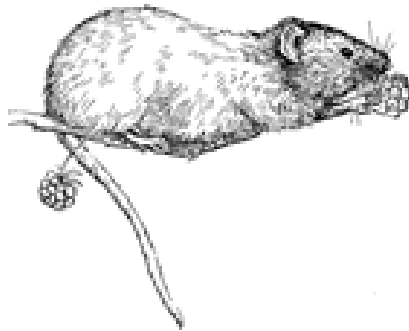


Wild Warwickshire

Saxon Mill Carr Mammal Survey

March 2009



M. C. Smith
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Saxon Mill Carr is managed for the Heber-Percy Estate by **Wild Warwickshire**



SAXON MILL CARR MAMMAL SURVEY

SUMMARY

This preliminary survey of the mammals present at Saxon Mill Carr reveals a wide range of mammal species present on the site. Mole, Rabbit, Muntjac, Badger, Brown Rat, Wood Mouse and Fox have all been recorded on the site. This species list is incomplete as other small mammals are likely to occur on the site. The survey does however highlight future areas of investigation.

INTRODUCTION

Mammals are notoriously difficult to survey reliably. Methods used in this assessment have all been non-invasive. Longworth Trapping is the most effective way of monitoring small mammals but in this case time and money restraints mean that such a technique is unsuitable in terms of animal welfare.

This survey is just a preliminary survey upon which subsequent research can be conducted.

METHODOLOGY

HAIR/BAIT TUBES

On the 21st February 6 bait tubes were placed throughout the site. Each tube contained dried mealworm bait and had a taped hair trap on the entrance to the tube.

The tubes were placed near established runways or beside hedgerows and trees. The tubes were left in situ for 7 days.

FOOTPRINTS

With several months of wet weather and the very nature of the site the observation of footprints in the mud was made on several occasions.

Prints were recorded either by photograph or by plaster cast.

HABITATION

During visits to the site all evidence of habitation were noted such as Rabbit Warrens and Mole Hills.

In the case of Mole Hills each hill was counted and its position recorded via GPS.

DROPPINGS

During all visits attention was paid to any droppings visible on the site. No samples were collected but identification of the species in the field were made where possible.

CAMERA TRAPPING

An Infra-Red camera trap was set up at 4 different locations over four different evenings (31st Jan, 14th Feb, 1st Mar, and 22nd Mar).

Each film was reviewed to establish species present and the time spent in view.

RESULTS

HAIR/BAIT TUBES

Of the six bait tubes all but one was used. Unfortunately no droppings were left in the tube or hair on the tape upon which to base identification. The tubes do however

confirm the presence of small mammals on the site.

FOOTPRINTS

The dominant footprint present on the site aside from human or dog is Deer. The small neat prints left are clearly those of Muntjac and sightings of this species on the site prior to the current management scheme clearly illustrate that this species is present.



Figure 1 Muntjac Footprint Cast

Fresh Muntjac prints are seen regularly and it is likely they are resident.

The second species identified through footprint identification is the Badger. Single prints have been recorded on two occasions on the track leading to the gate.



Figure 2 Badger Footprint Cast

HABITATION

An extensive warren of Rabbits exists in the hedgerow that borders the eastern edge of the site. There are multiple entrances in the raised bank.

MOLE HILLS

The analysis of the distribution of molehills shows two clusters of molehills. One cluster occurs in the south of the site by the footbridge whilst the other is further north, mid way up the meadow. This could indicate the presence of two individuals.

See Figure 3.

DROPPINGS

Most droppings observed were those of rabbits. Despite the presence of Badgers on the site there is no evidence of any latrine pits. This suggests that the sett is not close by or that the site does not form the edge of any territory.

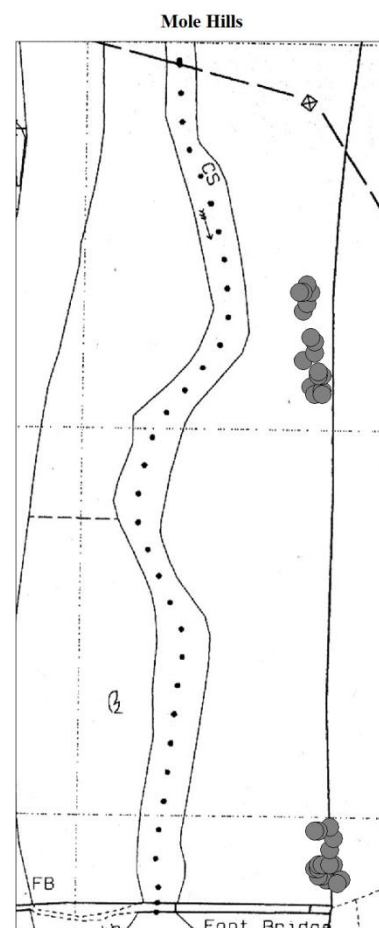


Figure 3 Distribution of Mole Hills

CAMERA TRAPPING

Of the four dates the camera was set up only two yielded any results. Nil results in the

other two sessions were a result of equipment failure.

The first successful use of the camera was at the feeding station. The camera was aligned to see what animals came down to the waterside. Over the night of 28th February 2009 Brown Rat and Wood Mouse were both recorded.



Figure 4 Camera Trap in situ

The second successful use was at the main gate at the north of the site. The camera was pointed due south and as badgers were suspected to be present the area in front of the camera was baited with peanuts.



Figure 5 Badger recorded on 21/3/09

On this occasion the camera trap was activated 35 times between 2.40pm and 10.20am the following day.

Time	Observation
4.44 pm	Rabbit
4.47 pm	Rabbit
5.02 pm	Rabbit
6.22 pm	Rabbit (x2)
6.29 pm	Rabbit
7.49 pm	Wood Mouse
7.57 pm	Badger
7.59 pm	Badger
8.15 pm	<i>Nothing visible</i>
8.20 pm	Wood Mouse
8.23 pm	Wood Mouse
8.26 pm	Wood Mouse
8.28 pm	Wood Mouse
8.30 pm	Wood Mouse
8.33 pm	Wood Mouse
8.36 pm	Wood Mouse
8.43 pm	Wood Mouse
8.46 pm	Wood Mouse
8.49 pm	Wood Mouse
9.06 pm	Wood Mouse
9.10 pm	Wood Mouse
9.19 pm	<i>Nothing visible</i>
9.44 pm	Wood Mouse
12.15 am	<i>Nothing visible</i>
12.34 am	<i>Nothing visible</i>
12.42 am	Wood Mouse
2.49 am	Badger
3.49 am	Rabbit (x2)
3.53 am	Rabbit (x2)
3.57 am	Rabbit
4.10 am	Rabbit (x2)
4.13 am	Rabbit
4.51 am	<i>Wren</i>
5.01 am	<i>Blackbird</i>
5.59 am	<i>Blackbird</i>

Figure 6 Camera Log 21/3/09-22/3/09

As the log in Figure 5 shows three mammal species were recorded over the night. Rabbit, Badger and Wood Mouse are all recorded and exhibit some evidence of stratification in activity times.

SIGHTINGS

As part of regular work and other surveys on the site mammals were regularly sighted. On two occasions a dog Fox was spotted moving through the site. One occasion was documented photographically.



Figure 7 Dog Fox sighted on 8/3/09

Rabbits have been seen on the site over the year as well as an unidentified mustelid. The sighting was too fleeting to establish its species but as Mink are known to frequent the area it is possible it was one of these alternatively Stoat or Weasel are both possibilities.

	Sighting	Footprint	Droppings	Camera Evidence	Burrow Evidence
Fox	Y		Y		
Badger		Y		Y	
Muntjac		Y	Y		
Brown Rat				Y	
Wood Mouse				Y	
Rabbit	Y		Y	Y	Y
Mole					Y

Figure 8 Summary of Evidence

are much harder to assess and is likely the species of Shrew and Vole also occur.

Little account has been taken of population size. The mole hills indicate 2 individuals and the number of Foxes, Badgers and Muntjac are likely to be just one. Numbers of rabbit would require further study. Whilst the accurate assessment of rodent populations would be largely unfeasible given the apparatus available to me.

DISCUSSION

Despite a limited survey to date a large number of species have been identified on the site. It is likely that aside from the unidentified mustelid that all the larger mammals present have been recorded.

Current evidence indicates an under representation of small mammals. These