

# **“Of Mammals and Men”**

## ***Challenges Facing Mammals Today***

Wherstead Park, Ipswich IP9 2BJ

Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2018

### **Presentation Summaries and Speaker Biographies**

#### **Wild Deer and their Threat to the Natural Environment**

***David Hooton, The Deer Initiative***

##### **Biography**

David Hooton works for The Deer initiative as a Deer Liaison Officer, specializing in providing advice on sustainable Wild Deer Management. David’s main area of work covers East England and East Midlands.

David studied Game Wildlife and Habitat Management at Sparsholt College Hampshire and on completing his course in 1992 worked for The Forestry Commission as a Wildlife Ranger managing wild deer at Thetford Forest.

In 2003 a two year secondment was offered to work with The Deer Initiative to act as a coordinator for the Deer Vehicle Collisions Project. Following this secondment David continued his role with the Deer Initiative and expanded his job role to include deer management advice across the East England Region and more recently to include The East Midlands. David managed the East of England Wild Venison Project from 2010 – 2014 providing £0.5m of grant to landowners and deer managers to increase efficiency of culling and to provide infrastructure to support the development of venison processing and marketing projects.



David's roles currently are to increase advice and support to landowners, deer managers and other stakeholders with deer management planning, organising collaborative culls and promoting landscape management of wild deer to meet a wide range of objectives.

## **Presentation**

Six species of deer live wild in the East of England and their populations have expanded in range and number over the past 50 years with more significant expansions during the last 25 years. The Deer Initiative is a partnership organisation established to provide awareness, advice and coordination to owners, managers and deer stalkers on population management, impact monitoring and collaborative management at a landscape level. The main objective of our work is to have a sustainable wild deer population in England and Wales, that is in balance with the landscape in which they (the deer) live.

This presentation will look at our current species presence, the threats that are caused by high deer populations to both the natural and farmed environment and the threats to animal welfare and human safety on our road network, and then explore some of the focussed project work that we are involved with.

## **Suffolk Bat Group – the first 35 years** ***Alan Miller, Suffolk County Recorder – Bats***

### **Biography**

I have worked as a sites manager for Suffolk Wildlife Trust since 1993 and am responsible for all the Trusts reserves in the north east of the county. I started as a volunteer warden for SWT in 1979 and it was as a bird ringer I first became interested in bats and ended up putting up some of the first bat boxes on an SWT reserve. When bats became protected in 1981 myself along with a few other interested staff and volunteers formed the Suffolk Bat Group under the umbrella of SWT in 1983. The group has continued to this day surveying, recording and conserving bats in Suffolk.



## Presentation

The presentation will look at the first 35 years of the Suffolk Bat Group including the latest distribution atlas published by the group. The way that bats are recorded by the group has changed over the years and modern technology now plays a big part using bat detectors and software programmes.

## Drones, a new tool for bat monitoring?

*Dr Tom August, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology*

### Biography

Tom has worked at the Biological Records Centre since 2012 where he and others use volunteer collected data to answer important questions about wildlife in the UK. He has recently worked on the State of Nature report, DEFRA's biodiversity indicators, and red-listing analyses for plants, including the largest ever analysis of UK wildlife (12,000 species). Tom also has a keen



interest in the applications of new technologies and has worked with a range of tools as a part of his research, including drones, image recognition, super-computers, mobile phone apps, computer games and social media. Long before this, Tom undertook a PhD studying bats and he still leads bat walks for the public, gives talks on his PhD research, and submits his records for the Bat Conservation Trusts annual surveys. Over the past three years Tom has spent some of his spare-time exploring the use of drones to study bats.

## Presentation

Drones are unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) that are controlled either from the ground using a controller, or autonomously by a computer program. Their use has been restricted primarily to military and high-end filming because of their high cost, however in recent years, their costs have dropped and their usability increased.

Tom will tell the story of three years spent exploring the feasibility of using drones as a tool for monitoring bats using on-board ultrasound detectors. From early, manually-controlled, flights using a large detector, to semi-autonomous flights using lightweight full spectrum

detectors, Tom has explored the challenges and opportunities that drones afford us. Amongst these opportunities are the ability to survey areas that are hazardous, inaccessible (such as over water), and at height. Additionally, no longer constrained by footpaths, large areas could be surveyed systematically and quickly, allowing an area to be monitored multiple times in one night. There are many challenges too, some of which we have overcome, but others remain. These include the tight legislation over the use of UAVs in the UK, interference noise generated by the drone and potential effect of drones on bat behaviour.

## **Little Ouse Headwaters Project Mammal Studies**

***Dr Rowena Langston, LOHP***

### **Biography**

Dr Rowena Langston is an ornithologist and conservation scientist by profession, having worked mainly for the British Trust for Ornithology and the RSPB during the last 30 years. A founder trustee of the Little Ouse Headwaters Project (LOHP), I now chair our Monitoring Group, and carry out a wide range of biological recording and monitoring on LOHP (and other) sites, including activities as a member of the LOHP Mammal Group.



### **Presentation**

The LOHP Mammal Group was established to bring together mammal enthusiasts in the study of mammals on LOHP sites along the upper Little Ouse River. We have a network of bat boxes, which are checked annually, and participate in the Norfolk Bat Survey, coordinated by the BTO. We are fully signed up members of the Otter Spraint Appreciation Society and are collecting spraint to investigate otter diet locally. Trail cameras are used to provide additional records of otters and other wildlife in the valley. The LOHP maintains mink rafts and contributed to the successful eradication of mink in the area, although we remain vigilant to any change in this situation. As part of our ongoing monitoring of water vole activity, we have contributed data to the PTES national survey. This presentation will outline some of the results from these studies.

## The hedgehogs of Ipswich - prickly liaisons and enthusing champions

*Ali North, Suffolk Wildlife Trust*

### Biography

Ali North began her role as Hedgehog Officer with Suffolk Wildlife Trust in September 2016, working on a 2-year project funded by Heritage Lottery Fund and British Hedgehog Preservation Society. Ali is working with individuals, community groups, schools, families, land managers, businesses and the local council to create a network of hedgehog-friendly streets and habitat across Ipswich, with the aim of making Ipswich the most hedgehog friendly town in the UK!



### Presentation

My talk will outline the range of approaches taken to help hedgehogs in Ipswich, from engaging a wide audience in hedgehog-friendly gardening and land management, to monitoring action, surveying green spaces and improving our understanding of the ecology of the species.

## Post Brexit legislative implications for Mammals

### Paul Cantwell Biography

Paul is now in his 19<sup>th</sup> year working for Natural England (NE) and its predecessor bodies. He joined the Farming & Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) based in Cambridge as a Consultant Wildlife Management (WMA) Adviser. He continued as a WMA until 2009 when he moved role to become what is now NE's National Species Enforcement Specialist overseeing our species enforcement role across England. Paul has ownership of our delivery of the Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme (WIIS) that looks in to the death or injury of wildlife, companion animals and beneficial insects where pesticides are thought to be involved in England on behalf of the





Health and Safety Executive. Paul leads on our relationship with the Police Service, National Wildlife Crime Unit (to whom he was seconded at one stage) and Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). He chairs the East of England wildlife crime Regional Enforcement Group and sits as the NE representative on the UK Government's Badger and Bat wildlife crime priority delivery groups and the CPS wildlife community involvement panel. Home based, he lives in rural Suffolk.

### ***Dr Matt Heydon Biography***

Matt began his career in research, studying logging impacts on wildlife in the tropics and hunting on foxes in the UK.

Matt joined the Farming & Rural Conservation Agency (FRCA) based in Oxford as a Consultant Wildlife

Management (WMA) Adviser in 1998. Matt has also spent

time a wildlife policy adviser in Defra and as manager of Defra's National Wildlife Management Team. Since the

formation of Natural England Matt has been the organisation's lead specialist on wildlife licensing and species protection issues. He has been

involved in a range of high profile topics ranging from badger culling, to beaver

reintroductions and the new licensing policies for bats and newts. Matt contributed to the Law Commission's Wildlife Law Review and is currently advising on the implications of Brexit on wildlife. Home based, he lives in Oxford.



### **Presentation**

We will be setting out the current legislation and protection afforded to English mammals and discussing what the legislative picture might look like post-BREXIT.

### **Using footprint tunnels to survey hazel dormice**

*Dr Simone Bullion, Suffolk County Recorder – Mammals*

### **Biography**

Simone is Senior Conservation Adviser/Consultancy Manager at the Trust and is also the Suffolk Mammal Recorder. She has written various publications on identifying and surveying mammals, including The



Mammals of Suffolk in 2009. She has been studying the hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* for the last 20 years, undertaking numerous surveys and exploring different techniques for detecting of this scarce and secretive small mammal. Recently, she has also become interested in the edible dormouse *Glis glis* - pictured with Simone in the photo – following the first record of one in Suffolk.

## **Presentation**

In 2017, Simone and her colleague, Alison Looser, embarked on a detailed investigation into the effectiveness of footprint tunnels to detect hazel dormice. The advantages of the method are that they can be used by non-licensed persons and in areas of higher public disturbance. In particular, it has been interesting to see how sensitive the method is for detecting dormice compared with other methods. This work was funded by The People's Trust for Endangered Species.

## **On the Trail of Pine Martens and Polecats**

***Lizzie Croose, Vincent Wildlife Trust***

### **Biography**

Lizzie Croose is the Mustelid Conservation Officer for The Vincent Wildlife Trust, a mammal research and conservation charity. She is primarily involved in conservation-directed research on mustelids, with a current focus on pine martens and polecats. Lizzie coordinated VWT's most recent



national polecat survey and she has also worked on the Trust's Pine Marten Recovery Project, translocating pine martens from Scotland to Wales for a population reinforcement. She recently took a sabbatical from the VWT and worked on a predator-prey dynamics study in Michigan, USA, studying survival of white-tailed deer and the influence of predation by coyotes, wolves, black bears and bobcats.

## **Presentation**

Pine martens and polecats almost became extinct in Britain at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but populations are now recovering and returning to parts of their former range. The Vincent Wildlife Trust has been studying both species for more than 20 years, notably monitoring the natural range expansion of polecats as they spread back across England and recently restoring a viable pine marten population to Wales by translocating animals from Scotland. This talk will give an overview of the current status of both species, the challenges brought by recovering carnivore populations, and the conservation and monitoring programmes implemented for them.

## **Suffolk Constabulary Rural Policing Team - Wildlife Crime**

*PC Lee Andrews-Pearce, Suffolk Constabulary*

### **Biography**

Lee Andrews-Pearce is a Rural and Wildlife Crime officer on the Rural Policing Team with Suffolk Constabulary, providing an investigative and enforcement capability for rural, wildlife and heritage crime.

He has completed a nationally recognised Wildlife Crime Officers Foundation Course covering species persecution, poaching and wildlife legislation, including the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) and the Hunting Act (2004).



### **Presentation**

The presentation will look at the structure and role the Rural Policing Team and the work it does with regional and national Police forces and external partners and agencies.



## **A Brief History of Humans and Badgers – and Bovine TB**

*Patrick Barkham, Natural History Writer for the Guardian*

### **Biography**

Patrick Barkham was born in 1975 in Norfolk. He is Natural History Writer for the Guardian where he has reported on everything from the Iraq War to climate change.

His first book, *The Butterfly Isles*, was shortlisted for the Royal Society of Literature Ondaatje prize. His second, *Badgerlands*, was hailed by Chris Packham as “a must read for all Britain's naturalists” and was shortlisted for the Ondaatje Prize and the Wainwright Prize.

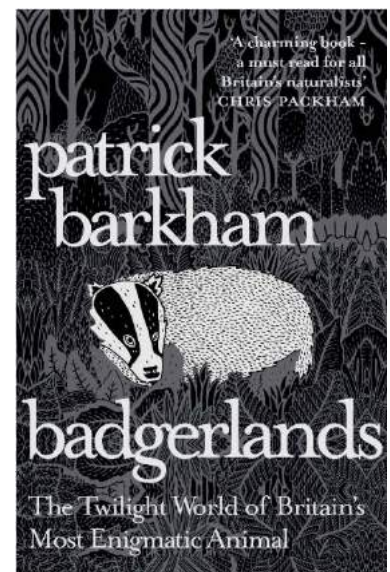
*Coastlines* (2015) was judged ‘an informative, enthusiastic and at times rapturous celebration of our shores’ by Blake Morrison.

Critics have called his latest book, *Islander* (2017), ‘charming and attractive’ (*The Spectator*), ‘a complete delight’ (*Scotland on Sunday*) and ‘vibrant and full of fascinating detail’ (*The Sunday Times*). *The Financial Times* said: ‘It’s rare to read a book as good-spirited as this, where the narrative voice is so eager, inquisitive but non-judgemental, the worldview so benevolent and open-hearted... Brimming with nature, literature and the eccentric life of the islanders Barkham meets, this is a fitting tribute to the strangeness and beauty of our British Isles.’

Patrick lives on the edge of the Broads in Norfolk with his family.

### **Presentation**

Patrick will show slides and discuss the fraught history of people and badgers and how that plays out today with the conflict over bovine TB. He will discuss the latest science and data on the badger cull.



# Otters on the Suffolk Coast – Living on the Edge?

*Richard Woolnough, Suffolk Otter Group*

## Biography

An interest in otters developed in the mid-1970s on a trip to Ardnamurchan after all hope of ever seeing otters in lowland England had disappeared. Not a year has been missed in the last 40 years. However, the otters returned to East Anglia and as the barren wastes of retirement stretched ahead it was such fun to be able to try and unravel some of the day to day lives of our local otters. Getting together with Rodney West who had studied the demise of Suffolk otters in the 1960s and '70s and worked with the Otter Trust on otter re-introductions was a boost. Initially based at Stanny Farm, a motley crew



formed the Spraint Appreciation Group to study their diet and started using trail cameras to gather more information on otter numbers. The Suffolk Otter Group was formed and expanded its work to Minsmere and the Blyth Catchment with occasional evangelical forays further afield.

## Presentation

Richard's presentation will report on the successes and failures of the Group; the possible interpretations of work of the Group analysing thousands of spraints and watching hours of videos. Priorities for future action will be suggested.

