The otter is now very much an endangered species in England. It was, therefore, most disappointing that after an encouraging start when I was findig otter signs quite frequently on the five rivers in 1984 and 1985, these virtually disappeaared in 1986, apart from two occasions on one of the rivers. It looks as though I have been monitering the remnants of a fragmented population in the Park, with only one reliable breeding record during the last four years. The reasons for the otter's continued decline and rarity in England are still unclear and it is surprising that the Yorkshire rivers are so unpromising; they had plenty of cover (essential for such a secretive creature), clean unpolluted waters and good fish stocks; added to which all the study rivers had good otter populations in the 1930's, 1950's and 1960's. So why the otter should be established in some areas of England and not this one is a mystery and a much more detailed survey throughout Yorkshire is urgently required.

Gordon Woodroffe

OTTER REINTRODUCTION IN NORTH YORKSHIRE — A DISCLAIMER

In the last edition of IMPRINT, it was mistakenly reported that otters were being reintroduced on the North Yorkshire Moors (Otters - the acid test, IMPRINT No. 12 p.13). There is no such project and none is envisaged at present. We apologise for any confusion caused.

STOP PRESS

The latest results from the York pipistrelle bat ringing programme carried out by Bob Stebbings, Sheila Walsh, Lesley Helliwell, Edna Shann and myself:

2983 bats have been ringed between 1977 and 1988. 77.5% are adult females, 7.3% are immature females and 8.5% are juvenile females. Of the 193 juvenile males ringed (6.4%), only one has been recaptured up to date.

By 1989 six adult females were known to have lived 11 years, thus equalling the British longevity record for this species (Stebbings 1977 - Handbook of British Mammals).

From the four main study colonies of Wheldrake, Sutton-upon-Derwent, Haxby and Huntingdon/Earswick, the recapture rate at colonies of origin was 47.0% up to 1988. I still have to analyse the recaptured rings for 1989. Only 24 bats have been found away from their colony of origin to date (0.86%). The greatest distance travelled by a displaced pipistrelle has been 34 kilometres (Gate Helmsley to Dalby Forest); the British record is 67 kilometres (Stebbings 1977).

Work is being done on miminmum pregnancy rates for adult females; however, from the York results, it would appear that 12% of juvemile females are pregnant for the first time at their first spring. More results to follow.

Michael J.A. Thompson.