

More roe deer, *Capreolus capreolus*, in Yorkshire

Since the publication of the book 'Yorkshire Mammals' in 1985, which chronicled the then known distribution of roe deer in the old county of Yorkshire, I have received quite a few records of sightings of this animal from areas that have, as far as is known, never held roe deer. The greater part of these records come, in the main, from the intensively farmed areas, to the east and south-east of Knottingley. Nowhere within this area is there any woodland of appreciable size, only scattered small copses.

From outside this area records of sightings come from Byram Park and Brockadale where there is a reasonable amount of woodland.

M.J. Delany, in his preface to 'Yorkshire Mammals' wrote "I have adopted the pre-1974 Yorkshire boundary and make no apology for this as this definition of the county has a historical stability which permits ready comparison between past and present distributions and biological events."

The list of post 'Yorkshire Mammals', roe deer sightings, until the time of writing, May 1988, is as follows;

1984

Early in the year one was seen crossing an unfenced works area at Great Heck, G.R.598 213.

May 4th: buck and doe seen crossing a wheat field at 1530hrs in Byram Park, G.R.500 260, near Brotherton.

1985

April 4th: one seen in Newfield Plantation, G.R.453 285, near Fairburn Ings, RSPB Reserve.

May 8th: one seen standing in a field, half a mile east of Green Hut roundabout, G.R.568 234.

May 19th: one seen crossing the road, as above.

1986

Jan 9th: four seen in Byram Park.

Feb 20th: several seen standing in a field, only about 30 yards from the busy A645 at Little Heck, G.R.602 219

Feb 21st: as above.

Mar 4th: four seen as above.

Apr 14th: three seen as above.

Apr 15th: three seen as above.

Apr 29th: one seen as above.

May 25th: two seen in Brockadale, G.R.505 175, a Y.W.T. Reserve near Wentbridge.

July 20th: one seen standing by the roadside near Kellingley Colliery, G.R.520 237, just east of Knottingley.

Sept 24th: one seen killed on the A19 between Eggborough Power Station and Haddlesey Bridge at G.R.576 255.

Oct 6th: one found dead in a field off Park Lane, Featherstone.

Nov 28th: one killed on the A645 at Little Heck.

Undated records: slots seen in the village of Gateforth, G.R.560 287, the animal in nearby Gateforth Wood, G.R.545 285.

1987

Shortly before Christmas, four were seen in woodland,

G.R.558 252, just east of Kellingley.
1988

During the first four months of this year, two were seen often on an Ash Disposal Works, G.R.535 215, midway between Whitley and Cridling Stubbs.

Mid-April: one standing in the road east of Whitley at G.R.552 202.

May 7th: one crossed the road east of Whitley at G.R.554 206.

May 12th: one killed on the A645 at G.R.592 223, just east of Little Heck.

May 21st: one flushed by a dog out of a field of growing corn at G.R.548 256, just north of Kellingley.

Ken Burden



Observations of small mammals at Willow Garth Reserve, Knottingley

On the 30th March 1988 I visited the reserve with the intention of photographing woodmouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*). I arrived at the reserve at approximately 3.00pm and walked round to see what was about.

At 4.00pm I saw a bank vole (*Clethrionomys glareolus*) emerge and I watched it for 10 minutes foraging, feeding and grooming.

7.00pm. I went to a place which I knew to be inhabited by woodmice and set my equipment up.

7.30pm. I settled down to wait for darkness to fall and for the woodmice to appear. I was expecting them to emerge from a hole at the bottom of a tree, to my surprise at 9.00pm I heard a rustle in the branches to my left and in the moonlight I saw the small shape of a woodmouse come down, then I heard it scampering about amongst the twigs overhead. It came into view again running along a branch (on my right this time) it ran across the tree trunk and back along the branches on my left.

9.20pm. A woodmouse came out of the branches, down the tree trunk and onto the woodland floor, where it started foraging and feeding. While it was feeding another woodmouse approached and the feeding animal immediately leaped at it and drove it away, it then returned to whatever it was feeding on. While all this was going on there was a bank vole feeding 2 inches from my left foot and another feeding 3 feet from my right foot.

9.30. A tawny owl started calling and hunting over the area and the bank voles and woodmouse went under cover. Not once did the woodmouse enter or leave the hole which I had expected it to use.

I waited about an hour but no animals reappeared and by this time I was very cold so I decided to pack up and go home. Although I did not manage to get any pictures on this occasion I did have a very interesting evening watching these tiny creatures going about their nocturnal activities. I left the reserve at 11.05pm.