

Small mammal trapping in Coton Orchard from 31 July 2026 overnight to 01 August 2026
Peter Pilbeam, Ben Grieg, Richard Lambert, Tiffany Atkinson
and several others at both sessions.

Twenty (20) Longworth traps were set to catch with bedding (dry grass) and bait (muesli, excess diced apple and excess casters) from around 6.30pm on Friday 31 July 2026 on a roughly circular route at various locations around the periphery of and within the orchard. Habitats included hedgerows (periphery), long grass within the orchard around the bases of the fruit trees and between lines of fruit trees, recently sown grassland, and brash/log piles. They were opened from 8.30am on Saturday 01 August 2026. All trapped animals were identified to species level, weighed and sexed before being released immediately where they were caught. The traps were then removed.

This second part of the exercise was also used for two members to receive training on opening traps and scruffing captured animals prior to those animals being sexed and weighed.

Overnight the weather was very warm, dry and clear.

Trap No.	Location	8.30am – 01 08 2026
63	under old timber fence panels on hardstanding next to barns	WM – m – 19.5gm
57	in base of hedge on main corner	BV – m – 16.5gm
58	at base of hedge, opp 1st row of trees	WM – f – 18gm
61	behind log pile in hedge opp 5th row of trees	BV – m – 16gm
56	under tree on RHS at far end of row	BV – m – 19gm
65	in grass on LHS of Ben's Meadow sign by tall weeds	o
52	under bush on RHS of Ben's Meadow sign	o
62	in grass between trees 4 and 5 down centre 'ride'	o
70	close by fence adj large hole	BV – f – 28gm
60	in log pile by fence	BV – dm – 12gm
64	under hedge corner opp corner of barn	o
69	by base of grey post in grass in jn of two tracks	o
68	in brambles behind roller	o
54	in long grass at base of small old tree	o
67	in brash pile in centre of rough ground	o
51	in hedge by corner of fields	o
66	in greenhouse	o
55	behind large thistle in grass between pear trees	o
59	at base of fir hedge along driveway	o
53	behind post in hedge near main gates	o

WM -- Wood Mouse

BV -- Bank Vole

m -- male

f -- female

o -- open, not tripped

d -- found dead in trap when opened

Over the 20 trap nights/sessions 7 captures were made – 5 Bank Vole and 2 Wood Mouse – an overall catch rate of 28%. Previous catch rates at similar times of year were 20% (2025), 50% (2024) and 30% (2023). The (small) range of species caught was reasonably consistent.

No explanation could be found for the demise of the Bank Vole in trap 60 – the trap had exactly the same hay, bait, excess diced apple and excess casters as all the other traps, the overnight weather was very clement, and no other animal died. The animal looked uninjured.

Signs of other mammals – one live fox (towards the end of the evening session), several 'good' examples of fox droppings, several live rabbits, and a very high number of their droppings.

Peter Pilbeam
01 August 2026