



## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2022

<https://gloucestershirebadgergroup.org>

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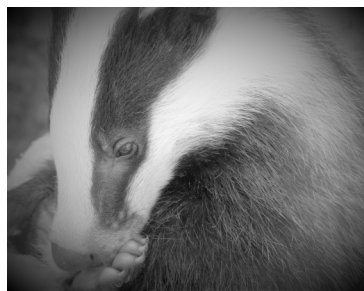
### Cull



NE eventually released the 2021 cull death toll just before Easter.

Intensive

Area	Min	Max	Total Badgers Killed	Killed by free shooting	Killed by cage shooting
<b>Glos. 29 Cheltenham</b>	525	714	<b>628</b>	456	172
<b>Glos. 46 Forest of Dean</b>	192	261	<b>240</b>	228	12



Supplementary

Area	Min	Max	Total Badgers Killed	Killed by free shooting	Killed by cage shooting
<b>Glos 1 Tewkesbury/Glos</b>	125	540	<b>65</b>	61	4
<b>Glos 9 N. Cots</b>	219	1118	<b>306</b>	294	12

The summer will be brief for the badgers in areas 9 and 29 as in less than a month (before many cubs are fully weaned), the guns will start blasting again.



Badger Trust organised the Big Badger Debate which proved an interesting and accessible insight into the latest bTB research. DEFRA and NE refused to take part in the discussion – which itself spoke volumes.



## Crime and persecution

### [Sett blocking and dig-outs](#)

The fox hunting season has just closed and - as ever - it has been devastating for badgers. For an idea of the scale, one hunt sab group that covers Gloucestershire (3 Counties) had 63 blocking related incidents numbers (and often several setts are reported on one number). The Heythrop and Ledbury hunts were particularly bad - not only for the sheer number of setts blocked but for the severity of the blocking.

Dig-outs into setts (to retrieve hunted foxes) were also rife – causing huge danger and suffering to all animals concerned. This shocking example – *Terrier men caught digging a badger sett by police escape charges* - shows how hunts continue to get away with this crime.

[Herefordshire Hunt Sabs | Facebook](#)

Recent instances in Gloucestershire include:

February 2022. Ledbury Hunt. At a meet near Tirley, not only were 5 freshly blocked setts found, but one was also dug out with 2 very large backfilled pits. (3C)

February 2022. VWH Hunt. A blocked sett on a regular hunt route in Bibury, showed clear signs that a recent dig-out had occurred.



March 2022. VWH Hunt. A small Lechlade sett was found blocked the day after the hunt had been marauding round the wood. A dig-out hole from a while ago was still visible in the sett area.







## [Logging](#)

### [Perrott's Brook, Cirencester – Update](#)

A further visit was made to this area which was devastated by logging last year. As though the badgers had not had enough disturbance, storms had uprooted many of the few remaining trees – including some on the sett. Apparently, this land has recently been bought by a local hunting and shooting estate, so it does not bode well for any wildlife left in this bleak landscape.





## [Police](#)

With all this crime about, we certainly need some police officers with specialist training. Unfortunately, Gloucestershire's rural police teams (including our local badger specialist) have been assigned general duties.



Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Gloucestershire

31 March · 🌐



Police rural crime units are not being disbanded.

In response to an incorrect report circulating on social media platforms today, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner Nick Evans said:

"There is absolutely no intention, short or longer term, to 'disband' our rural policing teams (RECLOs).

"RECLOs are an important resource, but in the weeks ahead they may be tasked with other jobs in order to manage increased levels of work across the Constabulary.

Whether temporary or not, in practice the loss of RECLOs means even less adequate policing of wildlife crime. Our first experience of the new regime being a member of a Neighbourhood Policing Team being assigned to a sett blocking case. They knew nothing about badgers, failed to find the location (despite a W3W ref) - and were sent out 6 weeks after the event. So – much the same resources used, but totally ineffectually.

We can only hope that the redeployment is not part of a wider move to downgrade wildlife policing in response to landowner pressure – as has been the case in Dorset.

[Disbanding of Dorset wildlife crime team puts birds of prey 'at risk' | Birds | The Guardian](#)



## Enquiries

A company making a prestige series about British wildlife for the BBC, was looking for locations. The TV requirements were a backdrop of bluebells, cubs in the sett and badgers who felt so safe that they'd be out before darkness. We pointed them towards them to NT Sherborne (after Springwatch, these badgers are almost Equity members) as Gloucestershire is rather lacking in badgers these days. It is to be hoped that by showing cute cubs romping in bluebells, the series does not perpetuate the myth that all is well in the countryside.



## RTA's

April certainly is the cruellest month as far as badger road deaths are concerned – almost twice the number as in March. The first sighting of a little cub casualty being in Ampney Crucis, followed by 2 others on the A40 – one near Northleach and one in the middle of the road at Dowdeswell. Elsewhere, one poor badger set out to cross the M5 near Junction 12.





## Development

The online training session on Planning Consultations (provided by Darren Parker, Vice Chair of Essex Badger Protection Group) was very well presented. Of course, what most stayed in the mind were the case studies – such as the 2 badgers stuck down a shaft for a week (both dying after rescue) as the site had not been secured.

### [The Steadings aka Bathurst legacy project](#)

As Phase 1 of the project is on the Siddington side, the sett on the edge of the Chesterton estate will have a little while longer before being closed and the badgers relocated to an artificial sett on a patch of ground towards the A429 – loftily called a wildlife zone by the fanciful developers. Despite being on a rubbish dump (it's not called the Sofa Sett for nothing) and fairly near the A433, the badgers seem to like their junk strewn home and it was doing well when recently visited.





## Old factory site near Cheltenham Cemetery – update

This development of about 60 houses abuts the cemetery fence, - which marks the edge of a badger sett. So far the badgers seem to be coping with the site noise. There are signs of activity at the sett and the badgers are continuing to make their nightly visits to a BTG member's garden – sometimes as many as 5 of these sociable guests calling round for dinner.





## Vaccination

The Gloucestershire Vaccination Group are about to launch into this year's programme.

If anyone is interested in helping with this valuable work, do let us know and we'll put you in touch with the group.







## Cub update

The little Oxfordshire cub (Snowdrop) that we featured in the last newsletter is doing well after suffering a dog attack. Here in Glos, we've yet to put our cub release training into action, but the recent Badger Trust Zoom event was very informative. The group now have a reference copy of Andy Parr's book if anyone wishes to read up on the subject.



<https://www.facebook.com/Thenutkinward>



## AGM

This has been delayed from its usual April date, but should now take place in the next couple of months. We are hoping to make some changes to expand what we offer to members and badgers, so require some new/additional Committee members to help achieve this. We would welcome expressions of interest if you think you could take on this role. We are also looking for people who can offer occasional help in areas such as fundraising.



## Finally....

Even in a cull-blighted county such as Gloucestershire, the wonderful exuberance of badgers shines through.



A fragrant home amongst the wild garlic.



The deep badger-shaped groove of a well used front door.





Badgers who put a lot of work into getting some comfy bedding.



Doing what badgers do best – home improvements.

