

Small mammal trapping in Cambourne overnight from 12 October 2024
Peter Pilbeam and members of a BCNWT 'Small Mammals' workshop.

Twenty (20) Longworth traps were set up with bedding (hay) and bait (excess casters, muesli and diced apple) at various locations (different habitats) within the rear garden of the BCNWT offices in Cambourne and on a circular route round a section of woodland some 50m away from around 5.15pm on 12 October 2024 and checked from around 8.05am on 13 October 2024. All trapped animals were sexed and weighed and released immediately where they were trapped. Nine (9) traps were rebaited and reset - the other eleven (11) traps were removed. Final checks were made at about 1pm that same day - the traps were then removed.

| Trap No. | Location | 13/10 – c8.05am | 13/10 – c1pm |
|----------|--|-----------------|--------------|
| | Rear garden | | |
| 60 | far LH corner by leaf mould in pallets | or | o |
| 61 | LHS behind first tree | or | o |
| 64 | LHS by green bin | or | o |
| 51 | LHS behind wire tree cage | WM - er - ?10gm | o |
| 69 | LHS behind willow fence panel | or | o |
| 59 | LHS - under apple tree | or | o |
| 62 | past barn - LHS under hawthorn | WM - mr - 15gm | o |
| 52 | LHS by black poly sheet | or | o |
| 68 | LHS - in brambles by rack of posts | or | o |
| 55 | LHS car park - behind 2nd last post | o | |
| | Woodland | | |
| 58 | LHS by multi-stem tree by wall | o | |
| 57 | turning right - RHS behind brash heap | WM - m - 18gm | |
| 65 | LHS behind multi-stem tree | WM - m - 14.5gm | |
| 66 | LHS under overhanging branch | o | |
| 70 | RHS - corner in ditch under hawthorn | pa | |
| 53 | LHS - behind large tree | WM - f - 15gm | |
| 56 | RHS deep in drier area | o | |
| 54 | RHS by large tree on corner | WM - m - 19gm | |
| 63 | LHS behind small oak | WM - f - 22gm | |
| 67 | under tree in centre of triangle | o | |

WM -- Wood Mouse

m -- male

f -- female

r -- reset

o -- open (not tripped)

pa -- pulled apart

In summary, out of 20 traps plus 9 resets there were 7 wood mouse catches. During the overnight session the catch rate was 35% - overall about 24%.

Trap 70 had been pulled apart (likeliest badger - very active sett not far away). Small mammal droppings were present in the tunnel section and a short burrow was visible in the nestbox section. It is surmised that a badger was attracted to the trapped small mammal and broke open the trap (getting an easy meal in the process).

The area was generally damp underfoot – the conditions overnight and when the traps were checked at c8.05am and later when re-checked were overcast, cold and dry.

Peter Pilbeam
20 October 2024