

Mini Mammal Monitoring Scheme
Greenfields Nature Reserve 13 November 2011
by Lorcan Adrain

Over the 11th, 12th and 13th of November this year the Shropshire Mammal Group took part in the



Mini Mammal Monitoring scheme on behalf of the Mammal Society as part of the long term national species monitoring programme that was started in 2009.

The eight participants from the Mammal Group and the Whitchurch Branch of Shropshire Wildlife Trust took part in the first ever mammal trapping session to be held at the Greenfields Nature Reserve in Whitchurch, North Shropshire. A site that is owned by the Shropshire Council and

managed the Shropshire Wildlife Trust, who both kindly gave permission for us to do the trapping event.

The method involved setting ten Longworth traps in a line at ten metres intervals, following the line of brambles that have been managed by the volunteers who look after the reserve. The traps were set open on the first day at 15:45 while it was still light so we could see what we were doing. They are filled with bedding and a selection of food that was made up of:- apple, carrot, oat, raisin, peanut and casters. Casters are used in case we catch a shrew (*Sorex araneus*) that are carnivores. Natural England issue a licence to allow shrews to be caught, but they specify certain criteria that must be followed. The trap comprises of two parts, an entrance tunnel and the main chamber. It is important that the main chamber is higher than the tunnel so that water will not enter the trap.



We came back the next night at 17:00 with torches to see if we had any signs of visitors to the traps. The bedding and food was examined and replaced if needed and then the traps set to be active.

The next day was an early start at 8:00 as we went to examine the traps. We recorded any findings and any mammal found was released next to the trap's location as they tend to be territorial.

Results:

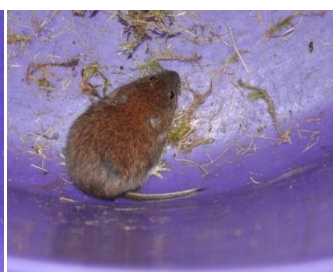
| | | | |
|---------|---|--------|---|
| Trap 01 | <i>Myodes glareolus</i> (Bank vole) | Trap06 | <i>Myodes glareolus</i> (Bank vole) |
| Trap02 | <i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i> (Wood mouse) | Trap07 | <i>Microtus Agrestis</i> (Field vole) |
| Trap03 | Remained open | Trap08 | Remained open |
| Trap04 | Closed with nothing trapped | Trap09 | <i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i> (Wood mouse) |
| Trap05 | <i>Myodes glareolus</i> (Bank vole) | Trap10 | <i>Myodes glareolus</i> (Bank vole) |



Trap02 Wood mouse
Apodemus sylvaticus



Trap 07 Field vole
Microtus agrestis



Trap05 Bank vole
Myodes glareolus

When comparing the field vole against the bank vole you can see that the field vole is greyer in colour, ears tucked in and is sometimes referred to as the short tailed vole.

The wood mice are very active compared to the voles, and it is very easy for them to jump out of the container (33cms) to make their escape.

Conclusion:

The event was a success with three different species being captured and everyone having an opportunity to see wild mammals up close. The two traps that were still opened were located in an area with very little cover for any mammal venturing out at night. One trap was closed, but when it was examined contained only bedding and food. It is possible that this was disturbed during the night as the trigger mechanism is very sensitive, or else it may have gone off when it was placed in its location.

This would be an area that we would like to do twice a year as part of the regular monitoring scheme that is carried out every April and November to monitor small mammal distribution in the UK.

Photographs from the day



More information can be found about the Mammal Society's Mini Mammal Monitoring scheme from their website <http://www.mammal.org.uk>

Also visit.

[Shropshire Mammal Group](#)

[Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Whitchurch branch](#)