

## Wildlife Recording Kit: Small mammals

- Please ensure that all equipment borrowed is replaced; consider the people who are using the box after you.
- The borrower of the loan box is liable for the cost of any equipment lost or damaged.
- If anything is broken/lost, we would be grateful if you could let Surrey Wildlife Trust know as soon as possible so that we can replace this in time for the next people borrowing the box. You will be charged for any missing or broken equipment.
- Ensure that before surveying, you have the permission of the landowner to undertake these surveys.

### Why survey?

Footprint traps are a fantastic way of discovering which mammal species live in your neighbourhood or garden. By knowing what you have on your site, can help you make better decisions on what actions to take to help nature.

### About the kit

These are simple plastic tunnels that contain some tempting food, inkpads and paper, so that when a mammal comes to investigate the food, they leave inky footprints behind.

The tunnels will help you to discover if you have mammals in your area, but will not tell you how many visit.

### When to survey

Many mammals are active throughout the year, but hedgehogs will typically only be active between April and October in the UK.

### Equipment included:

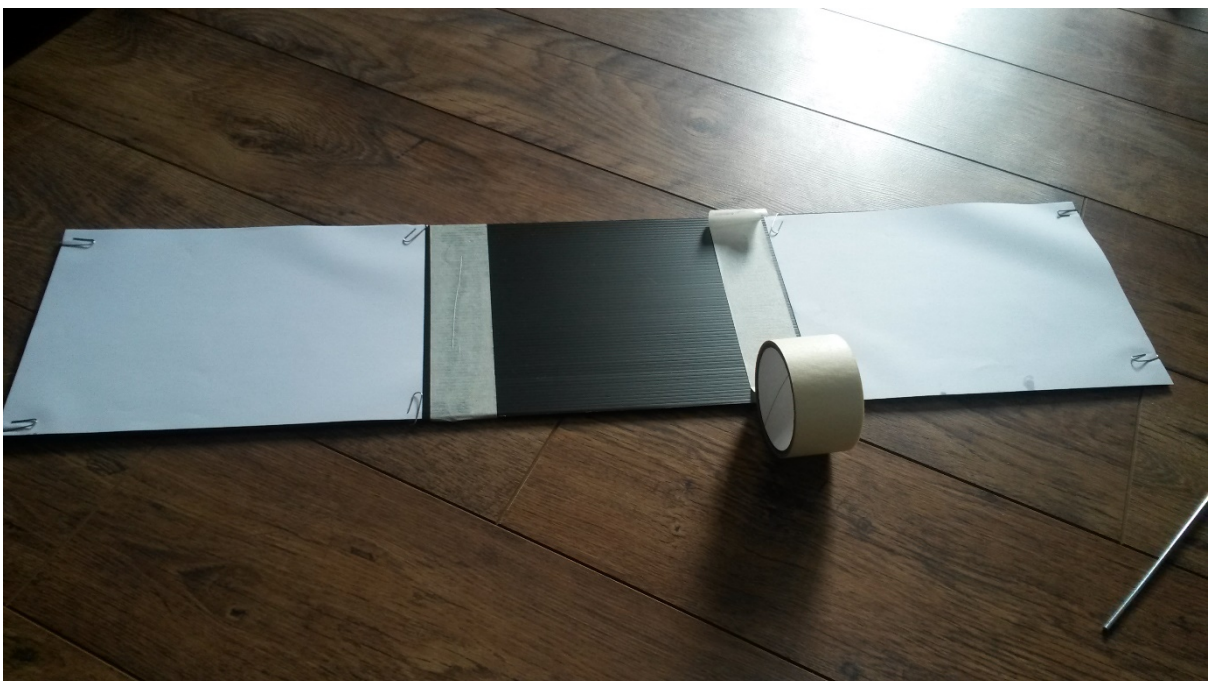
What's included in the kit?	What you need to provide?
A plastic footprint tunnel x 3	Dog food, kitten biscuits, or specialist hedgehog food. Seed mixes and fruit. Please note: NO fish-based products and definitely NO milk!!!
A tracking plate (a simple sheet of stiff plastic that you put the food, ink and paper on, and insert in the tunnel) x 3	A4 paper
Masking tape	Paper clips x 8
Pot of black poster paint powder	Bowl/tupperware to mix oil and powder
Small sponge (use instead of a paint brush to spread the ink on the masking tape)	Pot of vegetable oil
Feeding dish x 3	
Tent pegs to keep the tunnel in place x 8	
Red flags x 3	
Footprint guide – See below and ID guide – British mammals tracks and signs	

### Instructions on use

1. To assemble your tunnel, fold together the flat pack tunnel and insert the tabs into the slots.
2. Use the hole in the base of the tunnel close to the edge of either end for pegging.



3. To get your tracking plate ready, paper clip a sheet of A4 paper at each end of the tracking plate.
4. Put two strips of masking tape across the tracking plate. The tape may also need to be overlapped on top to make up sufficient width to ensure hedgehogs cannot step over the 'ink' pad (see below).



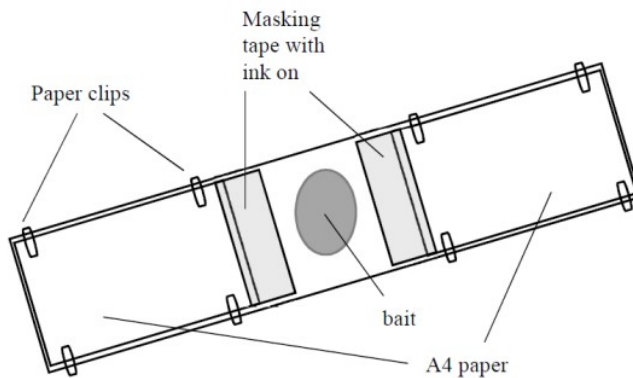
5. Mix one-part black paint powder with one part vegetable oil so it forms a smooth black ink. This is safe for mammals to lick off their paws, and stays damp for several nights. 1 teaspoon of powder and 1 teaspoon of oil will be enough for your tunnel for several nights.
6. Apply a layer of 'ink' to the two strips of masking tape, as shown below.



7. To position your tunnel, pick a good spot, either next to, or under a hedge, or along a fence or shed, or on the edge of grassland or woodland. Edges of habitat are a good place to site the tunnel. In the below image, the trap has been placed between a small hedge and lawn. Use the red flags to mark where the tunnel is, and to help with location when you check the tunnel.



8. Make sure the tunnel is flat on the ground, and use the tent pegs to keep it in place.
9. Add your food to the dish, and then insert your tracking plate (complete with food in the middle) into the tunnel, and you're all set for the night.



Tracking plate layout (Sheet A) which is inserted into the tunnel

10. The next morning, check your tunnel by removing the tracking plate. Hopefully anything that's been eating your food will have left inky pawprints on the paper. All you need to do then is work out what sort of pawprints they are. Don't be too disheartened if you don't get hedgehog prints after the first night – they tend to travel about quite a lot each night, and may not visit a particular garden every night.
11. The next evening, replace the paper with fresh sheets, put more food out, and check that there is still plenty of ink (topping up if needed).

### Using the equipment safely

Before you use this equipment think about your risk assessment for the location and for the activities.

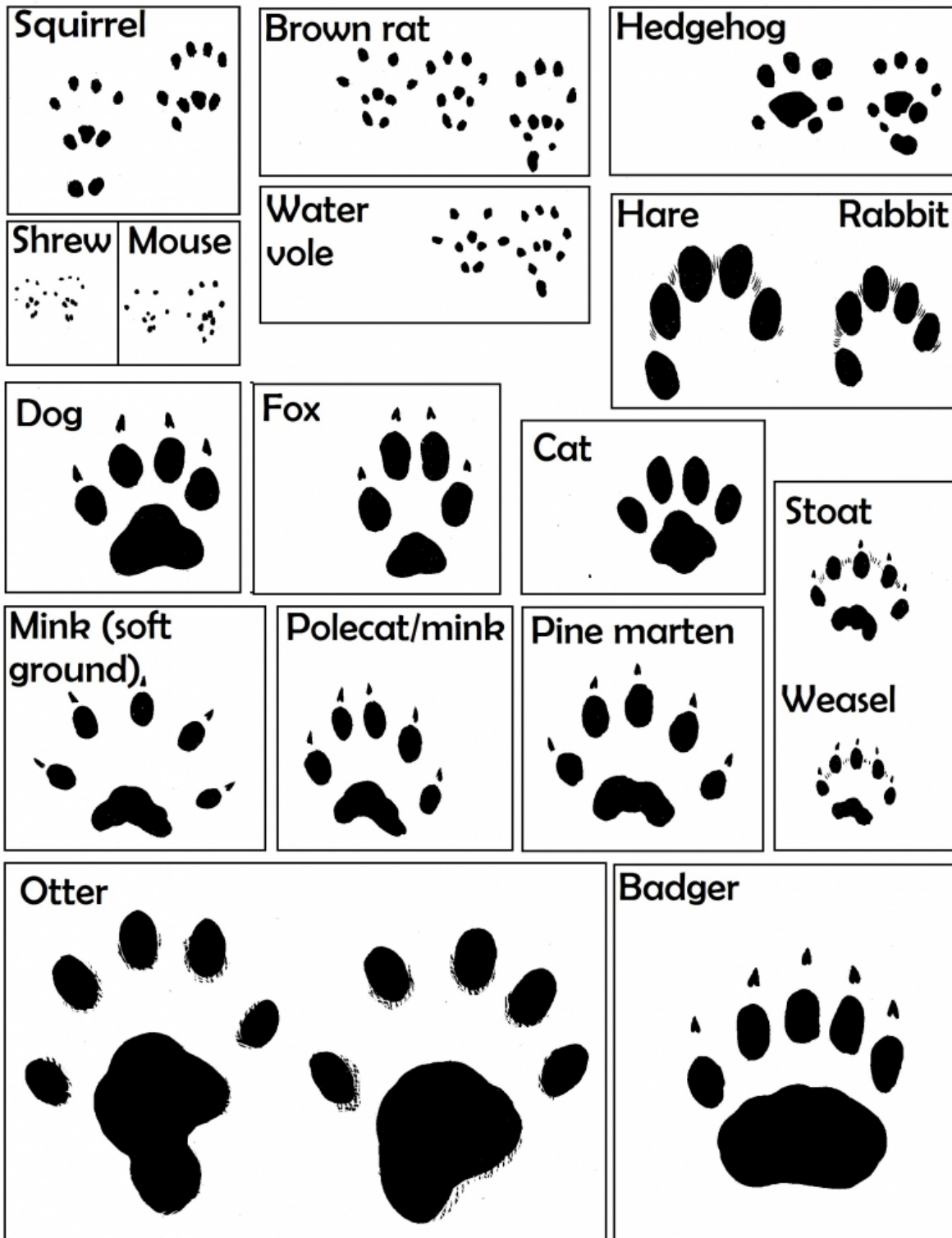
The following are some suggestions of hazards you might need to consider:

- Ground Surface – are there roots, holes, or kerbs to trip over?
- Weather – are participants appropriately dressed and have suitable protection from wet or hot weather?
- Plants and animals – brambles and stinging nettles can cause discomfort and participants should watch out for low branches.
- Germs – have participants got open cuts which might get muddy, and do they have an opportunity to wash their hands before eating?
- Using equipment – do you and other participants know how to use the equipment safely, is there a chance someone could hurt themselves?
- Appropriate supervision – are all children accompanied by a parent or guardian, and are they being appropriately supervised?
- Lone working – ensure you tell someone when undertaking surveys and they are aware of where you are and when you should return. Make sure you have a fully charged mobile phone and know where you can get signal.
- Group management – how will you ensure that participants don't get lost and are where you want them to be?
  
- Plan B – do you have an alternative activity or location if there is a problem with your planned activity?

### **Protected species**

Please note, that badgers, otters, water voles and dormice are some of the protected species in the UK and require a licence to handle them.

It is also prohibited under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) to take or kill any of the following species: hedgehog, shrews, water vole, or Eurasian Stoat.



Mammal footprints, front (l) and rear (r), as most likely to be seen on tracking paper. Rear pads will show up less, if at all. For more info visit: [www.mammal.org.uk](http://www.mammal.org.uk)