

DORSET MAMMAL GROUP - BADGER SETT RECORD CARD

Explanatory notes

All holes in a sett are connected underground, but if the holes are more than 15m apart, or separated by a steep ditch, railway cutting or road, then they belong to a separate sett. If holes are dug in the opposite banks of a shallow ditch and are only a few metres apart, then they are part of the same sett.

FINDING THE POSITION OF A SETT

Record the location of a sett relative to at least one feature on the OS map, eg field or wood boundary, stream, road or footpath. If the sett is very large ie 25+ holes then you may want to include 2+ points of reference and indicate an approximate number of holes rather than try to show the position of each one.

Other additional fixed features can be included to show the position of the sett, eg gate, fence, stile, single tree which are not shown on OS maps.

GRID REFERENCE AND LOCATION

A grid reference can be calculated from the grids on an OS map or by using a GPS. Give a 6 or 8 figure reference if possible, preferably the latter. The location refers to the name of a town or village. In a rural area this might include the name of a nearby farm or wood and in a town, an address or postcode.

DESCRIPTION OF AREA

This refers to the general nature of the immediate environment, eg garden, park, woods (deciduous or coniferous), farmland (arable or pasture) or any other identifying features of note.

WERE THERE ANY SIGNS OF INTERFERENCE?

Usually this would mean human damage of some sort, eg blocking up of holes, digging out of the sett, damage caused by vehicles or blocking of entrances with rubbish etc. Damage by cattle and sheep treading on the sett could also be included here.

NUMBER OF OPEN HOLES

All holes counted should be at least 25 cm across, large enough for a badger to pass through. Also, even if the hole is large enough the tunnel behind it should be of corresponding size. The entrances should be clear of debris/vegetation, with bare earth showing, sometimes with freshly dug spoil displaying a badger track.

NUMBER OF PARTIALLY USED HOLES

These are open but have leaves, twigs and vegetation around the entrance. They could be used after a small amount of clearance.

DISUSED HOLES

Completely out of use. These could only be used after a lot of clearance. They could be just a depression in the ground with an overgrown spoil heap.

NUMBER OF BLOCKED HOLES

This includes holes that were recently open but have been **deliberately** blocked. Spade-marks are often visible around the entrances.

TYPES OF SETT

Not all main setts have annexes, subsidiaries or outliers. All badger territories vary. If possible look around the area to see if you can find other setts close-by. If you are unsure of the classification of the sett then just enter details in the comment box eg degree of activity, presence of badger smell, number of active holes and number of badger paths between holes.

MAIN SETT

Usually many holes ranging from 5 to 40+, including open, partially used and disused. Large spoil heaps, well used paths leading from the sett and between holes. Only one main sett per social group.

ANNEXE SETT

Close to the main sett (less than 150m), usually connected to it by well-worn path. It comprises several holes but is not in continuous use.

SUBSIDIARY SETT

Often only a few holes, 3 – 5 at least 150m from the main sett with no obvious connecting path. Not in continuous use.

OUTLIER

Only one or 2 holes. No obvious path to main sett. Only used occasionally and can be taken over by foxes and rabbits.

OTHER COMMENTS

This includes anything important that is not covered in any other category eg live or dead badgers seen in the sett area, snares, poisons or other hazards, unusual badger signs or features of the sett. Mention if cull or vaccination has occurred.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THESE RECORDS

Whether submitted as hardcopy or by email, all sett records are collated by DMG and entered into a database which we will use to monitor changes over time in the distribution of badgers and their density. Copies of this database will be provided to the Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC) for archive purposes. Note that we are concerned here with setts and not with other badger-related observations. Records of badger RTAs, or live badger sightings of particular interest, should be separately notified - see DMG website (www.dorsetmammalgroup.org.uk) for more details.