

Small mammal trapping in the RSPB's Hope Farm in Knapwell as part of a LEAF event from 8 to 9 June 2024 - Peter Pilbeam and Pippa, Martha and Merryn Keynes

Twenty (20) Longworth traps were set up with bedding (hay) and bait (nut muesli, diced apple and casters) in two groups of ten (10) - one at intervals round the margins of a grass field and one among semi-wild areas near the farm house - from 6.30pm on 8 June 2024. They were checked from 8am on 9 June 2024. Each animal caught (except any shrew species) was weighed and sexed and (apart from one of each species except shrew species) was released immediately where caught. All the traps were then removed. One of each species caught (except any shrew species) was kept in a small tank (with hay, bait and water) for about 2.5 hours to display to attendees at the event. They were then released where caught.

Overnight the weather was dry, cool and clear.

Results:

Trap No.	Location	9/06 from 8am
	Field	
70	2m left of RHS of S entrance to field	WM - m - 22.5gm
66	c10m on (anti-clockwise)	WM - f - 29.5gm
68	c10m on (anti-clockwise)	o
62	c10m on (anti-clockwise)	o
64	c10m on adj wooden fence	o
60	c10m on adj wooden fence	o
58	c10m on adj wooden fence	o
54	in long grass behind id station	CS - ? - c7gm
56	LHS of sealed-off exit to field	o
52	2m right of S entrance to field	o
	Semi-wild area	
69	in long grass behind 'Farm Office' sign in garden	BV - m - 18gm
67	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o
65	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	BV - m - 22gm
63	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o
61	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o
59	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o
57	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o
55	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o
53	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o
51	c10m intervals in clockwise circular route round area	o

Key:

WM -- Wood Mouse
 BV -- Bank Vole
 CS -- Common Shrew
 m -- male
 f -- female
 o -- open (not tripped)

Conclusions:

Over the 20 trap nights a total of 5 captures were made – Wood Mouse, Bank Vole and Common Shrew. This catch rate was a marked improvement over that of the previous year (which was 2 captures out of 40 traps).

The heavier wood mouse captured was lactating and was set free immediately.

Peter Pilbeam
 12 June 2023