



Badger Survey

Petersfield Heath

January 2019

Badger Survey

Petersfield Heath, Hampshire

January 2019

South Downs National Park Authority

Western Downs Area Office

Empshott

Liss

Hampshire

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Non-Technical Summary

This badger survey report forms part of a suite of protected species surveys undertaken by Phlorum which were commissioned by the South Downs National Park Authority across land at Petersfield Heath, Hampshire. This survey assessed the land at Petersfield Heath for signs indicating the presence or absence of badger (*Meles meles*) and was carried out over the survey period between July and November 2018.

The survey site is situated at Petersfield Heath, Hampshire, to the south-east of Petersfield, approximately 1.3km south-east of Petersfield town centre. Habitats within Petersfield Heath and, where accessible, up to 30 metres beyond the site boundary were surveyed for signs of badger. The survey area extended over approximately 35.6 hectares (ha)

The main findings of the survey are as follows:

-  A single disused badger sett was found approximately 215m south east of the car park entrance, located within a strip of dense scrub. The location of this sett is marked on Figure 1 in Appendix A.
-  Several fresh latrines were found approximately 115m west of this disused sett closer to the car park together with pathways running parallel with the B2146 Sussex Road towards its junction with the B2199 Heath Road East (for locations see Figure 1 in Appendix A).
-  Due to the suitable on-site habitat and connectivity to the wider surrounds, it is considered that badgers utilise on site habitat for foraging and commuting.

1. Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This badger survey forms one of a suite of protected species surveys undertaken by Phlorum Ltd which were commissioned by the South Downs National Park Authority across land at Petersfield Heath (hereafter referred to as “the site”).
- 1.2 This survey assessed the land at Petersfield Heath for signs indicating the presence or absence of badger (*Meles meles*) and was carried out over the survey period between July and November 2018.

Site Description

- 1.3 The survey site is situated at Petersfield Heath, Hampshire, to the south-east of Petersfield, approximately 1.3km south-east of Petersfield town centre. The site can be accessed on foot from many points but the car park is situated to the south of the site and accessed via the B2146 Sussex Road.
- 1.4 Habitats within Petersfield Heath and, where accessible, up to 30 meters beyond the site boundary were surveyed for signs of badger. The site comprised of Heath Pond in the south-west of the site together with some amenity grassland, scattered trees, heathland, woodland, scrub and ditches. Buildings within the site area included the Plump Duck Coffee shop, Little School by the Lake day care centre and a building associated with a cricket pitch.
- 1.5 Within the immediate surrounds the site is predominantly encircled by residential properties forming the outskirts of Petersfield. At the southern corner of the site lies Petersfield pay and play golf course with some adjacent heathland and to the east there is arable land.
- 1.6 The National Grid Reference for the centre of the site is SU75493 22929. The site extends over approximately 35.6 hectares (ha).

2. Methodology

Legislation

- 2.1 Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), which consolidated and added to the previous Badger Acts of 1973 and 1991. Further information regarding legislation is included in Appendix B.

Badger Survey

- 2.2 During a series of site visits between July and November 2018 Petersfield Heath was surveyed by a team of qualified ecologists to determine the use of the site by badgers. This evaluation was based on methodology developed for the National Survey for Badgers (Cresswell et al. 1990). This included a systematic search for badger field signs in the form of:
-  Setts: comprising either single isolated holes or a series of holes likely to be interconnected underground;
 -  latrines: badgers usually deposit faeces in characteristically excavated pits called latrines;
 -  paths: between setts or leading to feeding areas;
 -  foraging areas indicated by the presence of a series of 'snuffle holes' in the ground;
 -  hair: often found among spoil and bedding outside entrances to setts, or caught on fences and other objects along well used runs; and
 -  footprints.
- 2.3 The extent of the survey area and field signs identified during the badger survey are indicated on Figure 1 in Appendix A.
- 2.4 Where access permitted, areas within 30m of the site boundary were also searched for evidence of badger activity. Where dense scrub restricted a thorough search, the perimeter of these areas was examined for evidence of runs of pathways into the scrub which may indicate the presence of a sett.

- 2.5 All holes potentially created by badgers were examined closely to determine if they were, or ever had been, used as badger setts. Where holes used by badgers were found, an intensive search within the area was undertaken to determine the number of entrances and levels of use. The sett was then classified according to the criteria shown in Table 2.1 below (based on Harris et al, 1989).

Table 2.1: Badger Sett Classification

Sett Type	Definition
Main	Several holes with large spoil heaps and obvious paths emanating from and between sett entrances.
Annexe	Normally less than 150m from main sett, comprising several holes. May not be in use all the time, even if main sett is very active.
Subsidiary	Usually at least 50m from main sett with no obvious paths connecting to other setts. May only be used intermittently.
Outlier	Little spoil outside holes. No obvious paths connecting to other setts and only used sporadically. May be used by foxes and rabbits.

Caveat

- 2.6 Although the survey methodology was robust, the area was very large, this may have resulted in field signs including foraging areas, footprints and latrines being missed during the survey.

3. Results

Badger Survey

- 3.1 A single disused badger sett was found approximately 215m south east of the car park entrance, located within a strip of dense scrub. The location of this sett is marked on Figure 1 in Appendix A.
- 3.2 The sett comprised of a single hole with no recent excavations. It did not appear to have been used in a long time and there were no signs of badger footprints, hair, bedding, nearby latrines, paths or snuffle holes.
- 3.3 Several fresh latrines were found approximately 115m west of this disused sett closer to the car park together with pathways running parallel with the B2146 Sussex Road towards its junction with the B2199 Heath Road East (for locations see Figure 1 in Appendix A). The pathways also disappeared through the fence towards Petersfield pay and play golf course and an area of heathland. The area with the fresh latrines was thoroughly examined for signs of an active sett but no further setts were discovered.
- 3.4 The site itself combined with adjacent land to the south consisting of agricultural land, golf course and heathland provides a variety of food sources for badgers in the form of extensive areas of grassland and bramble which may support earthworms, their preferred prey item, as well as other prey including caterpillars and other insect larvae. Berry yielding trees and shrubs also provide a food source for some of the year.
- 3.5 During the surveys it was noted that the site is intensively used by the public for dog walking. Dogs frequently disturb setts by trying to dig them out and their presence is likely to deter badgers from establishing setts on site. During the night, however, there is nothing to deter the badgers from foraging here.

4. Conclusions

Conclusions

- 4.1 The only badger sett found during this survey was a disused sett found approximately 215m south east of the car park entrance located within a strip of dense scrub. The location of the sett is marked on Figure 1 in Appendix A.
- 4.2 Several fresh latrines were found approximately 115m west of this disused sett closer to the car park and pathways running parallel with the B2146 Sussex Road towards its junction with the B2199 Heath Road East (for locations see Figure 1 in Appendix A).
- 4.3 Due to the suitable on-site habitat and connectivity to the wider surrounds, it is considered that badgers utilise on site habitat for foraging and commuting.
- 4.4 It is considered that the high level usage of the site by the public, particularly by dog walkers, acts as a deterrent for badgers to construct main setts here and use them for breeding because dogs will frequently disturb badgers by digging out their setts.

5. References

-  Cresswell P, Harris S, & Jefferies D. J (1990). The history, distribution, status and habitat requirements of the badger in Britain. Nature Conservancy Council, Peterborough.
-  Harris, S., Cresswell, P. and Jefferies, D. (1989) Surveying Badgers – An Occasional Publication of the Mammal Society – No. 9. The Mammal Society.

Appendix A
Figure 1: Badger Survey Map



Legend

←

Path

Lines

●

Disused Badger Sett

Points

×

Badger Latrines

Points

—

Site Boundary

Lines

Figure 1: Badger Survey, Petersfield Heath

Drawn by: HF
On the: 15/01/2019
Not to Scale
Job No. 7826



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Appendix B

Legislation

Legislation

This section contains information pertaining to the legislation and planning policy applicable in Britain. This information is not applicable to Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands. Information contained in the following appendix is provided for guidance only.

Species

The objective of the EC Habitats Directive¹ is to conserve plants and animals which are considered to be rare across Europe. The Directive is transposed into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (formerly The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) and The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended).

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and also implements the obligations set out for species protection from the Council Directive 2009/147/EC (formerly 79/409/EEC) on the Conservation of Wild Birds (EC Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

Various amendments have been made since the Wildlife & Countryside Act came into force in 1981. Further details pertaining to alterations of the Act can be found on the following website: www.opsi.gov.uk. Key amendments have been made through the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act (2000) and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

There are a number of other legislative Acts affording protection to species and habitats. These include:

-  Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
-  Deer Act 1991;
-  Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
-  Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
-  Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

Badger

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992), which consolidated and added to the previous Badger Acts of 1973 and 1991. Under this legislation it is an offence to:

-  cruelly ill-treat a badger, including use of tongs and digging;

¹ Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora.

-  intentionally or recklessly cause a dog to enter a badger sett;
-  intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett² or any part thereof;
-  intentionally or recklessly disturb³ a badger when it is occupying a badger sett;
-  possess or control a dead badger or any part of a badger;
-  sell or offers for sale, possesses or has under his control, a live badger; and
-  wilfully kill, injure, take, or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger.

A Development Licence will be required from Natural England for any development works affecting an active badger sett, or to disturb badgers while individuals are occupying the sett. Depending on the nature of the works and the specifics of the sett, badgers could be disturbed by work near the sett even if there is no direct interference or damage to the sett itself. Natural England has issued guidelines on what constitutes a licensable activity. There is no provision in law for the capture of badgers for development purposes and therefore it is not possible to obtain a licence to translocate badgers from one area to another.

² A badger sett is defined in the legislation as *"any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger"*. This includes seasonally used setts. Natural England (2009) have issued guidance on what is likely to constitute current use of a badger sett: www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WMLG17_tcm6-11815.pdf

³ For guidance on what constitutes disturbance and other licensing queries, see Natural England (2007) Badgers & Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing. www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/badgers-dev-guidance_tcm6-4057.pdf, Natural England (2009) Interpretation of 'Disturbance' in relation to badgers occupying a sett www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/WMLG16_tcm6-11814.pdf, Scottish Natural Heritage (2002) Badgers & Development. www.snh.org.uk/publications/online/wildlife/badgersanddevelopment/default.asp and Countryside Council for Wales (undated) Badgers: A Guide for Developers. www.ccw.gov.uk.



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