



# CORNWALL MAMMAL GROUP



Hare -Dave Hudson

## Chairs notes

*Always catches me by surprise – it's that time again, firstly the Newsletter, then harvest mouse surveys, and lastly, it's the AGM.*

*Well, the newsletter is always a good way of reviewing our activities over the last 6 months and we have been busy, as you can see elsewhere in this publication. After the National Otter Surveys some of us embarked on the dormouse season – plenty of discussion on how the strange weather might be affecting the absence (or presence) of dormice locally. A general impression that they were less commonly found earlier and then a bit of a rush later in the season. Plenty of trainees have been out on sites hoping to get their licences sorted and the erratic season hasn't helped. As soon as the dormice are heading off to bed, we begin our third harvest mouse survey season – still supporting the national survey, although there have been changes at the Mammal Society and Frazer has moved on to pastures new, to be replaced by Cornwall's own Ross Clifton. We are hoping to fill in some more of those gaps so get your wellies and gloves on and get out into a suitable scruffy field margin or join one of our organised surveys.*

## OUR MAMMALS NEED YOU!

If you have some extra time then we would love you to get involved with our projects. If you have some time to spare or skills and experience you think might be useful, get in touch at:

cornwallmammals@  
btinternet.com

If you have any interesting mammal stories or photos, we'd also love to hear from you! Your stories and photos could feature on our social media pages or in the next newsletter.

Get in touch via our social media:



@cornwallmammalgroup



@cornwallmammalgroup



@cornwallmammal

*A bunch of us attended the national conference of the Mammal Society (our sort of foster-parental body...) in Nottingham and it was great to hear the latest, and meet up with other mammal enthusiasts. More of the same coming up with the Dormouse Conference next month – promoting Cornwall's mammal work. We've also been out locally with talks, exhibitions and field work – let us know if you are doing anything similar or if you would like to get more involved in our outreach.*

*We are very excited about the AGM (see the flyer elsewhere) which is being held, courtesy of the University of Exeter, at Penryn Campus on 12th November. An opportunity to meet other members and hear what our speaker, Professor Naomi Sykes, has to say on what we can learn about biodiversity for the archaeological record. The fee covers the event, refreshments and your next year's subs – what's not to like? We will be electing the new Committee at the AGM – an opportunity for members to get more involved in what we do and how we deliver. Meetings are generally open to all so do join in and see what is involved. We will be waving goodbye to Gemma Hagar who has been an active member since her days in EcoSoc and for many years the guardian of our website. Thanks Gemma – we really appreciate all your work and, despite you moving to Devon, we still look forward to catching up with you when you are on the right side of the Tamar.*

*Part of the AGM preparations involve planning for the coming year and there are all sorts of goodies to look forward to: the inevitable opportunities to rummage in tussocks and find harvest mouse nests, Dave Hudson's hugely enjoyable Christmas quiz at Summercourt, an online talk on the wonders of shrews in January, Professor Fiona Mathews talking in person at Lanhydrock in February,*

*a repeat of our very popular joint dormouse conference with DMG in the spring, and a trip to see how Trelusback's water voles are doing in early summer. Plenty more where these come from, let us know if there is a subject dear to your heart.*

*I'm looking forward to catching up with many of you at the AGM and I hope everyone has a safe and enjoyable winter (I wont mention Christmas just yet...).*

Dave Groves



## REQUEST!

Do you have access to Cornish owl pellets in Cornwall or know somebody who does? You may be able to help us with a potential small mammal project. Please get in touch with Alex on [alex-pearce@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alex-pearce@hotmail.co.uk)



*Photo: Dave Hudson*

*Mammal Society Conference – Nottingham Trent University, Brackenhurst, August 2023*

*The first in-person conference for the Mammal Society since Covid and a great opportunity to learn about the latest work in the field of mammals as well as a chance to meet people previously only seen on Zoom calls, make new contacts and catch up with old friends. The Conference is usually held in the Spring but this year, for a number of reasons it was moved to summer.*

*Kate, Mary, Kayleigh, Ellie, Charlotte, and I travelled up from Cornwall and we were joined by several members of the Devon Mammal Group to represent the Southwest. Five of us were supported by grants from the Mammal Society to help with conference fees and accommodation costs.*

*The conference theme was The Future of Nature Conservation and Friday night's lecture was delivered by Steph Wray, the Chair of the Mammal Society. Steph considered the history and current status of conservation and how government, but more importantly individual actions, can impact the crisis in biodiversity. She looked at how society can focus on effective conservation strategies that deal with ecosystems rather than just endangered species and how we can persuade everyone of the importance of nature. On Saturday the theme continued with Alex Hunt from the RSPB talking about the People's Plan for Nature. Few could deny the values expounded in this People's parliament approach to understanding what the general public want for, and from our natural world, but it was less of a plan and more of an aspiration. If it can be used to leverage for change it may have value, but I felt the funding might have been used more effectively on the ground.*



*Then came the science – Graham Smith from the APHA bringing us up to date on the recent arrival in England of the Greater White Toothed Shrew. In Ireland this European species has spread rapidly at the expense of the native Pygmy Shrew. In England we have seen records in the Northeast and there was an appeal for any shrew records to survey for GWTS, but also to help with baseline data for other Shrew species. Holly Broadhurst from Salford University gave a presentation on eDNA and demonstrated that volunteers collected data as well as the ‘professionals’ from water courses. Then there was an entertaining talk from Kristy Adaway about the adaptability of urban foxes. This made it to the BBC news this week as well – they are bolder in approaching novel food sources, but no more cunning in working out how to get into them. Cue videos of puzzled foxes looking at feeding stations.... We finished with Simon Spiro from the ZSL Marine Strandings team with an excellent talk on whale autopsies – who doesn’t love an episode of CSI Whales? One interesting point is that only 2 or 3 cases of plastic ingestion have been recorded in 30 years of this work.*

*After coffee, Ellie Scopes and Charlotte Armitage from Penryn campus of the university of Exeter gave presentations on their dormouse studies. Ellie had used footprint tunnels to consider the importance of hedges and scrub for dormouse populations. One thing that intrigued me was that Devon dormice seemed much more likely to leave their prints than our Cornish animals. Charlotte’s work considered the drivers for torpor in dormice and its impact on populations at the edge of the natural range. Maybe climate change will have a positive impact on dormice (if they don’t drown first...)? Simon Poulton talked about his small mammal surveys in Nepal – notable for the frankly scary shrew species he was finding! Pedro Mittleman had looked at the interaction between beech mast and small mammal populations in Germany. In the afternoon we focussed on hedgehogs including a paper on the impact of robotic lawnmowers – testing involved a lot of hedgehog corpses (which I hasten to say had died from other causes). Perhaps the most relevant to CMG was an introduction to the new National Hedgehog Monitoring Programme which we may be supporting later this year. An ambitious plan to set up a series of 1 km square sites, each surveyed by 30 carefully placed cameras over 30 days allowing the determination of abundance. This will continue long term and we hope will provide evidence of population numbers and changes. This was followed by a series of rapid-fire talks on survey methods for water voles, the genetics of Tapirs and the impact of feral cats on birds.*

*In the evening there was a (indoor – it was rather rainy) BBQ and a great mammal quiz. Sunday started with the public perception of Lynx reintroduction in Scotland and then a series of talks on aspects of beaver reintroduction. It was apparent that public education and acceptance of reintroductions is every bit as important, and a deal more challenging, than dropping beavers out of the back of a van.*

*The current situation seems to be that NE no longer sanction enclosed beaver projects, but the change in status of the beaver means there will be no sanctioned wild releases either for the moment. Modelling indicated that beavers will eventually cover the country, spreading at 80 km/year along catchments. Some issues were raised about the limited genetic diversity of the UK beaver population, especially as animals are no longer imported from Europe and most are sourced from the Tay catchment and existing enclosed sites. Mary and I followed this up with an afternoon workshop on beavers run by Scottish expert Roo Campbell. An opportunity to discuss field surveys, impacts and mitigation.*

*The final session gave us some of the most interesting talks – Fiona Mathews updated us on the recent National Otter Survey (seems to be good news in England, compared to the 22% decline shown by the Wales survey recently). This was followed by identifying bat prey from DNA analysis of droppings. This showed some fascinating differences between pipistrelles (who enjoy a fly) with BLEs (who have a more moth-based diet). Perhaps the most important were the two presentations on using acoustics for small mammal monitoring. Stuart Newson has already given a talk on this topic to CMG, but the combination of bat detectors and the BTO Acoustic Pipeline analysis system has great potential for passive monitoring of species including dormice, harvest mice and shrews from their ultrasonic squeaks.*

*There were plenty of distractions from the books and kit stalls as well as local groups. We took two posters to display – the Cornwall Coastal Otter Project diet study which was originally prepared for the (cancelled) 2020 conference and also an update on our harvest mouse studies. Both were well received, and we had lots of questions.*

*Back through the Sunday night traffic to Cornwall on the Sunday night – a lot easier than the slog up on the Friday night - with plenty to discuss in the car. Next year the conference will be in Cambridge in the spring, and we hope we can find support for attendees again, both from the Mammal Society and from CMG so watch out for information. It's worth remembering that Mammal Society members get discounted rates and there is also a bursary system for students.*

Dave Groves



Photo: Dave Hudson

Is it a bird, is it a plane...no it's a mammal

Many of our mammal species are nocturnal and/or elusive and so whilst we might not always see them, we can often see evidence of them if we take the time to look. But how can we differentiate between mammal, bird, insect etc sign? There will always be some exceptions to the rule but generally there are identifying features that you can look out for to help you understand what is living in your own natural environment.

In the last newsletter I talked a little bit about differences between mammal and bird predation, i.e. how to look for signs on feathers or eggs to see what animal might have eaten them. Today's thoughts look at some of the basic differences to look out for when you're starting out in the fascinating world of scat identification. The first thing to remember is that all animals need to eliminate the toxic waste product ammonia that is broken down when consuming proteins and other nitrogenous compounds. Mammals get rid of their ammonia, by converting it to the less toxic urea which uses some water to dilute it and which we then eliminate when we urinate. Birds and reptiles use less water during this process helping to conserve water in their bodies and they produce a more concentrated form of this waste as uric acid which comes out as a more solid white substance. Therefore, if you see a white powdery or thick white liquid substance on an animal dropping then you know it can't be mammal, it's going to be bird or reptile. Occasionally in grazing birds such as ducks and geese, their droppings will not always show the white but there is usually so many droppings as they move around in groups, that it would be likely that you'd recognise their dark green – black pellets as being the same as others around you that do have the white. Just to really confuse you, there is also caecal droppings that birds produce from their caecum roughly every 8-10 times that they defecate. This is much darker, greasier and stickier than their usual droppings and often has a strong smell. These are more likely to be confused with mammal droppings as they lack the white urate, and the smell is very strong and reminiscent of a mammal predator's dropping, but maybe the identification of those is best left for in the field next time we head out on a tracking walk!

Green woodpecker scat can occasionally catch people out. As their droppings are made up primarily of ant and insect chitinous exoskeletons, they don't degrade as quickly as, for example, a bird that has been eating vegetation. When green woodpecker first excrete their scat, it is covered by a sheath of white uric acid. Over time that sheath can be washed off by the elements leaving only a small pellet of insect exoskeletons behind.

*Photo: Green woodpecker dropping in white uric acid*





At this stage it could be mistaken for one of our insect eating mammal species, the hedgehog. The differences then to look out for are that the green woodpecker scat is a distinct 'J' shape whereas hedgehog faeces are one long tube. They are almost entirely made up of ant remains whereas hedgehog is likely to have fed on several different insect species.



*Photo: Green woodpecker dropping with ants*

*Photo: hedgehog dropping*



You may also find evidence of hair in the hedgehog scat from when it has been grooming itself. Incidentally, if you've never seen toad droppings, its worth looking them up on the internet...they are comparatively huge! They will also likely be full of insect remains, but they are much lighter and more fragile than either the hedgehog or green woodpecker scat and will easily crumble. They are often distinctly curved (think croissant) and also tend to have the appearance of a smooth 'muddy' coating unlike hedgehog where you will see the insect exoskeleton.

One of the bits of animal sign that I see most often get confused is that of an owl pellet versus a mammal scat. Owls are not the only bird to produce pellets. In fact, all birds that feed on other species can and will produce pellets, even tiny little kingfishers. Small prey species such as mice and voles are often swallowed whole but the predators do not always have the means to digest the larger bones. Birds have a crop that stores the undigestible parts of their meal. Here it gets tightly packaged up so that any fur, feathers or bone from their prey species is compacted into a tight pellet and will be regurgitated and ejected rather than sitting within their stomachs. On the other hand, some of the smaller bones, such as ribs, will be digested by the acid in the mammals stomach where it sits for longer.



*Photo: Barn owl pellet and undigested bones found inside*

Fox scat, owl pellets and corvid (for e.g. carrion crow) pellets will often look dark when fresh, turning grey over time and are compact with prey bone, feathers and fur remains so it can be difficult to tell them apart. If you gently break them open (being sure to wear gloves and face masks as both can carry pathogens) then if it is full of the tiny rib bones it is far more likely to be owl pellet than it is fox. Pellets can come in different shapes and sizes, but foxes generally will exhibit a distinctive hairy twist and tapered point at one end. It's also worth noting where you are finding the scat or faeces. Foxes will use their faeces to mark their territory and so you will often find a single scat on mounds, or at a point where two paths might cross. Barn owls will eject their pellet at a roosting site so you will see large piles of multiple pellets below their roost. Crow pellets tend to be smaller and might have evidence of fruit stones which are more accessible to them than foxes. You might find them underneath a fence post or atop a picnic table. Tawny owl pellets can be beautiful jewels and full of brightly coloured insect wing cases.



*Photo: Fox scat*



Understanding a bit about where each animal lives (for example, barn owls hunting out in open fields and roosting barns, versus tawny owls in woodlands) and what it eats can help to narrow down which animal is most likely responsible for the sign that you are finding. There are so many wonderful little details to help us identify the tracks and signs we see but often all it requires is a bit of common sense and knowledge about the animal, and then it's just a process of elimination.

If you're ever finding any tracks and sign out on your walks, and you want us to help you to try and identify who is responsible, then please take a clear photo with something next to it that is a known size... ideally a ruler. A coin is an acceptable alternative. If you can give us a bit more information about where you found it, it helps. Share it on our Facebook page and we will try and help.

Angie Nash – Panash Adventures

*Photo: Crow pellet*



## Chark Moor

The Gaia Trust own this little gem of a site on the edge of Redmoor – seriously wet woodland, and an equally wet bit of heath which is being managed for butterflies.

About 7 years ago we found evidence of hazel dormice on the site in the form of opened hazel nuts. As management of the site has been evolving it was agreed to establish a monitoring programme on the site following the PTES National Dormouse Monitoring Programme protocol using nest boxes. Amy Horn-Norris is leading on this and in July a team of us carried 50 boxes through the mud in torrential rain (got to love this ecology stuff...) and installed them. New nest boxes usually take a little while to settle in and it can be several years before dormice are interested, especially in sites such as Chark Moor which has plenty of natural nesting opportunities.

In September Amy, Anna and I put on our wellies and carried out the first check – 45 boxes in, and the most exciting things we had found were a couple of hornet nests in trees – all very chilled but we treated them with the requisite respect. Then our first surprise! Lying on the ground, sodden and muddy, was a ‘dead’ rodent. I picked it up expecting a wood mouse, but it was clearly a dormouse – and it was moving. Dormice often revert to torpor, a deep sleep, when the weather is cool and food is in short supply. Although it wasn’t cold it had been very wet. It wasn’t obvious where this chap (it was a male) had come from – he was a several metres from the nearest bank and in the middle of an active badger latrine. He could have fallen from a tree nest or been dug out of a bank by the badgers. Amy cleaned and dried him and got him warmed up and we set out to collect a few leaves to prepare him a nest in an adjacent box. However, when we opened the next box, it had a nest and a very feisty female at home – maybe it was a domestic and she had kicked him out? Both animals were healthy weights for this time of year and should be fine for hibernation (over 15g). So, two dormice on the site and still plenty of evidence of feeding – hopefully our little waif has survived and we can look forward to finding him on future surveys.

*Dave Groves*





*Originally posted on The Guardian Country Diary 25/06/23*

After months of drought, the much prayed for rain has arrived. Mizzle falls steadily as I weave along the path, past the hand-etched memento mori, towards the rear of the churchyard. A lichen-encrusted menhir watches over me from a corner, surrounded by Victorian headstones, a reminder of the Christian erosion of the ancient beliefs that once enfolded this landscape. I huddle up to the ancient yew, shielding myself from the rain, and wait, watching the skylark's pirouette above one of the neighbouring barley fields. Eventually, my long wait is rewarded. Out of the damp vegetation pops a water shrew, in velveteen robe with a silvery-white shirt beneath. It scurries along the path, weaving in and out of the foliage before disappearing into a thick clump of bramble, only to reappear again moments later. Water shrews are reported to be shy, elusive animals, but this one is not. It is bold, unbothered by my presence, stopping centimetres from me to forage for invertebrates, its long nose poking and probing. Shrews typically have tiny eyes with poor sight, their elongated noses and strong olfactory senses helping instead to locate their prey.

I first encountered water shrews here last year, a small colony, likely youngsters, dispersing from the undergrowth. We tend to associate them with bodies of water, but they can also turn up in grassland, hedgerows, scrubland and even gardens, sometimes a good distance from the nearest water source. I have been monitoring this site ever since, sitting among the dead, waiting for signs of life. The water shrew wriggles along the pathway, its charming appearance belying its darker side. Sharp, red-tipped teeth and venomous saliva enable them to tackle and paralyse prey 60 times their body weight, diving into water to catch fish, frogs and freshwater shrimps, dragging them to the surface to eat. For now, this one must make do with the spiders and crickets that live among the damp grass – it's a long journey for such a small creature to the nearby reservoir. It disappears beneath the bracken and doesn't reappear again this time. The hoot of a male tawny owl somewhere in the distance tells me this is a wise choice.

*Alexandra Pearce-Broomhead*



***Photo: Water shrew***



## *Acoustic monitoring*



*Photo: Dave Hudson*

*Those of you that attended the Bottlenose Dolphin Symposium, which we organised jointly with CWT's Marine Group, or who followed it online will have heard some great talks.*

*The pod of bottlenose dolphins that have been seen around the Cornwall coast over the last few years are a group of about 40 individuals that do not mix with the more*

*numerous pelagic pods. 'Our' dolphins specialise in hunting in shallow water. There are other inshore pods around the country, including those in Cardigan Bay and the Moray Firth. In contrast to these, 'our' pod isn't doing too well, numbers are falling and the breeding rate suggests the animals are ageing. They have also moved along the Channel towards Sussex. So not a great story – but the work around identifying the individuals and studying their social interactions was incredible. One aspect was using ultrasonics to monitor activity – Nick Tregenza's ground-breaking work on submersible sound recorders has produced very useful results.*

*Acoustic monitoring, especially in the ultrasound spectrum has all sorts of potential for terrestrial mammals as well, as we heard from Stuart Newson last year. Nick and his colleagues have some interesting kit in development so if anyone would like to take this on I'm sure we could find a sympathetic ear!*

*Dave Groves*

## RECORD THE COMMONPLACE

Do you only record when you go out to record? Is “recording” a separate occupation for you? I’ll bet, like me, you tend to record only when you are out with your notebook. (Nowadays of course, that might be ‘out with your app’! But I’m catching up!)

For years I used to do a lot of bat work, both as a volunteer (houses and churches, mines, bat boxes) and as a contractor (barn conversions, bridge and culvert works, roadside embankments, road works, development schemes, planning applications, tree felling, etc.). And I made it a habit that whenever I found a place where bats roosted I filled out a Bat Roost Report Form, and sent it off to Natural England (I think I’ve recorded something like 800 bat roosts in Cornwall). But what I didn’t record, was flying bats, or places where bats had occurred, but weren’t necessarily roosting. Places where I might have found a few droppings from flying bats, or even what we call “feeding roosts”, where a bat might temporarily hang up to eat a moth. My preoccupation was with places where bats lived. What a lot of information I left unrecorded.

That’s like only mapping the distribution of badgers by places where setts are found. It doesn’t tell you much about how widely badger’s forage.; how much of the countryside they use. I used to think that harvest mice must be pretty thin on the ground, because I could go for years without coming across a nest. What a difference, now that we hunt for the nests!

But to get to the “commonplace”. Do you record all the rabbits, rabbit runs, rabbit droppings, rabbit holes you see. In fact, when was the last time you recorded a rabbit. And what about all those mole-hills. If you look at the distribution maps thrown up by our various recording databases, how accurate are they. There are massive gaps for the more common fauna (NOT the flora though! The botanists make a concerted effort to record everything they find in every kilometre square in the County). It is well known in the birding world that the robin appears scarce on distribution maps because it is so seldom recorded. Just frequently ignored.

At one time (in my heyday!) I used to make an effort to record everything – mammal-wise – I could. And at that time I was travelling a lot up and down the length of the County. The result was that when I later got the distribution map up of my Mole records I found it looked like the Cornwall page of a road atlas! The records highlighted all my journeys up and down the county. Which made it look as though moles favoured roadside habitats! Which reason knows can’t be true. It’s an “artefact” of recording effort. With modern digital mapping it is so easy to add more information to the maps we see on the screen, that it is possible to see if Moles are in any way associated with river valleys, or geology, or rainfall. I know. That sounds ridiculous. But what criteria do you want to look at. And if you can’t think of one now, who is to say that someone won’t think of something in the future. If the data is there, someone will find a use for it sometime.

So make a habit of recording, and record anything you can put a name to. It’s all valuable.



*Photo: Dave Hudson*

### *South Hill*

*CMG has been working with South Hill parish, near Callington for a couple of years since we were helped out with a Bat Group bat box-building event. We have been back to give a talk and then were asked if we would like to survey the parish churchyard. The church is part of the Bats in Churches project and has a breeding colony of Natterer's and the churchyard is managed for nature with lots of wild margins and long grass and flowers. It looked very pretty when I checked it out in July and although the weather wasn't so nice when we had our survey planned, it did stay dry. We set 30 traps (20 Longworths and 10 BioEcoSS) with bedding, food, and mealworms (for the shrews) on the Friday night. Tony Atkinson came along and gave a great talk and walk on bats – we picked up pips of two flavours (common and soprano) and noctules. Tony and Mary then set up their moth trap as we wanted to take the opportunity to see what else might be around. About a dozen people turned up for setting and the same again on the Saturday to open the traps. Lots of people took the chance to try handling, weighing and sexing the catch and we collected 2 common shrews, a juvenile bank vole and 6 wood mice – a good result. Some of us stayed on the look for invertebrates – all records submitted to ORKS with some interesting spiders, beetles and plant bugs.*



## Pupping season - Notes from Sue Sayer of Cornwall Seal Group Research Trust

The 2023 SW U.K. pupping season kicked off in earnest around the same time as last year in the last week of August (with a trickle of pups prior to that). This is EARLY! Records seem to suggest that the pupping season is moving forwards by a few days each year, now overlapping with our peak tourist season. One mum 'Scream' had her pup 25 days earlier in 2023 compared to 2017 with an average shift of around 4 days a year earlier.

With worrying signs from Scotland and the SW that mortality rates are high (see below for the range of threats experienced these day), all seals, but especially pups, need our help now!

So what can we all do?

Firstly we need to follow the Defra Marine and Coastal Wildlife Code

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/marine-and-coastal-wildlife-code/marine-and-coastal-wildlife-code-advice-for-visitors>

But let's keep it simple; we all need to stay 100m+ away from seals on land and in the sea, stay on paths and off beaches where seals are sleeping. Seals only spend 20% of their time on land and sleep is vital to their health and well-being (as it is to us). If seals are awake, alert and looking at us then they are aware of our presence and are wasting precious 'survival vital' energy!

This is most true for pups:

Day 1 sees a pup weak and disorientated with developing motor skills. Their tummies are small, so pups have more frequent short feeds.

By the end of week 1, a well-fed pup will have lost its rolls of skin as it stocks up on fat reserves.

By week 2, pups look like fat torpedoes and feeds are less frequent but last longer.

After 15-21 days, pups need to resemble a fat, bloated barrel to make it through their 1st winter. Every missed feed (as a result of human presence) is 1% of their nursing nutrition lost and reduces their survival chances.



*Photo: Two day old  
seal pup*



*Photo: Three week old seal pup*

When pups are born on publicly accessible beaches they are most at risk from human disturbance and this is our greatest challenge requiring a humungous team effort. This year has been no exception. After being alerted about a small white coated pup on a publicly accessible beach with high footfall clifftop, we all sprung into action. Seal Research Trust, British Divers Marine Life Rescue, the Cornish Seal Sanctuary and Newquay Marine Group volunteers joined forces to be present to engage with members of the public and monitor the mum, pup and beachmaster, to raise awareness of how best to act and help. SRT set up a googlesheet rota covering 10:00 until 20:00 for volunteers to sign up to. Over the next 13 days (the monitoring is still ongoing) we have achieved so much – most importantly being that the pup is thriving and has already fattened into a barrel shape.



*Photo: Seal pup and mum at Pentire (Image Andy Rogers)*



In total, over 13 days, 33 different volunteers between them donated 212 hours of shifts and engaged with at least 768 members of the public. Our concerns about an overzealous dominant male beachmaster waned (presumably as did his energy levels) leaving mum to feed her pup undisturbed. On day 1, 5 feeds lasted a total of around 22 minutes and by day 11 2 feeds lasted 32 minutes.

Of course this experience is replicated right around our UK coastline, so if you see a seal and you are concerned for its welfare, stay 100m away or back out of sight on the path and encourage others kindly to do the same and please ring BDMLR 01825 765546. This has been an incredible team achievement. Thank you to every single volunteer who has given their time to securing this pup a future – Amanda, Amy, Andrea, Andy, Ash, Chris, Claire, Debbie, Emma C, Emma Co, Emma L, Gill, George, Grace J, Grace R, Gwinnie, Jane, Josh, Kirk, Linda, Lizzi, Michaela, Mike, Nick, Nicole, Peter, Sally, Samuel, Seth, Sharon, Terry and Tony. Thanks to Sue, Dan, Lizzi and Jenny for alerting and encouraging volunteers to take part and collate the summary data. We hugely appreciate that the National Trust Rangers also serviced the fence, helping to better manage people on the clifftop. This team effort means this pup will have the chance of surviving the time it takes to teach itself to feed and its 1st winter! THANK YOU ALL!

Can you help support us to coordinate this volunteer effort and look after our volunteers by donating a few pounds? [https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=DQ4MYMHB9QH4Y](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=DQ4MYMHB9QH4Y)



*Photo: Mum telling beachmaster to 'get lost'*



Do you want to adopt a wild seal and get quarterly updates on its life story and that of all its friend? <https://sealresearchtrust.com/collections/wild-seal-support-packs>

Need a gift for a loved one that helps support seals too?  
<https://sealresearchtrust.com/collections>

### **Information about impacts seals are currently facing:**

Seals are facing increasing challenges in terms of prey availability, bycatch/entanglement, habitat loss, pollution in the form physical (macro and micro) and chemical outflows ranging from industrial, agricultural, transportational and household activities including emerging issues such as pharmaceutical runoff (e.g. painkillers and hormones) and disturbance in addition to all the new issues additional effects associated with climate change.

Climate change impacts on seals include: Warming seas affecting prey distribution; Extreme weather events inundating pupping beaches separating maternally dependent pups and mothers and reducing fecundity following year; Groundswells increasing lost gear increasing entanglement rates; Groundswells disturbing pollutants and contaminants locked in the seabed; Ocean acidification; Toxic algal blooms (domoic acid); Rising sea levels flooding sea caves and haul outs; Increasing rates of coastal erosion with rockfalls injuring or killing seals; Heavy rain increasing disturbance.



*Photo: Seal pup 'Scream' and mum*

# Cornwall Mammal Group AGM 2023

Sunday 12th November

Du Maurier Building, Penryn Campus, University of Exeter

**Guest Speaker: Professor Naomi Sykes**

**Archaeological approaches to biodiversity**



Naomi is Professor of Archaeology at the University of Exeter. Her interests are focussed on how fauna, flora and human populations have changed over the last 10,000 years. The rise and fall of species - invasions, recoveries and extinctions - interactions with environment, farming, industry and culture. How we view nature and the complexity of our relationship is interesting from a historical perspective but hugely relevant as we contemplate, climate change, rewilding and extinction.



Naomi is a great speaker who will guide us through the web of zoology, archaeology, genetics, history and art to see if there is a way out into a sustainable future.



After lunch Emily will lead a search for evidence of harvest mice in some of the wilder areas of the Penryn campus—please bring wellies, waterproofs and gloves if you would like to join in.

Tickets are **£12** each and will include a pasty lunch, tea and coffee and your membership of CMG for the coming year.

Programme:

Doors open 10:30

Presentation 10.55

Remembrance silence 11:00

Q&A 12:00

AGM 12:30

Lunch 13:00

Harvest mouse nest surveys 14:00

Finish 15:00



Our brief AGM will include a short review of last year's activities and the election of the committee. If you are interested in joining the committee and helping to run the Group please contact Dave at the email address below.

Please bring your own mug and water bottle—saving the planet one step at a time....

Book your tickets online at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cornwall-mammal-group-agm-2023-tickets-733537790277?aff=oddtcreator>

*We will be running a raffle to raise funds for the Group so don't forget to bring some cash along for a chance to win all sorts of great prizes!*

Any questions or problems—contact us at [cornwallmammals@btinternet.com](mailto:cornwallmammals@btinternet.com)