



Information Document

Supporting the Badger Baiting School Awareness Video

What are badgers?

Badgers belong to the Mustelid family – weasels

Badgers weigh about 10kg. Up to 12kg for a boar badger.

They have big, strong claws for digging.

Badger hair is very coarse – it is flat, like a knife blade rather than cylindrical.

The hair is not grey – it is banded in white, black and brown.

Badgers have strong skulls. A sagittal crest accommodates large muscles that work with the jaw muscles to give a 'bite quotient' of 109 newtons. Badgers have articulated jaws.

Badgers do vary in colour: black (melanistic), white (albino) and ginger (erythristic) badgers.

Where do they live?

Badgers live in holes in the ground called setts. Setts can have lots of entrances. The badgers live in chambers, deep beneath the earth.

Badger setts are highly protected by law. Damage to a sett could lead to a fine of up to £5000!

What do they eat?

Badgers mainly eat earthworms. They'll also eat insects, cereals, small mammals, birds and eggs, fruit and lots of other things – including wasps' nests!

Badgers will eat almost anything. Please don't feed them sugary food. If you want to feed badgers, give them peanuts.

Badger Territories:

All badger families have a home territory where they find their food.

Its size depends upon the food supply.

They mark the boundaries with dung pits. These tell other badgers to stay away!

Look for these along 'edges'. Edges of fields, fence-lines, hedges, etc.



Badgers Senses:

Badgers have poor eyesight. (Odd for a nocturnal animal.)

Their sense of smell is unbelievable! If you've been to the sett, they'll still smell you 24 hours after you've gone!

Their sense of hearing is incredible! They can hear you from ¼ of a mile away.

Why do badgers' eyes light up when you shine a light on them?

Facts about Badger Baiting:

Badger baiting involves torturing badgers until death and is a thriving 'blood-sport' across the UK. Both the badgers and dogs suffer inconceivably painful injuries.

Small terrier-type dogs are sent down setts to locate badgers and hold them at bay whilst baiters dig down. Once exposed, the badgers are dragged from their setts and either baited there and then by a pack of savagely-trained dogs, or they are sold to underground baiting rings, earning someone in excess of £500.

One way or another, the badgers always die. In addition to their horrific injuries from being viciously attacked by dogs, they are also often deliberately wounded by the baiters in order to guarantee a longer fight by breaking their jaw, teeth or even a foot.

If the dogs survive, rather than receiving veterinary treatment for their open gashes, ripped ears and lips, and any other unimaginable injuries, they are stitched up by their owners without pain relief or anaesthetic; or they are killed.

People who engage in badger baiting can often be involved in other forms of crime, for example theft, burglary, sale and use of drugs, assault and domestic violence.

Following an 18-month investigation by the Cumbria Constabulary's Serious and Organised Crime Unit, eight men were arrested for being involved in a plot to raid cashpoints across Cumbria. During the investigation, footage of badger baiting was discovered on the offenders' seized phones, resulting in 3 of the gang also being convicted of badger offences.

Other forms of illegal persecution:

- Snares

It is illegal to use a snare to catch badgers, however, the use of some snares are legal to capture other wildlife.

If you find a snare in the countryside, run the snare opening down so it is too small to catch an animal. Do not take it away as that's theft, and don't break it as that's criminal damage.



If you see a badger in a snare, do not try to rescue it, instead call the police or the RSPCA.

If you see a badger in a snare, do not cut the snare from its fixing as the badger will run off still entangled.

- Lamping

Lamping for badgers is another illegal activity, with perpetrators choosing to stalk foraging badgers late at night before unleashing their dogs in terrifying and gruesome combat.

- Trapping

It is illegal to trap a badger unless a licence is obtained from Natural England. Perpetrators use traps to capture badgers to sell or bait at underground baiting rings, or the badgers are killed immediately by a landowner to reduce their population.

- Poisoning/gassing

Badgers are poisoned by contaminating food and leaving it near their sett for them to eat. Badgers are gassed in their setts by blocking all entrances and filling the setts with carbon monoxide or other toxic gases. Gassing is understood to cause considerable suffering.

- Shooting

It is illegal to shoot a badger unless a licence is obtained from Natural England. Shooting badgers is the preferred method for the badger cull, which is the government's strategy to eradicate bovine TB (bTB) in England by 2038.

Badger Persecution:

Offenders of badger crime can be prosecuted under the following pieces of legislation:

- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Animal Welfare Act 2006
- Hunting Act 2004
- Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996

Badgers and the Law:

You could be sent to prison for up to 6 months and get an unlimited fine if you're found guilty of any of these offences:

- Intentionally capture, kill or injure a badger
- Damage, destroy or block access to their setts
- Disturb badgers in setts
- Treat a badger cruelly
- Deliberately send or intentionally allow a dog into a sett



- Bait or dig for badgers

Here's what evidence to look out for:

- Equipment used to dig setts
- Equipment for handling badgers - cages, snares, gloves, tongs, nets and sacks
- Equipment for killing badgers – clubs, spades and knives
- Equipment for tracking terrier dogs in badger setts – locators and collars
- Dogs with injuries to their lower jaw, chest and the top of their legs
- Photographs or video footage of crimes taken on cameras or mobile phones
- Pits or storage facilities to store badgers or dogs, or to use as fight venues – allotments
- Dug out badger setts

What should you do if you witness badger baiting?

If you witness a badger crime taking place do not approach the perpetrators as they are often dangerous.

Please report the crime to the police by dialling 999, or if reporting after the event dial 101.

What should you do if you suspect someone is involved in badger crime?

If you have any specific information on named individuals, please email your suspicions to Andy Swinburne - andrew@naturewatch.org

Andy is a former Wildlife Crime Officer and has many years' experience fighting badger crime.

Please be assured that your contact details and the information you disclose will be treated in a confidential and professional manner.