

Guidance Notes for Setts Recording Form

Health and Safety first...If you're surveying alone, tell someone where you will be, and maintain contact via mobile 'phone (make sure the battery is fully charged!). Always use a map.

Please follow the Countryside Code, and stick to Public Rights of Way, or if necessary engage with the relevant landowner and obtain their express permission IN ADVANCE if your survey takes you onto private property. Respect landowners, be polite at all times (even if you're challenged) and stay safe...no Sett Record is worth jeopardising your personal safety for.

If you arrive at a known sett location and there are already humans there with dogs, or even just vehicles, DO NOT CHALLENGE THEM. Back off to a safe distance, maintain a low profile, and contact the Police with a grid reference. Stay calm, and give the call-taker clear and concise details, and follow their instructions.

Try to be aware of any Hunting going on in the area you're surveying, and always take notice of associated sounds in the distance...a Fox Hunt can move very quickly, you cannot.

Most of the form is self-explanatory, and users should remember that the very fine details are of less importance than recording a sett in the first place! Recorders can add extra detail for any section in the "Other Comments" section at the end.

We should also remember that "vulnerability" is open to interpretation, so it's better to err on the side of caution rather than NOT record our concerns.

Recording evidence of Persecution can be difficult if the recorder has little or no experience of what to look for. Hopefully this can be covered with experience or training, but in the meantime consider taking photographs and sharing them with a more experienced member of the group for interpretation.

Sett Type

The status of a sett can change almost overnight, as badgers may move from one sett to another (for example in the case of extreme disturbance), so please use these notes with flexibility and common sense. They are NOT prescriptive. However, in general terms the following can be used as guidelines. Remember that the number of entrances alone is not an indication of whether a sett is a "Main" one.

Main Sett;

Usually more than 4 or 5 entrances, and can be as many as 30-50, including partly used and disused ones! Large spoil heaps, with fresh soil on them, and some very clean, large entrances (with no cobwebs across or debris lying in them). The paths will be smooth and well-used, with fresh prints, and possibly fresh bedding lying on them, and other evidence such as latrines nearby (several dung-pits within a fairly small area). There will only be one Main Sett in use by a Social Group of badgers.

Annexe Sett;

Around 100-150m from a Main Sett, connected to it by a well-worn path. Several entrances which are not necessarily in continued use. Annexe setts MAY be used for breeding.

Subsidiary Sett;

Usually only 2-5 entrances, and more than 150m from a Main Sett. Few, if any, clearly-defined connecting paths. Subsidiary setts may also, in exceptional circumstances, be used for breeding.

Outlier Sett;

Probably only a couple of entrances, no paths to speak of, and probably occupied by rabbits or foxes.