



<https://gloucestershirebadgergroup.org>

## AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2021

### Cull

7th September turned out to be the day of doom for our badgers with the publication of the 2021 Intensive cull licences. Two areas of Gloucestershire were included. Year 4 of Area 29, with a maximum target of 502 and Year 2 of Area 46, with a maximum of 860 badgers to lose their lives.

Meanwhile, the Supplementary cull is still ongoing until January in the original Pilot areas of the Glos. East and West Zones; North Cots (north of A40 up to Evesham) and South Glos is included in some Wiltshire areas. The usual hotspots continue to endure regular visits from shooters, such as

Redmarley in the original West Zone around Tewkesbury - now in its ninth year of killing.

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**Gloucestershire Badger Office emergency number: 07709 624903**

<https://en-gb.facebook.com/Glosbadgeroffice>

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In our neighbouring area, the Cherwell Valley in the new Oxfordshire zone seems particularly badly hit.

From its beginnings in Gloucestershire and Somerset back in 2013, the cull now covers almost 25% of England's land area.

### **Crime and persecution**

Over the Summer, the Badger Trust provided opportunities to participate in their online training in wildlife crime. This was a follow-up to the previous training on how to recognise and report a crime, and offered guidance in gathering, recording and presenting evidence. This training was put into practice pretty quickly as the start of the fox cub hunting season brought the usual rise in persecution cases. Here is a snapshot of the recent incidents:

[Sept. Wormington](#) near Broadway. Freshly blocked sett in the North Cotswold Hunt area.

**Sept. Doughton:** A much blocked sett that had just become active after some time, was again blocked.

**Oct. Broadwell:** A hunt sab managed to interrupt a dig-out at a blocked badger sett (Heythrop Hunt).

**Oct. Calmsden:** A sett that was really thriving the week before with bundles of bedding being brought in, was found with entrances rammed with clods of clay. On the day this occurred, there was torrential rain so the soil became claggy and heavy - just the conditions that make blocking particularly dangerous for badgers.



This was the 6th time of reporting this sett as blocked.



The perpetrator – filmed at the sett on a previous occasion.

[Sept. Perrotts Brook](#): Logging over a sett. The FC guidelines about leaving an exclusion zone around entrances were ignored and so considerable physical damage and noise disturbance was caused to a large sett - which now resembles a WW1 landscape.



July. Pitchcombe: Wire grills found left over a couple of entrances after a utility company had completed its work. This had involved a sett being temporarily closed under licence. NE were informed and the wire was removed by the police.



## Field Work

**Pittville Park:** After discussion with the council, Cheltenham's largest ornamental park is to plant saplings as protective screening around a sett in order to minimise disturbance. The park is currently engaged in an urban greening project which will include an area of meadow.

**Dursley.** A site visit was made to offer advice regarding badger damage to fencing and a lawn.

## RTA's

September occasioned another spike in RTA figures with autumn seeing an increase in badger range as they seek food to bulk up for winter and search for mates. And of course, the new autumn fixture of the cull, causes trauma and disturbance leading to a rise in perturbation.

One sad case among so many was a small cub found in September at Calmsden. This cub was not far from home but had clearly become trapped in a section of road with the now ubiquitous badger-proof stock fencing on both sides.

## Development

*Over two-thirds of the UK is now used for agriculture and 8% has been built on, leaving little room for nature. Nearly half of Britain's biodiversity has gone since industrial revolution | Biodiversity | The Guardian*

[Land south of Cirencester – The Steadings. A mixed use development of 2,350 residential dwellings. Planning-Statement.pdf](#)  
([thesteadingscirencester.co.uk](http://thesteadingscirencester.co.uk))

The current active sett is located right on the edge the Chesterton estate. Despite being used as a dump by locals, the sett is doing quite well.

The construction work will start with a phase over towards Siddington. When the sett is closed, the likeliest relocation of the badgers is to the southern perimeter of the new development, connected to a green corridor. Looking at the plan this does not seem ideal. The proposed area is near a road, the 'wildlife zone' (under the electricity tower) is very small and it seems unlikely that they will be able to restrict access with such density of housing nearby. Future stewardship will be with Bathurst Developments – a family who are not exactly known for their wildlife conservation credentials.

### [A417 Missing Link](#)

The National Trust have provided a detailed response (with advice from GWT) to the latest consultation on this massive road scheme. It raises issues about habitat loss and severance and of particular concern in relation to badgers, is one of the key mitigation measures - the siting and design of the bridge (over 8 lanes of traffic).

The position is further north *'than the severed commuting routes so there is a risk it will not be used by bats. The same issue applies to badgers and barn owls.'*

*More information on the bridge design is needed to comment on its efficacy for the target species but the design shown in the flyby suggests people will be zoned to one side of the bridge which is key to minimising interaction if mobile species are to use the bridge (hence the requirement for increased width). The target species identified are mostly nocturnal so conflicts are likely to be limited, but it is also important to consider that this bridge will be the only method for less mobile flora and fauna to cross the road. It is important that the proposed bridge, essential mitigation and enhancements, create opportunities to restore (ecological) connectivity across the landscape. It will be important that there is a robust long-term management plan not only for the bridge, but that it incorporates the land management practices either side of the bridge to provide a resilient habitat corridor in the landscape.*

We went to visit the sett that will be closed and the badgers moved to a new artificial one. It is a thriving sett under some lovely mature beech trees – but perilously close to the existing road.





View across to the copse where the badgers live.

## Other news

**Naturewatch:** Our locally based wildlife charity has a new Wildlife Crime Campaigns Manager - Kate Parker. Naturewatch does a lot of work on badgers - particularly baiting. They run an investigative reporting line for any wildlife offence relating to the use of dogs, where there is a named individual involved. Report Suspected Animal Crime - Naturewatch

Kate has kindly agreed to give a talk to the group in the spring.

**National Trust:** Time is running out to vote on the motion to ban hunting with dogs on NT land. The AGM is on 30th October and online voting for members closes at midnight on Friday 22 October. Login ([cesvotes.com](http://cesvotes.com))

**And to end this newsletter -**

Thanks to one member who has sent us this great photo of the badgers who feed in his garden.



Anyone who is not lucky enough to have their own nocturnal visitors, can share the experience by visiting the Cumbria Wildlife Trust Badgercam – a live feed in more ways than one. These lucky badgers get fed the leftovers from the hotel kitchen and are clearly thriving on their à la carte menu.



Badger cam | Cumbria Wildlife Trust