in mid-summer.

Although caring for bats is a significant commitment in terms of time and space I was keen to learn more about bats and offer my services collecting bats from members of the public who call the **Bat Helpline (0345 1300 228)**.

The first step was to arrange for a rabies vaccination. A small number of bats in the UK have been found to carry a rabies-like virus, European Bat Lyssavirus (EBLV). Two strains of the virus have been identified: EBLV1 and the imaginatively named EBLV2. No bats infected with live EBLV1 virus have been found in the UK but 3 bats, a Serotine and 2 Natterer's, have been found with antibodies to the virus – evidence of past exposure. EBLV2 live virus has been found in 12 bats – all Daubentons – since a surveillance programme was started by the Animal and Plant Health Agency in 1968. The rabies vaccination provides a degree of protection against EBLV should a bat worker be bitten or scratched by a bat during handling. The EBLV risk is one reason why it is strongly recommended that bats are not handled without appropriate gloves.

The rabies vaccination is provided free of charge to bat workers (it costs about £150 otherwise) and consists of 3 injections over a period of a month and a further booster at 12 months.

Suitably jabbed I was able to attend Sue and Chris's home for an introduction to skills involved in picking up, handling, assessing and feeding bats. The first impression I had while trying to contain a lively Pipistrelle in a gloved hand was how tiny they are, but also they had real character and attitude, especially considering the size differential!

Once I had an appreciation of the job I registered with the Bat Conservation helpline co-ordinators and sat back to wait for my first callout. I agreed to cover an area within 20 miles of my home outside Launceston, which might have been a little ambitious. Sure enough, a few weeks later my first call to a grounded Pipistrelle near Camelford – the lady who called in the bat had noticed him hanging from the roost exit, (on the slate hanging in their relatively new house) the previous day but later he was on the ground and seemed very lethargic. BCT Helpline had recommended she scoop the bat up with a piece of cloth and place him in a box with access to water while she waited for assistance. The bat was quite dehydrated and in a poor nutritional state. Taxied back to local bat carer Sally Caudle, he was soon drinking from a moist paint brush and guzzling down mealworm's entrails (a lovely task).

Over the summer I have been called out to about a dozen bats – mainly pips, although one whiskered bat pup was collected from a rather bemused couple's lounge, and mostly young animals – furred but often with incompletely fused wing bones. Most of the bats were remarkably co-operative in feeding and drinking, although very young bats need attention every couple of hours, which is difficult when work and sleeping get in the way.

About half of the youngsters progressed well enough to be released again within a few weeks – usually back to the area they were found, although this was not always possible. Some of them did not survive, it is possible that they may have been rejected by their mothers because of some defect or disease and many had been without food or water for several days by the time they were collected. This may also affect their development and some were unable to fly after rehabilitation and were euthanized, some were not suitable for release and so were retained as educational bats – channeling the spirit of Norman the Noctule and helping the public to appreciate, and empathize with, bats.

I was particularly impressed by two young bats which I collected, one from Laneast near Launceston and one from near Jacobstow. Both had suffered a degree of stickiness - the first from an encounter with some duct tape, the second from what looked like tree resin.



Removing young pip from duct tape – a success, although the patient died....

The duct tape bat was comprehensively stuck – tail, head and both wings. Releasing such a tiny and apparently fragile creature from the industrial adhesive was a challenge.

Pinning the tape onto a board and following advice from Sue Harlow, I gently eased an olive oil-soaked fine paint brush between the bat and the tape. Half an hour later – one oily but liberated bat. Within a few hours he was drinking and eating. Although he survived well for several days he did eventually die, possibly having ingested some of the adhesive or maybe spending several days stuck to the church floor was just too much.

The Jacobstow bat was possibly in a worse way – the resin had gummed up his face and stuck all manner of dirt to him so he couldn't feed or fly. Another few hours of gentle extraction and this very co-operative little bat

was drinking and feeding before being handed over to Sally for longer term care and eventual release.

So, I have learnt a little bit more about bats – much of it about the practical issues of handling such small animals – the necessity of good lighting, magnification and a steady hand, and a willingness to sacrifice mealworms for the greater good. I've also learnt there is a great deal more I don't know and I am committed to addressing this shortcoming. I have found the experience very rewarding, not only from the practical support of these engaging animals but also the opportunity to meet and chat with members of the public about bats and wildlife in Cornwall. You can find out more about becoming a bat carer by contacting BCT or Cornwall Bat Group.



Cornwall Bat Carers to
the Rescue!!

Off to collect another grounded pip....

- Dave Groves

Cornwall Mink Initiative

CMG has been approached by Westland Countryside Stewards (WCS) to see if we are interested in becoming involved with their proposed American mink initiative. The aim is to reduce the numbers of breeding American mink in Cornwall using the well-established mink raft approach. WCS are working with South West Lakes Trust, CWT and the Environment Agency as well as various local landowners and training colleges. Reducing mink predation has been established as one of the key requirements for the successful reintroduction of water voles to water courses and WCS have had success around the Bude area with this approach and now are hoping to extend it across Cornwall.

Let us know what you think and if you would like to be involved, or if you consider it something that CMG should be actively involved with.



Dave Groves

Internationally Important Mammal Research Carried Out Here in Cornwall

The common dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) is widespread in Europe but populations have declined in some countries, including the UK, as a result of habitat loss and fragmentation (suitable habitat being divided by areas too large for species to cross).

Dormice are considered to be an animal which lives in trees (arboreal), hardly ever comes to the ground and 'avoids corridor gaps', i.e. its arboreal nature means it needs continual habitat or trees to move along.

A population of common dormice living beside the A30 in Cornwall was studied in 2007-2010 by ecologists Paul Chanin and Leo Gubert in order to investigate the impacts of roads on habitat fragmentation at the local scale (tens of metres), i.e. the possible isolating effects of roads for a population.

Paul first became aware of the fact that dormice will cross small gaps in their habitat when he put some nest tubes in a short length of scrub in a wood in north Devon. The track split into two leaving a few tens of square metres of dormouse habitat (usually hazel, gorse scrub), isolated by a gap of about 3m. It was much too small for a dormouse to live in full time but one turned up and made a nest in a tube. It happened when a broom (the shrub) was in bloom but it's unsure whether or not that was what attracted the dormouse. It is unlikely to have been the tube because there were others nearby it could have used without crossing the ground.

A year or two later, he had a phone call from Matt Pickard (a fellow consultant) who put up some tubes on that particular central reservation of the A30, despite being advised not to as it would unlikely yield any results, and he discovered a dormouse! A dormouse living in the central reservation of the A30!!

With this information, Paul and Leo decided to investigate this site further. Each carriageway was eight metres wide with verges of two metres. Nest boxes and nest tubes were installed on each side of the road and on the central reservation where areas of woodland or scrub existed in order to be able to help find the mammals. Any dormice found were individually marked using implanted microchips (PIT tags). In total, sixty-two common dormice were marked during the course of the study, and a few individuals escaped before marking. Nine juveniles were tagged (three females, six males) and of the 53 tagged adults, 37 (70%) were female.

Their investigation showed that dormice will in fact cross roads, busy roads. Two individuals moved between the central reservation and the side of the road and there was indirect evidence of additional road crossings. This has implications for the conservation of dormice at the landscape scale where it is important to understand the extent to which roads are barriers to movement and the extent to which dormice will use fragmented habitats. It is also important to understand the extent to which dormice use habitats which are fragmented by roads when carrying out surveys for common dormice in connection with development and in mitigating the impacts of this development. Common dormice during this study were found in fragments of woodland or scrub as small as 0.2 ha and breeding

was regularly recorded in fragments of 0.5 ha or larger although dormice were not present in all fragments in all years.

Paul thinks it does matter that we should fully understand the animal we are conserving.

“I am quite certain that people are failing to find dormice because their view of ‘suitable habitat’ is less flexible than that of the animals themselves. This matters a lot when it comes to doing surveys prior to development.

However I don’t think that this means that the work that has been done in closing gaps and connecting up the landscape has been wasted. Any increase in the overall amount of dormouse habitat has to be welcomed and the fewer gaps there are, the better it is for the animals.

It is also important for other, smaller animals which may find it harder to move around a gappy landscape than dormice or to attract funding for conservation work on their own behalf. The use of charismatic species like dormice and otters to do this has a creditable history and has done much to benefit things that creep and crawl around the landscape in the name of more appealing animals.

Dormice are scarce, a protected species, and nothing we have found undermines this or the protection that they receive. However we are now in a better position to concentrate our energies.”

Pat Morris’ recent article on dormouse bridges (*British Wildlife*, February 2012) shows that there may be ways of enabling dormice to cross motorways using existing infrastructure and Paul thinks that is certainly something that we should concentrate our energies on.



If you want to read a more detailed description of Paul Chanin’s and Leo Gubert’s research, then you can find it through the following literature search;
Chanin, P & Gubert, L. 2012. **Common dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Movements in a landscape fragmented by roads.** *Lutra* 55 (1): 3-15

If you think there are questions to be answered or further investigation that you could carry out, then please get in touch with the CMG committee to see if it’s something we can support through our funding programme.

A BIG thank you to Paul Chanin and Leo Gubert for allowing their work to be included (and plagiarised) for this copy of the newsletter.

- Angie Nash

Cornwall Dormouse Day



By the time you read this the Cornwall Dormouse Day run by CMG, in conjunction with the Friends of Stara Woods, at Upton Cross will have been and gone. The event had been organised for volunteers and professionals with an interest in dormouse surveys, monitoring and mitigation in the South West. Fifty people attended for a day of presentations, discussions and a visit to Stara Woods to look at habitat management for dormice. This was a follow up to the last Biodiversity Action Plan dormouse event run in

Liskeard in 2013 under the auspices of the Caradon Hill Area Heritage Project which helped to set up much of the ongoing dormouse monitoring in the Lynher Valley.

A big thank you to the organising team - especially Jen and Pete Bousfield, Jenny Stuart, Anne Hughes and Mary Groves. I would also like to thank Ian White from the People's Trust for Endangered Species and forestry expert Roger Trout for travelling all the way to Cornwall from the corners of the empire to speak to us. A review will follow in time for the next newsletter.

- Dave Groves

*There will be future dormice monitoring days run by CMG members so please keep an eye on our events and on our Facebook page, (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/cornwallmammalgroup>) for more information.

Just for fun.....

Mammal collective

Think you know your collective nouns? Test yourself below to see if you can match the animal to the name of its group. Answers at the end of the newsletter.

TOWER SOUNDER POD CRASH ROMP SKULK LABOUR CACKLE BUSINESS BLOAT

- a) A ____ of hippos
- b) A ____ of ferrets
- c) A ____ of rhinos
- d) A ____ of giraffe
- e) A ____ of otters
- f) A ____ of wild boar
- g) A ____ of dolphin
- h) A ____ of foxes
- i) A ____ of hyenas
- j) A ____ of moles

- Sarah Hodge

*There is one species that is the odd one out. Do you know which it is? Answer in the next issue!

Wild Sightings

Some of you may have recently heard on the news of the rare sighting of a humpback whale in our Cornish waters just off of Mounts Bay. Along with a Leatherback turtle (ok, not a mammal but very exciting), Northern Fin whale, a Beluga whale, Minke whale and a Bowhead whale (the last two both off of the Isles of Scilly) our Westcountry coasts and coast paths are a great place to see some rare sightings of wild Cornish mammals.

One Marine based company said that 2015 has been a very good year for marine wildlife: "It's the most sightings we've had in the South West after 10 years of business".

The Sea Watch annual National Whale and Dolphin Watch survey took place at the end of July amid unseasonal weather - high winds and relatively cold temperatures.

Dr Peter Evans, director of the Sea Watch Foundation, said the first European sighting of a bowhead whale - taken on a smart phone from Scilly - was likely due to the fragmentation of floating ice.

"Whether the same has occurred in the case of the beluga is not clear but sea temperatures have been unusually low this summer." he added.

One Cornish marine mammal wildlife expert, Rebecca Allen (Bex), was lucky enough to be rewarded with a completely different rare sighting this last week. Rebecca regularly scours our Cornish coastlines on the look-out for Grey seals to help monitor the species. Whilst taking an early morning walk around Porth Island, Newquay, a place she visits regularly with its great vantage point of the Atlantic, she stumbled across the UK's smallest carnivore - a group of 6 very confused and panicked looking weasels. Weasels, (*Mustela nivalis*) whilst not rare themselves, are generally solitary animals so seeing a group of 6 at such close proximity is quite rare and very exciting.

There are natural predators such as seagulls and buzzards, as well as foxes in the area so Bex's initial thought was that maybe something had happened to the weasels' mother and the group of six were young weasels that had been abandoned, emerging from their den. On further research, it turns out that at this time of year, when the young are approximately eight weeks old, the mother will actually actively push the young weasels from the nest to fend for themselves.

It's likely that within the first year only one or two of the six will have survived due to predation. They don't hibernate and will stay active, making nests from grass often in dens that have been taken over from their prey species of rabbits and mice. There were certainly lots of signs of their prey species around the area so they should have a good chance of feeding themselves.



Image by Rebecca Allen – A little bit blurry as she was very excited!

Remember to contact the Environmental Records Centre for Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly (ERCCIS) with your recordings of any mammal species you have found in Cornwall and you can use their online recording form on www.orks.org.uk. Cornwall Mammal Group would also love to hear any first hand reports so please use our Facebook page or contact us on enquiries@cornwallmammalgroup.co.uk or via our website contact form at <http://www.cornwallmammalgroup.co.uk/index.html>.

- Angie Nash

And finally.....

Cornwall Mammal Group is now the proud owner of two shiny new trail cameras. We have bought these for the use of CMG members and you can borrow them to help with a particular project or survey, to see what is lurking at the bottom of your garden (!) or maybe to see if it would be worth you buying your own set-up.



The cameras are Bushnell Natureview HD Max units and are supplied complete with a full set of rechargeable batteries and a rapid charger as well as a cable lock to secure the unit, or at least discourage theft. The kit is packed in water resistant tough plastic cases and includes all the instructions. The intention is to try and keep one of the cameras in the East of the county and one near Truro when they are not on loan.

If you would like to borrow the cameras you can contact Dave or Kelly to book them out and arrange collection and return. There will be a small returnable deposit of £20 and we would also ask for a small contribution towards the battery usage as they will need replacing after a couple of years. The cameras are covered under CMG's all risks insurance although the committee may ask for contributions towards any excess payments if reasonable care has not been taken and the camera is lost or damaged.

Having said that, I have been using trail cameras for many years without problems – it requires a little discretion and common sense.

I hope that anyone who borrows the cameras will let us know what they have seen, and just as importantly send their records into ERCCIS. Let's see what's out there.....

A big thank you to Mike and Handykam in Redruth for all the help in selecting and sourcing the kit and (most importantly) for giving us some very useful discounts!



- Dave Groves

Update from The Mammal Society

There are two important dates you should know:

1. December 31st 2015 – this is the last day for records to be accepted as part of the national mammal atlas, which will be the first for 20 years. Please send your records to ERCCIS who are sharing their data The Society.

2. October 27th & 28th – is the date of the Autumn Symposium, held in National Mammal Week, supported by Devon Mammal Group and Devon Wildlife Trust. It's a wonderful opportunity to meet mammal folk and learn more about the role of mammals. For more information and to book please follow: <http://www.mammal.org.uk/events/mammal-societys-autumn-symposium>

- Kate Hills

If you want to be involved in some practical habitat management, all of which can help our Cornish mammals, then below you will find the National Trust calendar of events:



Events in North Cornwall – Tintagel to Holywell October to December 2015

- Saturday 10 and Sunday 11 October **Scrub 'n' Spuds at Porthcothan** Help the rangers in their efforts to reduce gorse and blackthorn to promote greater biodiversity at Porthcothan cliffs, near Bedruthan Steps. To reward your efforts we'll cook up a jacket potato lunch on the bonfire. Family friendly and a great way to meet new people. Come along on one or both days. Free. 10am-4pm. 01208 863821 or sarahe.stevens@nationaltrust.org.uk for info and to book your place
- Saturday 17 October **Litter pick above and below water at Port Gaverne**. Join National Trust rangers and Dive Against Debris in removing litter from the beach and sea at Port Gaverne, near Port Isaac. 8am – 1pm Further info: 01208 863821 or sarahe.stevens@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Sunday 25 October **Coastal Challenge #The Sunrise Run** 7.30am Glebe Cliff, Tintagel. 5 mile and 10 mile off road social runs. £3 per person, includes a bacon sarnie at the end. For more info 01208 863046 or northcornwall@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Tuesday 27 October **Geology Rocks! Pentire Head**, near Polzeath. Join a local geology expert to guide us through the geological history of the area. 3.5 mile coastal walk with some strenuous sections. 11am - 3pm Info and booking: 01208 863046
- Wednesday 28 October **Scrub 'n' Spuds at Lundy Bay**. Bonfires, potatoes, toasting marshmallows, we've got the lot! Bring along the family and help us in our efforts to cut back the gorse and blackthorn and help the wildlife. To thank you for your hard work, we'll cook up a jacket potato lunch on the bonfire. For further info and to book your places: 01208 863821 or sarahe.stevens@nationaltrust.org.uk
- Saturday 7 and Sunday 8 November **Scrub 'n' Spuds at Holywell** Help the rangers in their efforts to reduce gorse and blackthorn to promote greater biodiversity. To reward your efforts we'll cook up a jacket potato lunch on the bonfire. Family friendly and a great way to meet new people. Come along on one or both days. Free. 10am-4pm. 01208 863821 or sarahe.stevens@nationaltrust.org.uk for info and to book your place
- Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 December **Scrub 'n' Spuds at Pentire**, near Polzeath. Help the rangers in their efforts to reduce gorse and blackthorn to promote greater biodiversity. To reward your efforts we'll cook up a jacket potato lunch on the bonfire. Family friendly and a great way to meet new people. Come along on one or both days. Free. 10am-4pm. 01208 863821 or sarahe.stevens@nationaltrust.org.uk for info and to book your place

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Answers:

“Whose poo are you?” –

A = **Fox**. The slightly tapering end with a twist helps to identify this. Admittedly, this one was tricky as there was no size scale to work with, but trust me, it was too big for a hedgehog!

B = **Badger**. Badgers are one of the few mammals that will actually dig its hole (latrine) before depositing its faeces.

C = **Crow**. A bit of a red herring, (or a black crow). Birds such as crows, owls and seagulls will cough up pellets of indigestible material. Hopefully the white uric acid in the faeces in the top left of the page helped to give that one away.

Mammal Collective -

- a) A **BLOAT** of hippos
- b) A **BUSINESS** of ferrets
- c) A **CRASH** of rhinos
- d) A **TOWER** of giraffe
- e) A **ROMP** of otters
- f) **ASOUNDER** of wild boar
- g) A **POD** of dolphin
- h) A **SKULK** of foxes
- i) A **CAKLE** of hyenas
- j) A **LABOUR** of moles