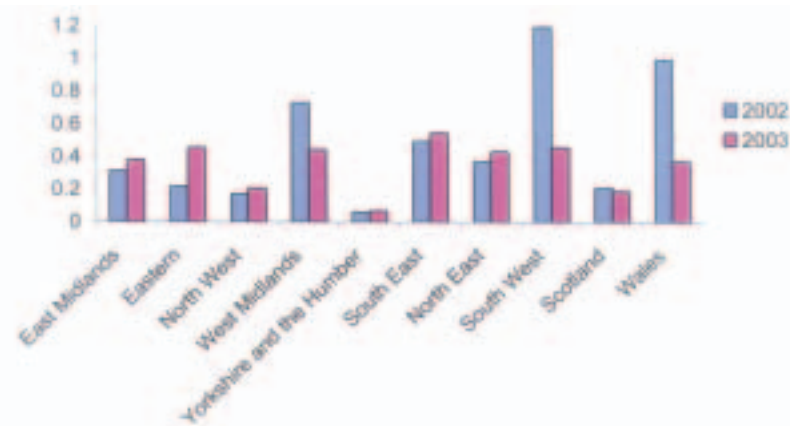


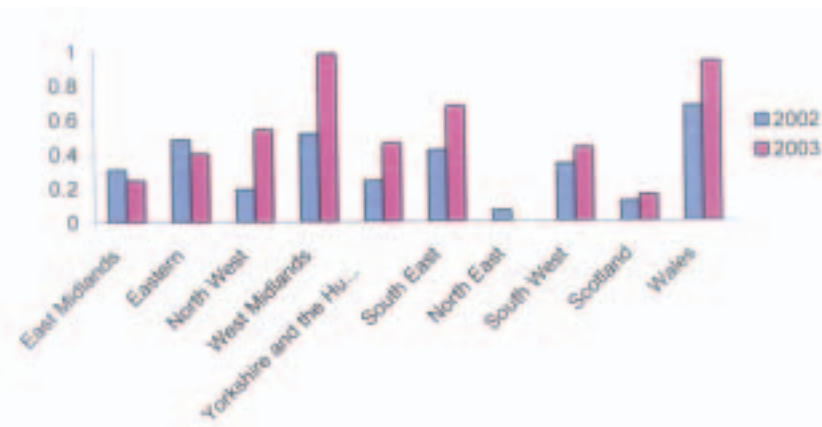
The average number of badgers sighted per 100 miles travelled in each region.

Badgers per 100 miles of road driven



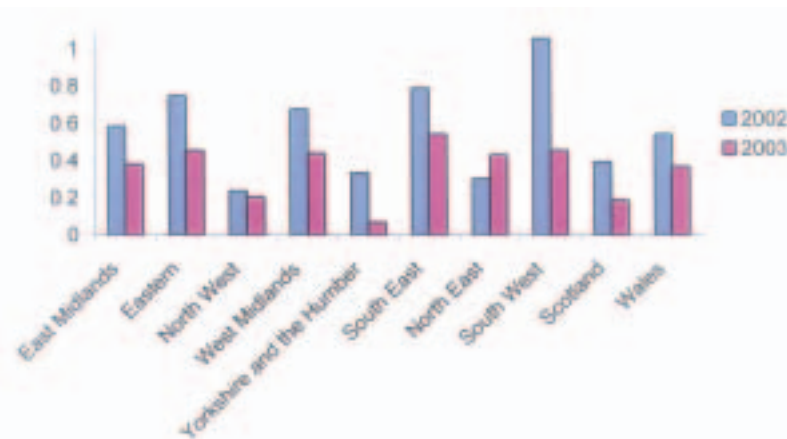
The average number of squirrels sighted per 100 miles travelled in each region.

Squirrels per 100 miles of road driven



The average number of foxes sighted per 100 miles travelled in each region.

Foxes per 100 miles of road driven



A more detailed report will be available on request next year.



Find out more about UK mammals

Mammals UK £5 inc p&p      Spotting Wild Mammals £2 inc p&p.

Both of these MTUK booklets give useful information about our native mammals. The Mammals UK booklet covers the whole range and Spotting Wild Mammals concentrates on just those species you are likely to see. To order please call 020 7498 5262.

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# Mammals on Roads Newsletter

MAMMALS ON ROADS SURVEY 2003 – an outline summary of results      JUNE 2004

**M**ANY THANKS to everyone who took part in the Mammals on Roads survey in 2003 and who continued the tremendous effort of the first two years of the survey. The information collected extends across the whole of the UK with sightings as far afield as the Highlands of Scotland, all the way to the tip of Cornwall.

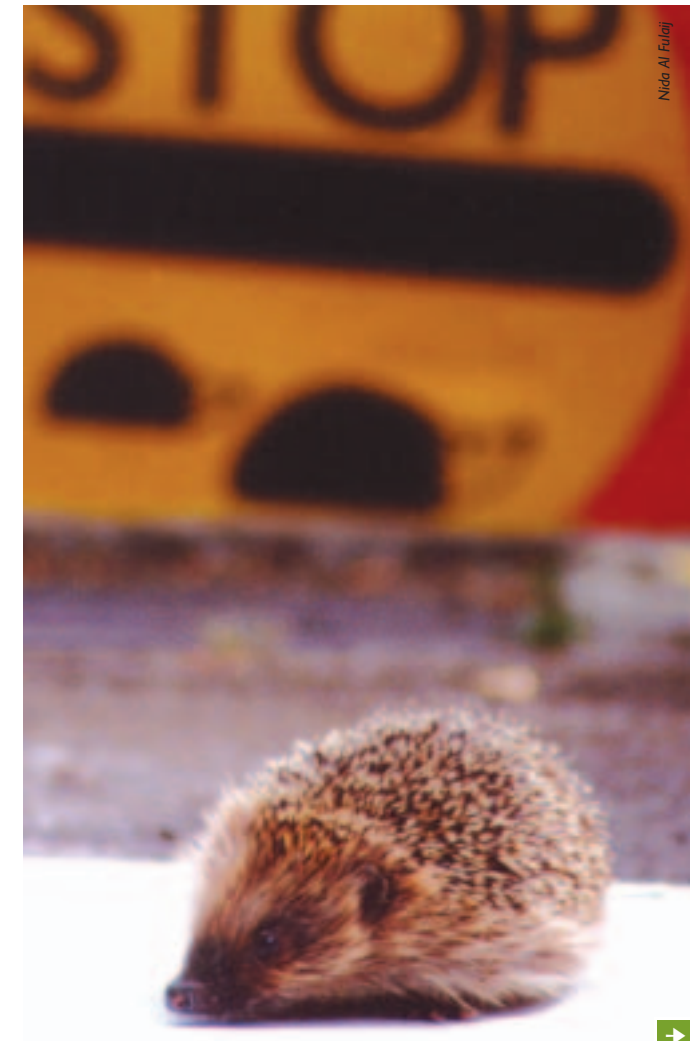
**Numbers of journeys**

Although fewer than in previous years, the 1,097 journeys made in 2003 were well spread out across the whole country, providing us with good coverage. The highest numbers of journeys were carried out in the south-east and south-west and the lowest number carried out in the north-east. We were particularly pleased with the increased number of journeys in Scotland and Wales, as these areas are not as heavily populated by people but are equally important for mammals!

The numbers of surveyors did drop, however, last year and so we are hoping for more recruits this year to help get a better picture about how mammals are faring in our countryside. Please tell a friend about the survey and how to get involved!

**Mammal sightings**

The numbers of sightings were fewer than those in 2002, reflecting the smaller number of miles surveyed but the average numbers of species per 100 miles were comparable to those recorded previously. This consistency in some regions from year to year is very encouraging; it's evidence that the survey is reflecting large-scale population numbers rather than local or yearly "blips".





	2001	2002	2003
Number of miles surveyed	94,288	87,620	44,125
Number of journeys	2,280	1,909	1,097
Mammal sightings	10,501	10,928	c 5,000
Badger sightings	414	343	186
Fox sightings	399	459	199
Hedgehog sightings	2,569	2,089	823
Rabbit sightings	4,999	6,119	3,248
Squirrel sightings	388	343	286

**Some Quick Facts**

This table is a summary of the information collected in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland in 2001, 2002 and 2003.



**Hedgehogs numbers remain the same.**

Hedgehog counts showed little change from those recorded in 2002, with the possible exception of the Yorkshire and Humber region, which showed a small increase. This should be treated with a little caution though, as the number of miles surveyed in the region was low in both 2002 and 2003 compared to that travelled in other regions. The results however do reinforce the finding that hedgehogs have declined drastically in some regions since an earlier study in 1991. Note, too, that counts appear to have levelled, suggesting that the decline has at least slowed.

**Squirrels – our predictions were right!**

One prediction from last year was that squirrel counts would be higher in 2003 than in 2002. This followed from the knowledge that squirrel numbers are strongly influenced by the amount of tree seed (particularly mast) that is set the previous year. 2002 was a good mast year, while 2001 was a poor year. Squirrel counts in the survey, we predicted, would reflect this. It was very encouraging to see that this was indeed the case in most regions. Counts of (mostly grey) squirrels may be important in managing the threat to isolated red squirrel populations, such as those in Cumbria and in Merseyside, but are valuable as well in that they're good evidence that the survey is tracking real changes in large-scale abundance between years.

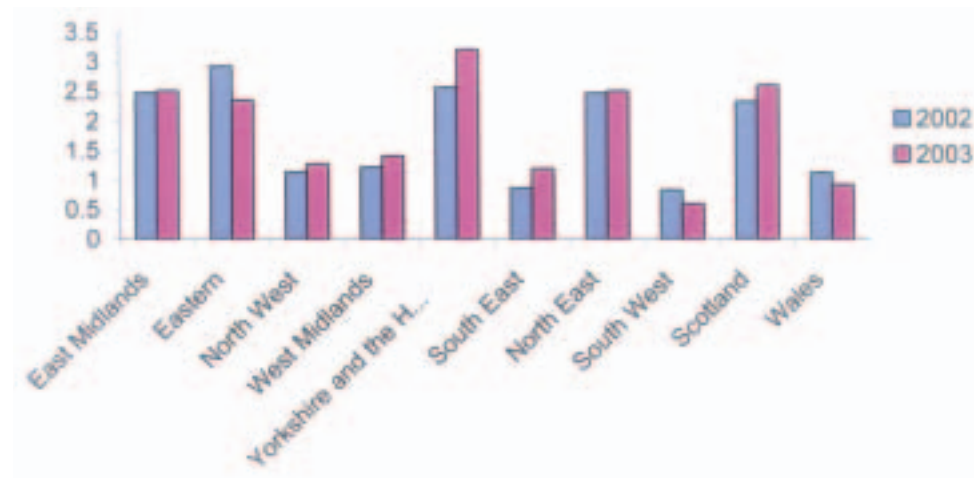
**Foxes and badgers – what's happening?**

Many fewer foxes and badgers were seen in 2003 than in 2002. For foxes, lower counts per 100 km were recorded in all but one region, while counts of badgers per 100 km were down from 2002 in Wales, the South West and West Midlands. In the two English regions, this is the second year that the survey has recorded a fall in counts of badgers but the reason behind this is unclear. At least in part, the drier conditions of 2003 may have been responsible, increasing the levels of mortality among cubs. Other causes are also being looked at. The reason for proportionately fewer foxes being recorded is very much a mystery. It's interesting to note though that foxes were a common sight in gardens and urban sites in our Living with Mammals survey, the same year.

**Rabbits – no problems there.**

Rabbit numbers are known to vary greatly from year to year but counts of rabbits per 100 km changed very little in the last two years of the survey. The North East region though seems to be a particularly good area for rabbits, showing an increase in both 2002 and 2003.

**Hedgehogs per 100 miles of road driven**

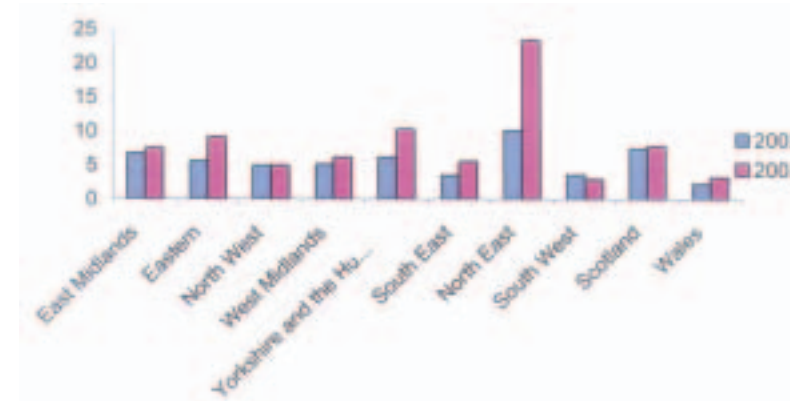


The average number of hedgehogs sighted per 100 miles travelled in each region.



Distribution of sightings of all mammals in 2003. Sightings on journeys which did not meet the survey criteria are not included. Although sightings in Northern Ireland are not shown, due to software limitations, they are included in the analysis.

**Rabbits per 100 miles of road driven**



The average number of rabbits sighted per 100 miles travelled in each region.