

Small mammal trapping in the gardens of Robinson College, Cambridge, overnight from 13 to 14 April 2024 - Peter Pilbeam, Pippa Keynes, Jo Green and several attendees at the Mammal Society Annual Conference 2024.

Twenty (20) Longworth traps were set to catch with bedding (hay) and bait (muesli, casters and diced apple) at various locations (a range of habitats) in the gardens of Robinson College, Cambridge, from 5.30pm on Saturday 13 April 2024. They were opened from 8am on Sunday 14 April 2024. All trapped animals were identified to species level, weighed and sexed before being released immediately where they were caught - the traps were then removed.

Trap No.	Location	14/04/2022 – c8am
56	by S side of lake among small trees	o
52	behind brown box on N side of lake	o
69	on left behind large tree	o
66	behind small trees on corner of brook	o
53	behind LH end of log pile	o
64	behind RH end of log pile	o
51	behind RHS of 'mature' compost heap	o
54	behind LHS of 'mature' compost heap	o
68	on path to right of inspection cover	o
59	towards LH end of border near CWB	o
63	towards RH end of border near CWB	o
60	in corner near semi-circular steps	o
67	RH end on rough bank by brook	o
70	LH end on rough bank by brook	WM - m - 18.5gm
58	behind picnic bench on LHS of path	o
65	in SW corner of garden along edge of fence	o
62	in NW corner of same along side of shed	WM - m - 29.5gm
57	at side of S (of 2) sheds	o
55	behind N (of 2) sheds	o
61	by trunk under mulberry tree	BV - m - 16.5gm

WM -- Wood Mouse

BV -- Bank Vole

m -- male

In summary, out of 20 traps there were 2 Wood Mouse and 1 Bank Vole catches. This represents (of 20 trap sessions) an overall catch rate of 15%. That catch rate is rather smaller than that found in April 2022 (35%) in a very similar exercise during that year's on-line Mammal Society Conference, but that included one night's pre-baiting to get the local small mammals used to the traps.

Other species seen during the trapping - muntjac.

The weather overnight and when the traps were checked at 8am on 14 April was clear, cool, and dry.

Incidental sightings:

During a walk on 12 April to check the route of the trapping, a grass snake (c75cm long) was seen swimming in the stream (i.e. the Bin Brook) near trap 66 and landing on the far side of the brook.

In the very late evenings of both of 13 and 14 April an otter was seen (from the walkways) in the Bin Brook where it goes under the Umney Theatre at the College.

Peter Pilbeam

15 April 2024