



Cambridgeshire Mammal Group

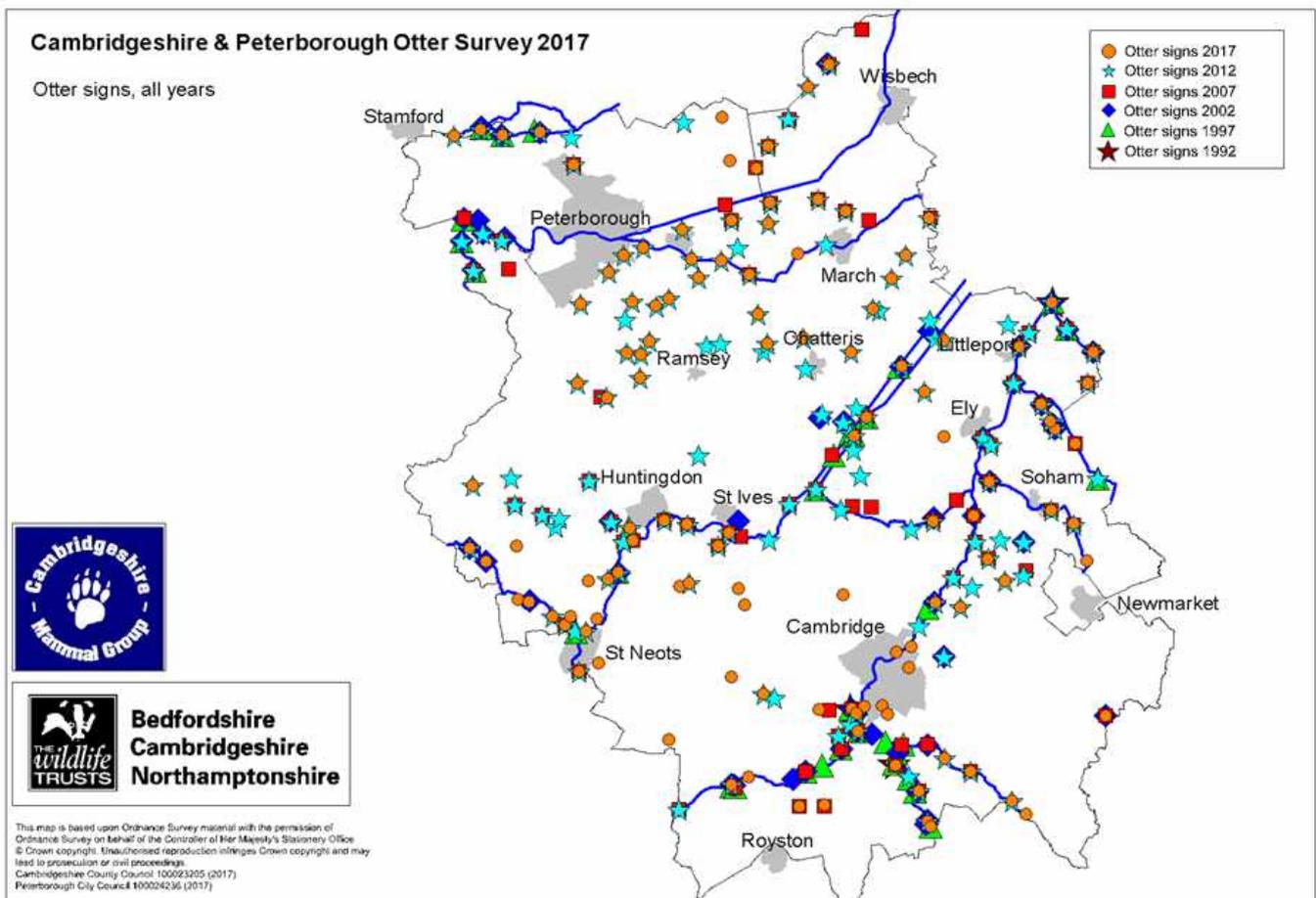
Hello and welcome to the Cambridgeshire Mammal Group 'page' for
NatHistFest 2020!

First of all, what our stand at this year's 'real' event in the Department of Zoology would (probably) have looked like – actually a couple of photos of our stands in previous years.



A glance or three at what we would particularly have been talking to people at NatHistFest about.

A main feature of our stands is usually charts and tables concerning the 5-yearly survey of otters in Cambridgeshire – started in 1992 and next due in 2022. This shows very clearly that otters have ‘come back’ throughout the county extremely well since 1992 and are present in all the main catchment areas and even come into the centre of Cambridge itself (but you’ll have to be very very lucky to see one there). Here’s map of the signs found of otters over all the surveys from 1992 to 2017 – note that these are signs (spraint [poo] and clear footprints) - not sightings. We cannot tell you where to go and sit and see an otter!



Next might well have been about harvest mouse nest surveys – done in late autumn every year on the same sites in Barton. By that time of year the mice have stopped using their nests (i.e. finished with breeding) and have left their nests attached to the vegetation (could be say 30cm above ground in long grass, hedgerows, etc. - perhaps in field margins deliberately left by farmers for wildlife. There is a protocol for this specified by the Mammal Society – involves finger-tip searching of a set area for a set time for complete nests, squashed soggy nests, and traces of nests (not to be confused with certain bird’s nests which can look quite similar). Here’s a picture of a nest found in early November this year in Barton, another of one of our teams about to start work, and another of two harvest mice (not from Barton).





We helped with a BioBlitz in the Botanic Garden in September this year, so some records from there would have been on show. This was an unusual BioBlitz – for our bits we would have spoken to and taken round small groups of attendees to show them small mammal trapping and hedgehog tunnels. Unfortunately following Covid-related rules meant we couldn't have any members of the public with us – in fact we just had a small film crew. And we had to follow guidelines from the Mammal Society and The People's Trust for Endangered Species for all the surveying – wearing masks and gloves (to stop us giving Covid to the small mammals or vice versa) and socially distancing – not easy at all! Here are some photos of us at work, and a couple of small mammals (one not from the BioBlitz).







Just in case readers are not aware of how we trap small mammals (alive and for immediate release where caught after identifying, weighing, measuring and sexing them), here's a picture of a member with a Longworth trap ready for use.



The above was taken pre-Covid when surveying the new Wildlife Trust reserve at Trumpington Meadows. Although a very new reserve there is already evidence of good small mammal populations of several different species.

The two pictures below were also taken pre-Covid when surveying for small mammals in Barton before and after the National Hedgelaying Championships in Barton in 2018.



For the future - in late 2019 we had plans ready to re-survey (in spring 2020) all the badger setts (a few hundred) we have on our sett database - now due spring 2021.

And we'll be taking part in late spring in a re-survey of water vole habitats out near Chatteris and those in a first survey of the Granta between Stapleford and Linton. Cambridgeshire is one of the best (if not *the* best) county in the country for water voles.

ALL those events can be done with the present Covid restrictions - the protocols for those types of survey conveniently lend themselves to those restrictions!

More information about what we do is in our leaflet at:

<http://www.cambsmammalgroup.org.uk/cmgleaflet.pdf>

Our website address is:

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