

Small mammal handling training exercise – 15/16 August 2026
Peter Pilbeam, Laura Allen, David Wege, Cat Taras and a ranger from BCNWT

This was a CMG Training Event to familiarise (some) members with the handling (and weighing) of small mammals after overnight Longworth trapping. Therefore the aim was to catch as many small mammals as possible to give everybody a demonstration and then to have some practise – weighing (and sexing) animals was not the main purpose of the exercise.

Thirty (30) Longworth traps were set to catch with bedding (hay) and bait (muesli, excess diced apple and excess casters) at various locations (a narrow range of habitats) at intervals mainly alongside the northern edge of part of Trumpington Meadows (with permission from BCNWT) and alongside the main path leading back to the Byron's Pool car park from around 6.15pm on Saturday 15 August 2026. They were opened from 8am on Sunday 16 August 2026.

The first trapped animal was identified to species level while being used for a demonstration of handling, (particularly scruffing and placing in a pre-weighed bag), weighed (and incidentally sexed) before being practised on (by one person). It was then released where caught and the trap removed. The other caught animals were all practised on/handled by at least one person (or a maximum of two people when the animal didn't appear to be stressed). Each animal was weighed (and incidentally sexed where possible) before being released where caught – all were very active when released. Each trap was removed as emptied. One animal was marked by fur-clip to demonstrate the technique.

Trap No.	16/08/2026 – from 8am	Trap No.	16/08/2026 – from 8am
57	o	56	o
41	BV – fc – 14gm	47	o
61	WM - ? – 10.5gm	68	BV – m – 14gm
42	BV – m – 13gm	64	o
60	BV – m – 16.5gm	65	BV – m – 25gm
101	o	54	o
70	o	71	BV – m – 22.5gm
46	CS - ? – c5gm	52	o
62	o	51	o
55	o	53	o
72	BV – m – 18gm	45	BV – m – 23gm
67	o	58	o
44	o	66	o
63	BV – m – 22gm	69	WM – m - 28.5gm
43	BV – f – 13gm	59	BV – m - 19.5gm

WM -- Wood Mouse

BV -- Bank Vole

CS -- Common Shrew

m -- male

f -- female

? -- too young/small to determine

c – marked by fur clip

o -- open, not tripped

In summary, out of 30 traps over one night there were 11 Bank Vole, 2 Wood Mouse and 1 Common Shrew catches. This represents (of 30 trap sessions) an overall catch rate of c46%.

The weather overnight and when the traps were checked from 8am on 16 August was clear, mild and dry.

One (dried out) dead shrew was found on a footpath when passing.

Peter Pilbeam
18 August 2026