

Documented Interference of Local Badger Sett

Follows a list of photographs and dates of the continuous harassment of one badger sett in Ceredigion:



image 1. 2004 January. Start moving under the boundary wall into the field.



image 2



image 3



image 2, 3, 4 2006 11th March. Burrows in field filled with slurry (above)



*Image 5. 2007 January 19th.
Back again*



Image 6. 4. 2012 February 18th.

Records resume in 2012 but we don't know what occurred during the missing years



*Image 7. 2012 April 6th.
Burrows filled in.*



Image 8 2012 June 2nd. Back again



*Image 9 2012 August 11th.
Filled in again.*



Image 10. 2012 October 7th. Back.



*Image 11. 2013 April 20th.
More digging*



Image 12. 2013 April 27th. Filled in.



*Image 13. 2016 May. Sett burrow in use (woodland side of boundary wall
opposite filled burrow) (see image 27)*

Records stop until 2019:



image 14



image 15



*Image 16 2019 August 21st. Filled in and run over.
At this time over 20 tons of rubble, old fencing and soil was fly tipped onto the
photographer's property by this ~~animal abuser~~ farmer*

2020 was uneventful with the badgers left in peace. However, 2021:



image 17



image 18



Image 19



image 20

Image 17 - 20. 2021 March 25th. Filled in again



Image 21, 22. 2021 April 2nd. Two of the three burrows been dug down, as opposed to normally dug from below with the spoils deposited in the wood.



Images 23, 24. Although this one, the third (centre burrow) or the main sett burrow, was not reopened, abandoned.



Image 25. 2021 April 21st. Surprisingly three cubs emerge from new entrance on the far right (wooded side).



Image 26. 2021 July 3rd. Same cubs in July.



Image 27. 2022, re sett burrow (screenshot picture from video image 13 above) became unused, suspect some died there, this was, prior to 2019 the main entrance with cubs.

This continual harassment seems to have had little effect on the overall badger population of that sett, other than the obvious stress them making them susceptible to bTB infection from infected cows.



Image 28. 2022 14 June. Grass 'topping' carried out avoiding most of the entrances.

How can we deal with this?

Since there's no clear 'evidence' of the offender, bearing mind the reasonable excuses:

- 1/ What badgers
- 2/ It was an old unoccupied sett
- 3/ Wasn't us
- 4/ No idea, perhaps it was the National Grid contractors
- 5/ Must have been one of the outside farm contractors

Even a photograph of the sett days before showing it in use would be of no use in prosecution:

- 1/ Who took this?
- 2/ Is that person a 'certified' photographer? (yes, that is asked in court)
- 3/ How do we know it's not 'photoshopped'?
- 4/ This was taken years ago; I can tell from **something**.
(those will be amongst the defence)

It would seem the 'cull' since 2013 has given some implied legitimacy to badger persecution. Looking at the very dismal statistics:

(https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/WCL_Wildlife_Crime_Report_Nov_21.pdf)

Number of reports							
Year	Number of incidents recorded	Number of probable cases of criminal offending	Number of cases referred to the Police	Number of cases where criminal offending confirmed	Number of cases and charges prosecuted	Number of defendants prosecuted	Number of defendants convicted
2016	512	N/K	92	N/K	5	N/K	N/K
2017	633	N/K	99	N/K	N/K	N/K	N/K
2018	551	N/K	163	N/K	4	N/K	N/K
2019	452	411	270	N/K	8	N/K	N/K
2020	614	522	312 *	N/K	7		
* These are referrals made to the police and recorded by Badger Trust. It does not reflect other reporting agencies N/K – Not Known							

Number of reports 2016 to 2020

Types of sett interference			
Type of Sett Interference	Number of reports 2020	%	Number of reports 2019
Agricultural	34	112.5+	16
Blocking	75	6.25-	80
Damage Destroy	30	150+	12
Development	106	221.21+	33
Disturbance	21	250+	6
Forestry	5	58.33-	12
Hunt	99	15.12+	86
Sett Dug	36	21.74-	46
Other	0		3
Total incidents	406		294

Types of incident 2019 compared to 2020.

Types of report			
Type of Incident	Number of reports 2020	% (change)	Number of reports 2019
Sett Interference	406	+40	291
Baiting/Fighting	32	+52	21
Poisoning	23	+77	13
Traps/Snares	28	- 3	29
Trading	0	0	0
Shooting	29	+164	11
Hunting Dogs/Lamps	4	-50	8
Other	88	+11	79
Non-Criminal	4	?	?
Total incidents	614		452

Types of report 2019 compared to 2020. Not encouraging.

Incidents can be reported here:

<https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/report>

When the Police turn up, with their best intentions, one will have to make a written statement and possibly give evidence in court, all likely to no avail. Whatever happens, any possibility future co-operation with a belligerent neighbour has evaporated. Reprisals, such as fly tipping debris and dead farm stock, again both of which will be near impossible to prove.

Video evidence of the crime being committed along with positive identification of machinery and perpetrator seems to be the only way forward, along with social media 'shaming', but that could land you in serious and expensive trouble without careful wording.

Another useful page here; UK National Wildlife Crime Unit (NWCU)

<https://www.nwcu.police.uk/how-do-we-prioritise/priorities/badger-persecution/>

and the Badger Trust page on these matters:

<https://www.badgertrust.org.uk/post/crime-report-reveals-a-very-bad-year-for-badgers-with-a-36-surge-in-reported-badger-crime>