



## NEWS-SHEET SPRING 2008

### THE CULL IS STILL A THREAT

The Badger Trust has welcomed a recent report by the EFRA (Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) Select Committee which concludes that the current regime of TB testing in cattle is not working effectively. The Committee recommends:

*more frequent cattle testing, with more and targeted combined use of the tuberculin skin test and the gamma interferon test;*

*the evaluation of post-movement cattle testing;*

*greater communication with farmers on the benefits of biosecurity measures;*

*the deployment of badger and cattle vaccines when they become available in the future;*

*and continued work on the epidemiology of the disease.*

Although the Committee says that 'under certain well-defined circumstances it is possible that badger culling could make a contribution towards the reduction in incidence of cattle TB in hot spot areas', the Badger Trust says that the demanding conditions that would have to be met would mean that culling is effectively off the agenda. Indeed

recent research by the Central Science Laboratory has concluded that methods of culling such as gassing, snaring, night shooting and cage trapping are inefficient and inhumane. It would be going against public opinion and the cost to tax payers could not be justified.

Trevor Lawson from the Badger Trust commented that the current TB testing regime is full of loopholes and weaknesses, with the result that cattle are spreading bovine TB throughout the national herd every day. The skin test that is used for most cattle testing is missing around one third of infected animals, leaving the disease to fester in herds and spread to others.

In Northern Ireland a tighter focus on cattle testing has virtually halved the incidence of the disease in just 3 years without killing badgers. The same is achievable here, provided the Government acts quickly and invests properly. A badger population survey is now in progress.

The massive badger extermination policy in the Republic of Ireland, initiated in 2002, has failed to control the disease. In 2007, the number of TB reactors was virtually the same as in 2002/3, despite 5 years of snaring and shooting across 30% of Ireland's land area where cattle were most concentrated.

**It is important to get as many letters as possible, opposing the cull to your MP at the House of Commons, London, SW1A 0AA, or Hilary Benn at DEFRA, Nobel House, 17 Smith Square, London, SW1P 3JR. The more letters that MPs and the Government receive, the greater the pressure on the Government not to allow a cull of badgers.**

### NEW OFFICE FOR BADGER TRUST

The lease expires on the Badger Trust London office in May and a new premises has been selected for 6 months from 1 April to be manned by one employee. This may be a temporary arrangement and no postal address has been given.

**They can be contacted on the following national telephone number:  
08458 287878**

**E-mail: [enquiries@badgertrust.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@badgertrust.org.uk).  
Visit their website at [www.badgertrust.org.uk](http://www.badgertrust.org.uk)**

The Badger Trust has experienced recent staff changes and this together with having to move offices has prompted a review of the Trust's resources and anticipated future activities. Their ultimate goal is to organise a move to a virtual office, which is considered to be a more cost-effective longer-term proposition.

**Our thanks to all those members who have renewed their membership for 2008.  
If this has slipped your memory, your renewal date was January 2008.  
We need to keep up our membership in order to continue to help badgers.**

*Mary Westwood*

### **DORSET MAMMAL ATLAS PROJECT**

Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) is planning an exciting new project to increase mammal recording effort and our knowledge of mammal distributions in Dorset, with the aim of producing a Dorset Mammal Atlas by 2012 consisting of species distribution maps and accounts written by local experts. The project is a collaboration between volunteer recorders, DWT, the County Mammal Recorder (John Stobart), and Dorset Environmental Records Centre. Each year we will be looking at maps of mammal records and identifying under-recorded areas to target.

In order to increase recorder effort in the county we are creating a Dorset Mammal Recorders Network database. Since many of you spend a considerable amount of your time out and about in the countryside, possibly undertaking badger surveys in specific locations, we would like to add the Badger Group to this database. The database will be used to contact you when survey work needs to be done in areas that are under-recorded for badgers. In addition, if you are interested in surveying for other mammal species, please let Anna Hobbs know:

**Tel: 01305 264620 or e-mail: [ahobbs@dorsetwildlife.co.uk](mailto:ahobbs@dorsetwildlife.co.uk)  
Please contact Anna if you do not wish to be included on the database.**

We have prepared a new mammal recording sheet, which can be downloaded from our website at: [www.dorsetwildlife.co.uk](http://www.dorsetwildlife.co.uk) or obtained by contacting DWT. We are interested in all mammal species in Dorset and therefore encourage you to send in your everyday records for any mammals. Completed forms or records should be sent in by the end of the year to Anna at the above e-mail address or to: DWT, Brooklands Farm, Forston, Dorchester, DT2 7AA.

### **DORSET BADGER GROUP, useful numbers and area contacts**

#### **Committee**

Chair, Elizabeth James, tel: 01297 678772  
Vice Chair/Treasurer/Membership, Mary Westwood, tel: 01308 422530  
Secretary, Sue Old  
Rtas, Lorna Power, tel: 01305 889910  
Events, Elizabeth Boxall, tel: 01202 885702.  
DWT rep, Anna Hobbs, tel: 01305 264620  
Website, Sofia Carter  
Member, Marianne Turner

#### **Available for badger rescue and emergencies**

Mary Westwood, West.  
Elizabeth James, West  
RSPCA, Countywide tel: 08705 555999  
Please check area before calling.

#### **Licensing Procedures**

Natural England tel: 0845 6014523.

#### **Sett interference and suspected criminal activity**

Police Headquarters tel: 01202 222222 ask for wildlife crime officer in the relevant area.  
Poison hotline tel: 0800 321600, (if you discover poison in public places putting people and animals at risk).

Dorset Badger Group is affiliated to: The Badger Trust, Tel: 08458 287878  
and Dorset Wildlife Trust 01305 264620

**AND DON'T FORGET TO VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: [www.dorsetbadgergroup.co.uk](http://www.dorsetbadgergroup.co.uk)**