

Towards an online, interactive Mammal Atlas for Worcestershire.

Poppy Morris

Time flies when you're having fun! The Worcestershire Mammal Group (WMG) has been up and running for three years now and during this time we have got ourselves set up and have successfully run many activities and events in order to fulfill our three main aims which are:

1. To promote the recording of mammals in Worcestershire.
2. To increase skills of individuals through the provision of training sessions.
3. To raise public awareness of mammals in Worcestershire.

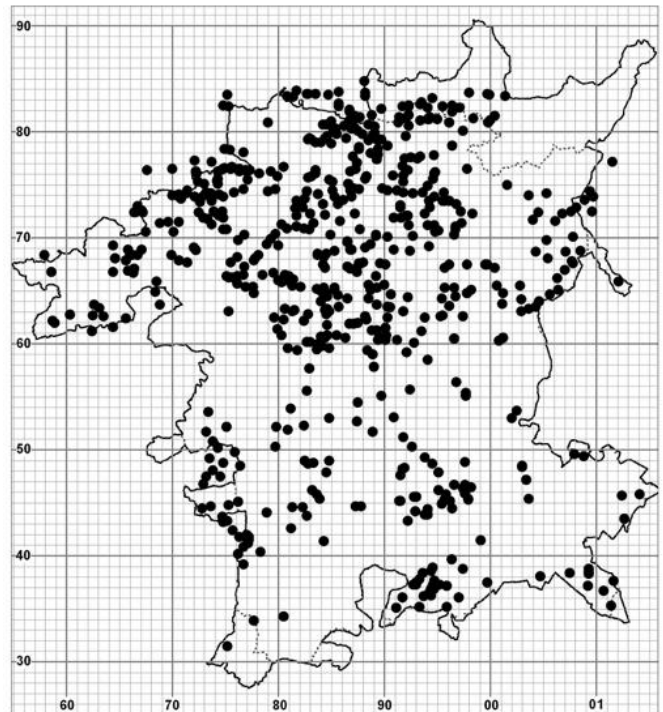
It's very exciting to see how the group is developing. Our membership is growing and the general awareness of what the Worcestershire Mammal Group is and what it does is also growing which is very encouraging.

By organising a varied programme of events and training each year, the WMG hopes to enthuse and encourage individuals to record and submit mammal records to us. There are gaps in the recording effort - the infamous 'white spaces' on distribution maps. If you look at mole distribution for example, the south of the county appears to have a distinct lack of moles in comparison to the north of Worcestershire. I'm sure there maybe a couple or so gardeners out there that would beg to differ! Whether the reason is because the mammal is deemed 'common' so ignored in many cases or perhaps under-recorded due to difficulties in recording a particular mammal species, the WMG are very keen to address these gaps.



03. Recording moles. Poppy Morris.

Mole (*Talpa europaea*) records held by WBRC (Jan 2008 - Jan 2018)



04. Mole distribution in Worcestershire 2008-2018. WBRC.



01. Smelling the evidence. Poppy Morris.



02. Otter spraints. Poppy Morris.

All records that are submitted to WMG, which also get sent to the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC) automatically, are important in gaining a better understanding on the mammal distribution across the county.

As many of you will be aware, there has been a push to encourage more mammal records to be submitted to create the next 'mammal atlas' following the publication of *Worcestershire's Mammals* (Green et al, 2012) that compiled mammal records collected between 1995 and 2007.

Having run an idea past a few key individuals the WMG are excited to share with you a project that we will be involved in and, hopefully alongside other key groups within the county, will be exploring further over the next few months.

The vision is for an online mammal atlas, which would be a follow-on development from *Worcestershire's Mammals*, available to all on the web, achieved by inviting relevant local groups and individuals to collaborate and contribute to updating the graphs and text on an ongoing basis. Being web-based the pages can evolve rather than

being tied to a particular date, with an interactive element so that people can learn, submit records and be involved too.

Some initial ideas include:

1. Individual species and order pages, with calls-to-action to submit a record on the site and help with identification.
2. Taxonomies to relate them, e.g. habitats
3. "Habitat Explorer" pages with info about the habitat and a list of species that can be found there
4. "Mammals Near Me" page - user enters location and gets a list of mammals nearby (filter by species, distance etc)
5. "Mammal of the month/season" - for promoting a particular species, possibly in collaboration with a local groups events.
6. Users able to log in, submit records and view interactive maps. Records go to local BRC. Make submission of records easier whilst maintaining quality. Possibility of a linked mobile app.
7. Features to encourage people to submit records, e.g. leaderboard
8. Search facility for easily finding information

Watch this space!

Worcestershire Mammal Group

Joining instructions are very easy and all laid out on the WMG website. <https://worcestershiremammals.org/get-involved/>

References

Green. G. H, Birks. J.D.S, Schenke. J.M.L, Trevis.G.H. 2012. *Worcestershire's Mammals*. Published by Worcestershire Recorders and the Worcestershire Biological Records Centre. (Available from WBRC).

Images

01. Smelling the evidence. Poppy Morris.
02. Otter spraints. Poppy Morris.
03. Recording moles. Poppy Morris.
04. Mole distribution in Worcestershire 2008-2018. WBRC.