

2nd August - Small Mammal Trapping at Moor Green Lakes

by Bernard Baverstock



This event, which was postponed from May, eventually took place on the 2nd August. A few of the original people could not attend but they were replaced by a similar number of new people from a notice to the MGLG and Trust members.

I had three keen helpers to fill and set-out traps on Thursday evening and we were joined by another person on Friday evening, when the traps were refilled and set to trap.

Saturday morning was mild, bright and cloudy with no sign of the threatened showers, just right for checking the traps. Unfortunately two parties of people were unable to attend on the day but this gave a good sized group of nine who were able to take part in all the aspects of trap checking – indeed, their enthusiastic help was a great bonus to the leader.

The cattle had been on the reserve a short time and there were some areas that had been quite heavily grazed (they seem to have liked the stinging nettles!) but there was plenty of cover to place the traps.



The first three traps we opened had two wood mice and one bank vole, so this was a good omen. The next tripped traps had a female, then male, yellow-necked mouse, and this set the pattern for the rest. By the end of the session, and after getting a male yellow-necked mouse from the 42nd trap, we had had a total of 27 animals. Wood mice were the most numerous with 17, including two very young individuals that had not got their adult pelage, and a very pregnant female which was caught in a trap that had been sealed with leaves during the previous night, when the traps are left open. Yellow-necked mice were next with a total of six, and again one of these was a youngster, but it clearly showed the full collar markings that distinguish it from the wood mouse.







Bank voles made up the total with four individuals, and the sex ratio of three females to one male was the opposite of the two mouse species. Unusually we did not catch any shrews in this trapping session.

It was good to see and be able to show these animals to members as it shows that there is more to the reserve than just visiting birds, although the barn owl is probably most appreciative of the number of small mammals available as food.

Trapping will again be taking place on the Open Day, 31st August, and hopefully next year I will be able to get back to an earlier date for the first trapping session.

I was very grateful to those that attended for their help in checking, recording and helping to carry the traps. It was altogether a very pleasant morning.

photos - Chris Rose, Jeff Atkins, Grant Evans.