



Endangered mammals alive and well near you?

Wildlife conservation charity, the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), is asking all wildlife lovers to take part in what will be the 7th annual survey of mammals in the urban environment; *Living with Mammals*.

Since 2003, *Living with Mammals* has asked volunteers to look out for mammals, and their signs, around their homes, places of work and recreational land. By continuing this work we can gain a better understanding of our wild neighbours and spot changes in their numbers before it is too late to act.

Analysis of the first five years of data has shown that garden features such as berry or seed producing plants, or gardens with a shed, pond or woodpile support more mammals. Considering gardens make up between a third and a half of the green space in urban areas their significance for wildlife and biodiversity is clear. Almost half of Britain's terrestrial wild mammal species have been recorded in the survey, including 17 *Species of Conservation Concern* and seven *priority* species such as water voles, hedgehogs and otters.

Particularly encouraging were records of otters within the survey. Otters are good indicators of water quality in rivers and as the species increasingly makes use of urban waterways, they are becoming a flagship species in recognising the importance of the built environment in conservation.

PTES is now urging more people to get involved so they can achieve an even more robust set of results. The survey runs throughout April, May and June 2009 and PTES needs volunteers to look out for mammals in spare moments each week, at

sites such as gardens, allotments, cemeteries and parks, whether you are walking the dog, getting a breath of fresh air from work or looking out of your kitchen window.

PTES Chief Executive, Jill Nelson, commented “Only by careful monitoring can we gain a picture of how wildlife is faring and take action if a species looks in decline. By taking part in our survey, and telling us which mammals you have seen, not only are you helping conservation in the UK but you may surprise yourself with the fascinating wildlife right on your doorstep.” David Wembridge, Surveys Coordinator for People’s Trust for Endangered Species added “The presence of these species so close to home is of enormous value and highlights how our urban green spaces blur the distinction between natural and built environments.”

Wild mammals are often difficult to spot and looking for signs such as tracks and droppings is an alternative way to identify their presence. PTES is encouraging people to become animal detectives and to discover which animals share the environment around our homes and places of work. It is not difficult to identify hedgehogs from droppings, wood mice from stashes of hidden nuts, or tracks of deer or badger.

All those who contact PTES for a survey pack will receive an exclusive full-colour *Spotting Wild Mammals* booklet containing information of how to identify species and recognise the field signs that they leave behind.

Anyone interested in taking part should contact David Wembridge at PTES, either by phoning 020 7498 4533 or emailing LwM@ptes.org, Further information can be found on the website – www.ptes.org/surveys

Notes for Editors

People’s Trust for Endangered Species (registered charity number 274206) works in partnership with voluntary organisations, wildlife experts, government and industry to conserve wild mammals and their habitats throughout the British Isles. For more details call 0207 498 4533 or visit our website: www.ptes.org