



Cornwall Mammal Group

Cornwall Mammal Group
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Jen Bousfield's dormice working on their Christmas decorations.
Full story of the Middlewood orphans inside!

Picture by Fran Stothard



Not quite a team of hares - but nonetheless the Cornwall Mammal Group made a sterling effort in the Cornwall Wildlife Trusts **Race for Wildlife** - a 10 km sponsored run around the hills above Penzance. The team raised nearly £1350 towards the Trust's target of £40,000 to support conservation in Cornwall. Thanks to everyone who sponsored us and of course a BIG THANK YOU to Dee, Ian, Hector, Nicola and Dave.

Shelagh Garrard accepts the CMG contribution for the CWT.

Photo - John Prady

Chair's Notes

What a year we've had with the weather; starting with a drought and ending with the wettest summer for 100 years. This has of course been a challenge to mammals and I worry particularly about the battering our bats and the dormice have taken. Despite the weather many CMG members have braved the elements and been out and about at our events around the County. Huge thanks must go to Dave Groves who has organised many of these. In fact Dave should get a medal for his efforts as he has also done fabulous work on progressing the atlas, including fundraising for it. However, as a CMG committee member Dave is not eligible for the annual CMG award. This year's award will be presented at the Christmas Quiz in December.

Our efforts for the beginning of 2013 will remain focussed on the atlas. In January CMG is holding its first sponsored walk, which is being attended by Adam Grogan, Vice Chair of The Mammal Society. You may recall he did a sponsored March for Mammals and took a year off work (at the RSPCA) to raise funds for The Mammal Society. In February, the legendary Dr Pat Morris is coming down to Cornwall to talk about 'what's special about British mammals' and there will be another mammal auction. People were extremely generous at our first mammal auction (in November 2011)



where we raised £650 for The Mammal Society. Although not asked to, some people donated mammal themed items for the auction. If people would be willing to do this again, that would be wonderful, please contact me: it could be anything from a painting, sketch, framed photograph, toy to a mammal book.

I hope that Winter will not be too severe and look forward to seeing you at future events (have a look at the events list to see what's going on). And I hope you will support us in the Spring when our colour mammal atlas is produced, by buying a copy – if you haven't already booked one!

Kate Hills

01837 861664 or email

Khills@southwestwater.co.uk

Editor's Notes

November here already - time for the annual hedgehog-based bonfire warning: always check that nobody has decided to hibernate in your bonfire BEFORE you use the matches! I'm kind of looking forward to another cold crisp winter - anything to forget this year's awful weather. Not much good for many of our mammals - especially the insectivores - and certainly no fun for recorders.

I hope you enjoy the new format newsletter - it allows the Editor to practice working with his new publishing software before getting stuck into the Atlas over the Christmas break. The usual applies - if you like it, we would love to know, if you don't like it, we would love you to get involved!

There are plenty of events coming up for 2013 - we have tried to spread our events out across the County. We have been working away to raise funds to cover the printing costs for the Cornwall Mammal Atlas next year but we still need to raise more, so we are holding a number of fund-raisers including a sponsored walk and a repeat of last year's mammal auction - your support would be much appreciated. Look out for the more hands-on stuff later in the year - we want to get out there and search for nests over the winter as well as carrying out site surveys across the county - make sure your membership is up-to-date as we will publicise most of these events by email (or post if you prefer - let Sophie know).

Dave Groves

Atlas Update

Work continues, albeit a little slowly, on the Cornwall Mammal Atlas. We have been fortunate to have been awarded £1500 by the OPAL Grants scheme to help cover the printing costs and also the launch event next year. We still need to find more financial support for the project, so let us know if you have any ideas or if your company or employer could help. I hope the map formats will be agreed in the next couple of weeks and Alan Rowland will be working at ERCCIS to develop the atlas maps from their databases.



News from Cornwall's Mammals

Cornwall Bat Group

Cornwall Bat Group has had a busy year with lost and abandoned baby bats and starving or grounded juveniles and adults. The wet summer has meant fewer insects around, with the resulting impacts on a range of insectivorous animals. If food is in short supply mothers may abandon their pups to improve their own survival chances. CBG has taken in over 60 babies and juveniles this year. These included those from a pipistrelle roost in a St Austell School where 18 weak and starving bats of all ages were found, many infected with mites, along with 5 dead bats. Derek Lord was able to inspect the roost and measures were taken to make sure no further bats were trapped in the classrooms. After treatment and feeding all the bats were released back to the roost.

Contact: www.cornwall-batgroup.co.uk



Cornwall Seal Group

Contact: www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

See Sue's article on Page

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Marine Strandings Network

Something one doesn't expect on a trip to the beach - the Marine Strandings Network recorded this rather 'ripe' whale carcass at Widemouth near Bude. This was one of three large whales washed ashore so far this year. Here we are demonstrating how to cut a whale in half using only a log saw and a

poor sense of smell...

Contact: www.cwtstrandings.org



Don't forget to check out Sue Sayer's lovely little book about our native seals: *Seal Secrets: Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly* - a glimpse of the hidden and secret world of grey seals around the coasts of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, from 'cradle to grave'. An interesting read with some great pictures! Available, as they say, from all good bookshops



EcoSoc

This September Ecosoc headed out around our university campus with a bunch of new students that had just started university, to show them our small mammal monitoring scheme transects, to get them excited about all things mammal! We also really enjoyed attending the Bodmin trip for small mammal surveys and the chance to see the footprint tunnels in action! Later in the year Ecosoc and CMG hope to head to College Reservoir in Penryn to survey for small mammals - this will be exciting as the area has varied habitats suitable for a wide range of mammals and it is an area we have not yet surveyed. It will be interesting to see what we find! We've also got a Bioblitz planned for this area in the new year to launch a new moth monitoring project we are setting up! The Bioblitz will include a range of walks and activities for a range of species and will include small mammal trapping! We've also had a glimpse of otters on our camera trap at the reservoir so will be looking for more signs of otters too! Listen out for more details!

Ali North

Contact: www.fxu.org.uk/ecosoc

Seal mums inform conservation message... but are we listening?

Surprising findings are beginning to emerge from Cornwall Seal Group's long term focus on grey seal photo identification. The map shows six grey seal mothers that are known to pup on three tiny coves on the north Cornish coast. What is shocking is that these mothers have also been identified at other locations that spread across much of the Cornish coast, as well as to the IoS, north Devon and Wales. For those responsible for conservation this is challenging message.

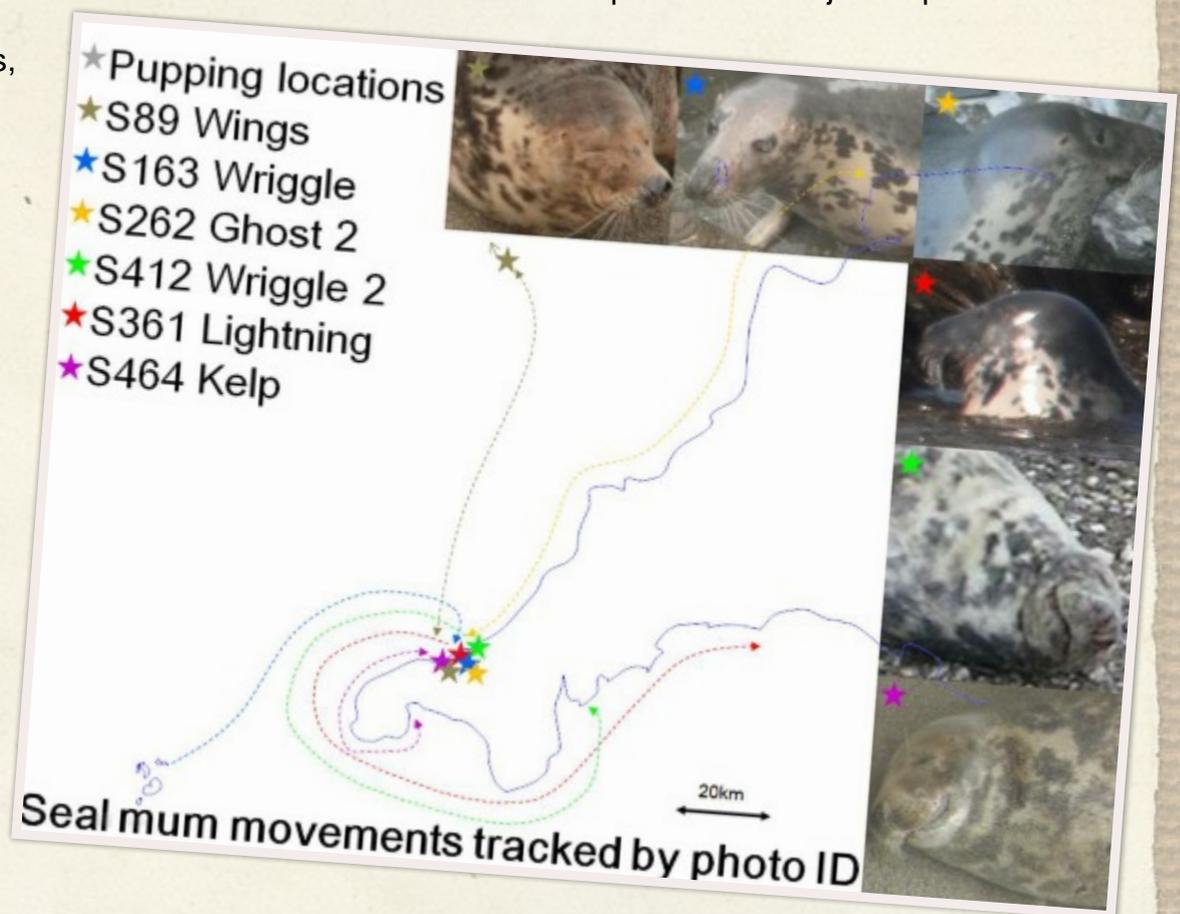
It isn't enough to protect pupping sites, as mothers may travel hundreds of miles just prior to giving birth and leave immediately afterwards. Mothers must be protected across their range all year, along with their pups if they are to be successfully recruited into the next breeding generation.

Threats posed in one area may have implications for pupping success far away. Joined up thinking, a shared approach across the Celtic Sea, with

protection measures that follow the seals wherever they go are needed to effectively conserve our grey seals.

Are we up for this? We should be! Grey seals only live in the north Atlantic, which is why there are so few globally. The UK has been given a special responsibility for protecting this annex II species in the EU Habitat Regulations, because with almost half of the world's grey seal population, the UK is THE global hot spot. There are less grey seals in the world than African elephants. Grey seals are OUR iconic marine flagship species. If we can't be

bothered to protect grey seals, then how can we expect anybody elsewhere in the world to be bothered to protect other flagship species that we value on their patch? Anyone living in Cornwall who cares about wildlife, habitat and species will respect the responsibility that we have to protect the grey seals around our shores on behalf of the rest of the world. What Cornwall Seal Group are only just beginning to realise, is that the success of this protection isn't just dependant



on what happens in Cornwall, but can be affected by actions taken all around the Celtic Sea and beyond.

Sue Sayer

www.cornwallsealgroup.co.uk

Orphaned in August - the orphan dormice of Middlewood.

On Wednesday evening, August 22nd, my neighbour Geoff reported hearing some squeaking in the beech hedge that separates our gardens. 'Probably just some Shrews fighting' was my rather casual reply...

Luckily he does not give up easily and arrived the next day to say there was even more squeaking and thought I should go up and look in case it was 'the mice'.

Halfway up a branch was a tiny dormouse, eyes just open, far too small to be out of its nest. Continued squeaking resulted in Geoff finding three more in the leaf litter and then I found a dead adult just a couple of feet away. Not a

cat kill (a cat would actually eat the dormouse, leaving few remains) so I am hoping that I can get it down to Vic for an autopsy; it was a female and only weighed 13g.



Picture by Debbie O'Keefe

Warmth was the first priority followed by re-hydration solution & then goats' milk. Geoff found the nest, high up at the top of the hedge; it was a large and strongly made nest, wrapped around with *Crocsmia* leaves. Fortunately I thought to check & discovered two more inside so now we had six. They were furred but emaciated; the two stronger ones' eyes were open but two of the others were noticeably weaker & less developed. I fed them every 2-3 hours with warmed goats' milk and by Saturday, three were able to lap the milk. Overnight I left them with ripe

blackberries, shavings of hazel nut and split sunflower kernels; the berries were well sucked by morning!

Their individual weights were recorded between 4.25g & 5g on the Saturday and by Sunday all but one had put on weight (4.9g to 5.25g). The smallest one just quietly died while asleep.

With work about to start I knew I would not be able to care for them during the day and I was finding it very difficult to keep their fur clean from the milk; I needed someone else to take them on but it was holiday time!

I decided to contact Secret World Wildlife Rescue in Somerset because I knew they had the facilities and expertise to help them survive and it was not all that far to drive from this end of the county.

Ten days later they phoned to say that three had survived; the orphaned dormice became national media stars for a day but since then handling has been kept to a minimum. They have been weaned onto a diet of nuts, seeds and fruit with a few live mealworms to replicate the insects they would be feeding on in the wild; and once their weights have increased, they will be encouraged to hibernate in the tortoise room.

By mid October, they weighed about 19g each and much of their fur had re-grown from the alopecia probably caused by general trauma or even grease from the milk and hopefully next spring, they will be returned to Cornwall for release here.

I would like to record my thanks to Castle Vets & Janice Whittington for their advice and Pete for all the driving; the photographers who gave permission for us to use their work and of course, all at Secret World who took them on & gave them a chance.

Jen Bousfield. November 2012.

Read all about it!

Jen's orphan dormice have been featured in many local and national newspapers - everyone loves a story with a happy ending - although the Times overlooked the 'natural wastage!' but 3 survivors from a nest of 6 is probably a lot better than would have been achieved in the wild. Latest news is that the 3 are all feeding well and will be returned to Middlewood in the Spring



NEWS.....

Dormice on the Moor

As part of the Caradon Hill Area Heritage Project, several members of CMG have been installing and monitoring dormouse box schemes in previously unsurveyed woodland on the Eastern side of Bodmin Moor. We have also been helping to train new dormouse surveyors (thats surveyors of dormice, rather than dormice that are doing surveying, if you see what I mean....) who will carry out the long-term monitoring of the sites. Despite the awful weather this year, we have persevered through the rain, cold and soggy dormouse nest boxes full of slugs until, at the very end of the season, we found dormice! So far two sites have produced a total of 3 dormouse nests, one of which was occupied. We have also found dormouse-opened hazel nuts at several sites.



Latest polecat recorder!

Bracken the Staffordshire Terrier soaks up the adulation after making a contribution to Cornwall's polecat survey in July - unfortunately the polecat in question came off second best after Bracken caught it near the house at

Polecat and Polecat/ferret records continue to come into the records centre - mainly at the ferret-y end of the scale but we have had one confirmed polecat submitted to Vic Simpson which was collected by Robin Roper from just



Trebulet near Launceston. Although the mustelid was very polecat-y Johnny Birks thought it too pale, so it has been recorded as a polecat/ferret hybrid at the Records Centre. Never mind, better luck next time Bracken!

outside Lifton on the Devon side of the Tamar. There seems to be a lot of RTAs in East Cornwall so keep your eyes open.

Auction appeal

Last year our fund-raising auction was a great success and contributed £650 to national mammal conservation through the Mammal Society. We would like to build on this to help with printing costs for our own project - the Cornwall Mammal Atlas. This year it will take place on 6th February after Pat Morris's talk at Penrhyn. So....if you have something lovely, and possibly mammal-related, that you think would find a caring home with another mammalophile we would love to effect the transfer. Last year we auctioned books, drawings, prints, customised house signs and many other desirable items - please contact Kate if you can help out.

Events - reviews

Pentillie Castle Bioblitz 22nd September

Tamar Valley AONB organised a Bioblitz at Pentillie Castle overlooking the Tamar estuary. Over 300 people attended over the weekend and a good proportion of them seemed to be the under-7s that helped us clear the Longworth traps in the old orchard on Sunday morning. We found plenty of wood mice and common shrews. Over the weekend records of grey squirrel, fox, weasel and fallow deer were also collected along with the bat detector records of greater and lesser horseshoe and common and soprano pipistrelle from Tony and Mary Atkinson, braving the chilly Saturday evening. All valuable records for a poorly surveyed corner of the county.



Gullacombe Farm Walk 29nd September

Sunday morning was clear and dry, despite threatened rain, and 10 of us set off at 9am sharp to see what we had trapped overnight. Our first traps were set amongst coppiced, but fruiting hazel in the valley bottom where we caught a 22g female wood mouse. The long grass and umbellifers in the adjacent damp meadow did not prove productive, but another wood mouse (female and 27g) came from the bank side in the woodland. Our next traps were set in a bramble thicket next to the recently dug pond and a 22g bank vole came out of the trap – we were able to see the smooth coat and chestnut fur as well as the long(ish) tail, which contrasted nicely with the field voles (greyer, shaggier coat and shorter tail, 19g female and 22g male) which we trapped in nearby rush beds and in the cocksfoot tussocks. These also produced another (16g) wood mouse. The trail camera we had rigged was not very informative, although overnight was not really long enough. Hedgehog tunnels showed plenty of interest from small rodents – mice and/or voles – but nothing bigger. These tracking devices have a lot of potential for simple monitoring of several species and we will be looking at the best ways to use them in the future. Whilst clearing the traps we also noted red and roe deer slots and Tony Atkinson found plenty of field vole larders around the cocksfoot tussocks, so a very productive morning and we are looking forward to visiting Gullacombe again to explore the Inny valley side of the farm.



Bunny's Hill Small Mammal Trapping 7th October

Seventeen of us made an early start to carry out a small mammal survey of the Cornwall Butterfly Conservation's reserve on the east side of Bodmin Moor. 20 Longworth Traps and 5 hedgehog tunnels had been set on Saturday evening. We were working with CBC to try and build a fuller picture of the other species present in this parcel of abandoned grazing fields near Cardinham. We recorded bank voles and wood mice in the traps as well as finding a field vole larder in the molinea. Perhaps most exciting is that we found extensive evidence of dormice on the site - possibly the most abundant hazel nut evidence around a single tree that any of us had seen - we will be following this up with an attempt to find dormouse and harvest mouse nests before the weather blows everything away.



Events - coming soon

Reintroducing the Red Squirrel to Cornwall

Natasha Collings from the Cornwall Red Squirrel Project will give an illustrated talk about the efforts to reintroduce the Red Squirrel, 30 years after it was displaced by its American cousin.

Tuesday 13th November, 7-10pm at Lanhydrock Memorial Hall
£3 CMG members/£4 non-members includes refreshments



The Cornwall Mammal Group Christmas Quiz Night

The infamous Christmas Quiz - an opportunity to show off your knowledge or just tuck in to a slap-up Christmas supper and have a chat.

Wednesday 12th December 7 - 9pm The Inn for All Seasons Redruth, just off the A30
£8.95 CMG members/£9.95 non-members



CMG's Cross-County Sponsored Walk

A chance to walk off the excesses of Christmas (see above) and help support our Atlas Project. Join our sponsored walk from Devoran to Portreath along the Mineral Tramway - 11 miles of easy paths. A flyer and sponsor sheet will be circulated soon.

Saturday 12th January 0930 - 1600 (approximately) Meeting at Devoran Church No charge for this event but we hope everyone will raise sponsorship

Hedgehogs (and Hotdogs), a talk by Dr Pat Morris

Britain's foremost expert on all things hedgehog will give us an account of his many years of research on this species, focused on the questions that people most often ask. How far do they travel, where do they go in winter, what do they eat, are slug pellets a problem, what happens to 'rehabilitated' hedgehogs after they are released from hospital. And much more!

Food - hot dogs, homemade cake and refreshments

Tues Feb 5th February 7-9pm at Lanhydrock Memorial Hall
£2 CMG members /£3.50 non-members includes refreshments

Remember - Students pay the CMG Rate for all events



What's so Special About British Mammals? By Dr. Pat Morris



Internationally recognised mammal expert, past Chair of the Mammal Society, Hedgehog expert, dormouse wizard, academic, film-maker, traveller and taxidermist (!) Dr Pat Morris is a brilliant speaker so don't miss this opportunity. We will be also repeating our excellent Mammal Auction - this time to raise funds for the Cornwall Atlas.

Wednesday 6th February 7-9pm at the Seminar Room of Tremough Campus £2 CMG members/£3.50 non-members inc. refreshments

Committee:

Kate Hills (Chair)
Sophie Higgins (Secretary)
Tania Percy-Bell (Treasurer)
Sarah Hodge (Vice Chair)
Dave Groves (Newsletter Editor)
Cheryl Mill (Website Manager)
Ali North (EcoSoc)
Cathy Turtle
Nick Jones
Jacque Mericik

Contact:

Write to us

**c/o Cornwall Wildlife Trust
Five Acres, Allet, Truro TR4 9DJ**

Or email us at

enquiries@cornwallmammalgroup.co.uk

Or check out our website at

www.cornwallmammalgroup.co.uk

Are your details correct?

Please let us know if you think that some of our emails and flyers are not making it through the ether - its only a glitch, nothing personal! Also, don't forget to let us know if you move house or change you preferred email address - we aren't psychic....



Paul Chanin (OK - he does live in Devon) has been watching a hedgehog building a hibernation nest using a trail camera. In one night the animal made 27 trips out to collect leaves!

Do you have any interesting mammal news?

Let us know and we can include it in the next CMG Newsletter. An interesting encounter, some new research, a project of your own, a photograph or a drawing - anything that might help CMG raise the awareness of Cornwall's mammals.

Membership.

Membership of the Cornwall Mammal Group is fabulously good value. For a mere £5/year you could be attending one of our many events - talks by international experts, farm walks and mammal surveys far from the madding crowd, hands-on survey training, up close and personal with Cornish wildlife. Some of these events are exclusive to members, for others members get a substantial discount. There is an inordinate amount of cake involved and it is a great opportunity to meet like-minded people and get involved.





The Mammal Society
And
Devon Mammal Group
Present



The 59th AGM and Spring Conference of the Mammal Society
21st and 22nd April
At Exeter University

A golden opportunity to catch up on the latest mammal news and research, and probably the closest its going to be for a few years. If we get enough Cornish folks, we could arrange a charabanc....

**Book online at www.mammal.org.uk/events
or contact Alex on 023 80237874**

Also

The First National Conference on Red Squirrel Conservation
National and International Perspectives
on Red Squirrel Conservation
19th April at Exeter Business School

Enquiries and Bookings
contact britishredsquirrel@gmail.com or call Narasha Collings 07825 507238



And Finally - I think our old friend the otter has dropped down in our priorities over recent years, especially after funding to Vic's autopsies was cut, therefore we seem to be do less otter work and so there is a chance that we may be missing important changes in populations and ecology. Next year it would be good to get out there and get wet and muddy in search of spraint and paw prints. If anyone would like to help co-ordinate this work please get in touch with the committee.
Dave