

Badger culling pilots: Independent Expert Panel

Monitoring the effectiveness of badger population reduction by controlled shooting

The aim of this monitoring work is to test the assumption that controlled shooting is an effective method of badger removal, in terms of being able to remove at least 70% of the starting population in the area, over the course of a six week cull. To do this, it will necessary to establish, as precisely as possible, the proportion of the badger population that has been removed from each of the two pilot areas.

In their role overseeing the design of this work, the Independent Expert Panel considered seven different potential approaches, including surveys of badger activity, line transect distance sampling and genetic census techniques. In making their decision on the approaches to take forward, they considered factors including precision, potential for bias, susceptibility to disruption, time taken to carry out, and cost.

The selected approaches use information collected from a sample of land (approximately 16%) in each pilot area. As part of the cull, all carcasses will be collected and the total numbers recorded, and the monitoring approach will also make use of this information.

The outcomes of this monitoring will be:

- 1) Evaluation of the proportion of the population in each pilot area that was removed by culling activities.
- 2) Evaluation of the minimum effort required to deliver a 70% cull using the methods employed during culling activities.

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