

INTERFERENCE WITH BADGERS AND SETTS

WHAT TO DO

Badgers, their setts, and access to their setts, are protected by law at all times. This is even when setts may seem to be unoccupied. Anyone disturbing badgers or a sett may be committing a criminal offence. Any unusual or suspicious activity should always be reported to the police as soon as possible.

Reporting a Wildlife Crime

- **If the crime is still taking place** then contact the police urgently by calling **999**. Report the incident as ongoing and ask for them to attend as soon as possible. Please also inform the Badger Trust and/or your local badger group immediately.
- **Any incidents or suspicions that have already happened** should be reported to the police by calling **101**. Ask for the local **Rural Crime Team** and/or **Police Wildlife Crime Officer** to be advised if there is one. Alternatively if you wish to retain anonymity then call **CrimeStoppers** on **0800 555 111** and give them the information.
- In all instances always request an incident number (which is a unique reference for your crime report). Don't be put off if the person you speak to doesn't seem to understand that what you are reporting may constitute a crime. Many do not know much about the Protection of Badgers Act.
- Please share the incident number you are given with the Badger Trust and/or the local badger group so the matter can be followed up to make sure it is being dealt with properly by the police.

Badger Baiting/Digging

- If you notice any suspicious activity at or near a badger sett which is actually taking place, contact the police urgently by calling **999**. Report the incident as ongoing and ask for them to attend as soon as possible. Please also inform the Badger Trust and/or your local badger group immediately. The means of doing so will be on the respective websites.

- Take a note of the registration numbers of vehicles you might see close to the incident and the make/model/colour of them if you can.
- Note how many people and dogs are present. Take a description of the persons, what they are wearing, and note any equipment they have with them. Take video clips or photographs (which include an accurate record of the date and time) **but only** if it's safe to do so.
- Please **DO NOT** approach these people or let them know you are watching. They are frequently of a violent nature and you should never place yourself in a position where you could be threatened or assaulted.
- If the activity is no longer taking place and the perpetrators have gone then get in touch with the police by calling **101**. You should ask for an incident report reference number and ask for the local **Rural Crime Team** and/or **Police Wildlife Crime Officer** to be notified immediately (if there is one).

Snares

- If you find illegal self-locking snares set in position, or snares of any description set in such a way that they are likely to catch pets or any protected species, please contact the **RSPCA** (tel 0300 1234999) and the police by calling **101**. Report what you have seen and ask for the **Rural Crime Team** and/or **Police Wildlife Crime Officer** covering the area to be informed if there is one. If snares are set on a badger path or near a badger sett please also contact your local badger group and/or the Badger Trust urgently.
- Say exactly where you have found the snares and if possible, arrange to meet with whoever attends, (police, RSPCA officer, or badger group representative) to investigate, so that you can show them exactly where the snares are.
- If you suspect that snares which you come across are not set correctly please **DO NOT** interfere with them but report the matter to the police. If possible also take photographs with a date record to demonstrate your concerns.
- Any snares that you find should not be removed or interfered with by you as that constitutes an offence in law. Removing snares could see you charged with theft for example. **ALWAYS** contact the police instead - who will investigate.

- Please **DO NOT** trespass in order to look for snares. Also, please do not damage or remove any snares - if you see any that you believe to be illegal, render them safe by closing the noose (with a stick for example).
- If you find a live badger caught in a snare, please contact your local badger group, the Badger Trust or the RSPCA as soon as you can. Any other animals found alive in snares should also be reported to the RSPCA. If possible, arrange to meet with whoever attends so that you can guide them directly to the injured animal.
- **DO NOT UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES** attempt to release an animal yourself. The animal may injure you, or it may suffer further injuries itself. It may even escape with the snare still in place, and die a lingering death. So please do not interfere with the victim. Just leave things exactly as you found them so that the evidence can be fully recorded and a proper rescue of any live animal can be effected.

Damage to Setts and/or Sett blocking

- If you find a badger sett which looks damaged or blocked, please contact the police by calling **101** as soon as possible to report the incident. Again ask for the **Rural Crime Team** and/or **Police Wildlife Crime Officer** to be informed if there is one. Please also inform the Badger Trust and/or your local badger group as soon as you can.
- Explain exactly where the sett is located. If possible, arrange to meet whoever attends to investigate, so you can show them exactly where the sett is and what the problem is.
- **DO NOT** disturb or remove any evidence or materials which may be blocking the sett but please do take photographs and/or video clips (which include the correct date and time) if you are able to.

How to deal with shot badgers

Hopefully this is something you will not encounter. But if you do so then please access the internet and read the protocol for the [Examination of badgers with suspected gunshot injuries 2014](#) - **prepared by Secret World Wildlife Rescue**. You should also report the matter to your local Badger Group and the Badger Trust immediately so that a vet and/or wildlife rescue centre can be involved.

Suspected Poisoning Incidents

- Please **DO NOT** touch the animal or remove it from where it is found
- Note the location as precisely as is possible and phone the **Wildlife Incident Investigation Scheme** on **0800 321600**.

They will arrange investigations into such incidents throughout the UK.

Please also inform your local Badger Group and also the Badger Trust.

Help the Badger Trust to protect badgers

If you are aware of **any** incidents of persecution in your area, please contact the Badger Trust either by phone, email, or by accessing their website and filling out their online report form.

VERY IMPORTANT WARNING

If you come across a sett with every entrance hole blocked do not under any circumstances try to open any up. The sett could have been gassed with cyanide-producing crystals which are lethal. There may be signs of a white powder or residue near to the entrances and the holes may be covered with polythene or plastic sheeting too.

REMEMBER SAFETY FIRST - TAKE ABSOLUTELY NO CHANCES IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES - INFORM THE POLICE IMMEDIATELY BY CALLING 101 AND LET THEM SORT IT OUT.

This information has been collated from several sources and is provided as a general guide. It hopefully covers most eventualities.

Steve Hawkes - May 2021

