

# NEWS IN BRIEF

DO YOU HAVE A MAMMAL STORY YOU'D LIKE US TO COVER? PLEASE EMAIL THE EDITOR, AMY@PTES.ORG OR WRITE TO US AT MAMMALS UK MAGAZINE, PTES, 15 CLOISTERS HOUSE, 8 BATTERSEA PARK ROAD, LONDON SW8 4BG

## Britpave raise the game for *Mammals on Roads*

Regular readers know that we have been running our annual *Mammals on Roads* survey for eight years now. In terms of long-term monitoring, eight years is not long, but already *Mammals on Roads* has provided us with an alarm call for hedgehogs. When repeated year on year the decline in hedgehog sightings started to suggest a major problem. We were able to react quickly, launching *Hogwatch* to survey hedgehog distribution in detail, and a related research programme at Royal Holloway University of London to find out why the species is declining.

Each year several hundred volunteers spend time logging the mammals they see (dead or alive) from their car windows on 20 mile journeys on the nation's single-carriageway roads. Many people take part in the *Mammals on Roads* survey every year, which is great for consistency, but each year a few drop out and we seek to



replace them. In fact ideally we would like to have more and more people taking part as the more the sightings, the more robust the results.

We were therefore especially delighted this year to be able to extend our promotion of the survey to reach more potential volunteers by teaming up with a new sponsor. Britpave is a trade body that promotes transport solutions including concrete safety barriers. As part of its environmental commitment it was keen to help by providing vital extra funding for a promotional campaign in *BBC Wildlife* and *BBC Countryfile* magazines. This enabled us to reach over 100 000 people. We hope this will be the beginning of an ongoing partnership with Britpave and we are very grateful for their support. Find out more about Britpave at [www.britpave.org.uk](http://www.britpave.org.uk).



The *Mammals on Roads* survey is in its eighth year. The results are accumulating and most areas of the UK are now being covered, as this map of our 2006 data shows.



### BADGER CULL LATEST

Controversy continues over the government's decision not to pursue a programme of badger culls to limit the spread of bovine TB. The decision, announced in July, went against the advice of former Chief Scientific Advisor Sir David King, favouring instead the conclusions of the so-called Krebs report. The report was based on the evidence of an eight-year randomized badger culling trial and indicated that culling would not solve the problem, and may even make matters worse. The decision not to cull has been welcomed by People's Trust for Endangered Species and the Badger Trust, but

derided by farming interest groups, who point out that the risk of TB in British herds leads to tens of thousands of cattle being destroyed each year.

Work on a TB vaccine suitable for wildlife is not expected to yield results for 10 years. In the meantime, the focus will remain on measures designed to improve farm biosecurity and keep badgers and cattle a safe distance apart.

### WINNERS ALL ROUND

Thank you so much to everyone who sold and bought raffle tickets in this year's raffle. The first prize of £750 was won by Ms Harvey-Duffield of the West Midlands,

second prize of £250 went to Mr Winder of Bedfordshire and the third prize of a signed copy of Sir David Attenborough's book *Life in Cold Blood* to Mrs Hallsworth of Lancashire. A further twenty prizes of £10 *Wildlife Encounters* gift vouchers were also won.

The winner of our *Britain's Best Wildlife* competition is Mike Towler. We asked for your top mammal watching tips – Mike sent in several suggestions, which we will publish in a future edition of the magazine. Please keep the tips and suggestions coming – we can't promise prizes every time but it's always great to hear your

### MORE INFO

**MAMMAL NEWS**  
We also publish news on our website. Why not visit [www.ptes.org](http://www.ptes.org) next time you are online?



Magnificent Migaloo, the famous white humpback whale, migrates up the Great Barrier Reef each year. His name means 'white fella'.



DAN BURNS

ideas and we'll publish as many as we can.

### NEW WHITE WHALE

Few wildlife spectacles match a close up view of a breaching humpback whale, but for cetacean enthusiasts in Australia over recent years, sightings of one individual has been prized above all others. Known as Migaloo, this magnificent male is almost completely white. Now it seems Migaloo has company. In July this year, a second

white humpback, never seen before was sighted off eastern Australia near Byron Bay. The newcomer has a smattering of black on its head and tail, but is otherwise white all over. Inevitably there is speculation that Migaloo and the newcomer might be related, but proving this will require DNA evidence. PhD student Dan Burns recently used genetic analysis of sloughed skin samples to confirm that Migaloo is male.

## Call for pictures

Readers often comment on the quality of the photography in *Mammals UK*. That we manage to publish so many wonderful images on a very small budget is largely thanks to the generosity of a few photographers, who allow us to use their images for little or no fee.

If you have photographs of British mammals and would like to see your work in print, why not send them in? We'll credit any we use and, in helping us keep our production costs low, you'll be benefiting the projects we fund too. Granville Davies, whose badger picture appears below, did just that, and you'll be able to enjoy more of his photographs in forthcoming editions of the magazine.

When submitting images, please make sure they are printable quality (this means the original file should be 300dpi at size A5 or bigger). Our email server will accept files up to 10MB in size. Larger images should be compressed into good quality jpegs and emailed to [hannah@ptes.org](mailto:hannah@ptes.org).



GRANVILLE DAVIES

# Conserving our traditional orchards

In September we launched a campaign to promote the conservation of traditional English orchards. These often overlooked hotspots for biodiversity typically support thousands of species including various small mammals as well as invertebrates, birds and plants. Old orchards form part of the foraging range of the specially protected greater horseshoe bat, for example.

Traditional orchard habitat has declined by almost 60% in the last 50 years. In 2007 the government designated these important sites as a national priority habitat for conservation action.

Following a successful two-year pilot study to map remaining traditional orchards in nine English counties, PTES has secured funding from Natural England and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation to extend the scope of the survey to include the whole of England.

Existing data about the amount of traditional orchard habitat remaining in England is out-dated and incomplete. Through a painstaking analysis of aerial photographs, covering 3.5 million hectares of countryside, we have located 14 807 traditional orchards to date. Many trained volunteers have taken part in the study, surveying orchards on the ground, recording the species, age, and condition of the fruit trees.

Over the next three years we will create a national inventory that incorporates the condition, age, boundaries and management status of each traditional orchard, which will underpin the conservation of these threatened habitats, as well as raise awareness of their importance in the ecological landscape.

The next priority areas to survey are Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somerset, NW Somerset/S Gloucestershire & N Somerset, Suffolk, Norfolk, East Sussex and Shropshire. If you know of traditional orchards in these counties or would like to help find them, please contact Anita Burrough on 020 7498 4533 or [anita@ptes.org](mailto:anita@ptes.org).

### Did you know...?

There are over 2 000 varieties of cooking and eating apple in Britain, and hundreds more of cider apples. You could eat a different variety of English apple every day for six years without eating the same one twice!

The apple is Britain's national fruit. Apple trees belong to the rose family. *Peasgood's Nonesuch*, *Sheep's Snout*, *Bastard Rough Coat* and *Slack my Girdle* are just a few of many genuine traditional British apple names.

A team from Oxford University recently traced the origins of the domestic apple, *Malus domestica*, to the wild *Malus sieversii*, which still thrives on the slopes of the Tien Shan mountains of NW China and Kazakhstan.

There are over 100 perry pear varieties in Gloucestershire and some of the more colourful names of the perry drink produced vividly describe their potential effect: *Merrylegs*; *Mumblehead*; *Lumberskull*; *Drunkers* and *Devildrink*.

JILL NELSON



WILDSTORY.CO.UK