

East and North Yorkshire Badger Protection Group.

The cruel sport of badger baiting still flourishes despite protective legislation introduced in the form of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act and its further amendment which strengthened the 1973 Badgers Act. It seems to be mainly young people who are involved in this persecution with industrial rather than rural occupations and their effect on badger populations are far more devastating than in times gone by. Past reports tended to be of diggers taking single badgers from a different sett each time which, though deplorable, is far preferable to the wholesale attack approach practiced recently. Although persecution tends to centre around industrial areas, a recent survey of North Yorkshire showed disturbance rates to be as high as 10% (Johnson, P.N. Yorkshire Wildlife, Autumn 1987).

For this reason The East and North Yorkshire Badger Protection Group came into being in June 1987. Its aim is to protect badgers in every possible way, liaising with police, local landowners and farmers, most of whom support efforts to stamp out the barbaric sport of badger baiting. The Group intends to form a sett surveillance team for each sett, to check and record any interference to setts and to have talks, meetings and discussions at all levels to ensure a coordinated programme of action. For as little as £200 an alarm system can be installed into a sett and various fund-raising activities meet these costs.

If you would like to help the Badger Protection Group in its admirable aims contact Jan Stuttard at Station Cottage, Wharram-le-Street, Malton, North Yorkshire or telephone North Grimston 389.

Ed.



British Mammal Society AGM : 1988

The British Mammal Society AGM took place from 8th to 10th April in Ripon at the College of Ripon and York St John. This is the second time the college has hosted the proceedings, the previous occasion being only in 1986.

The programme was varied and interesting, with lectures all day Saturday and on Sunday morning, and then field trips on Sunday afternoon.

YMG made several contributions: by showing two displays of our work at the exhibition, by selling Imprint at the bookshop and by helping to arrange some of the field trips. YMG member Gordon Woodroffe gave a paper about his work with water voles, *Arvicola terrestris*, and mink, *Mustela vison*, in the North Yorkshire Moors National Park. He recorded their activities and statistically analysed the results for signs of mink interactions with water vole populations. On one river in particular his results recorded significant interrelationships.

Of the other papers presented on Saturday I found the following particularly interesting: J. Hurst spoke on her fascinating studies entitled 'A view of the world through a mouse's nose'. She described a cleverly designed experimental forum used to investigate this perception and introduced us to such phenomena as 'urine posts'.

D.J. Inkpin had studied the stress factors involved in trying to reintroduce red squirrels, *Sciurus vulgaris*, into the wild and the possible consequences of such pressures.

Ray Hewson gave an entertaining talk on his old friend the mountain hare, *Lepus timidus*, and how it adapts to living in such adverse conditions.

R. Shore presented the results of a small mammal trap with a difference. He and his friends had been on a one month's expedition to the high Shira Plateau on Mount Kilimanjaro. They caught animals such as the four striped grass mouse, *Rhabdomys pumilio*, and white toothed shrews, *Crocidura*.

Sunday morning's lectures were entirely devoted to bats. Amongst the speakers was Phil Richardson, who had recently given an excellent and entertaining lecture to YMG in York.

The field trips were as popular as ever and fully subscribed. These included return visits to Throstlenest Farm, Nidderdale (with Ron Deaton) and Fountains Abbey and Studley Royal: There was also a visit to look at YMG dormouse boxes in situ at Rievaulx.

The conference was very well attended, with a sizeable delegation of YMG members - as well there might be for such a convivial and pertinent occasion.

Angie Hibbert