

Introduction to Small Mammal Identification & Surveying

Introduction

Bromley's Environmental Education Centre at High Elms (BEECHE) is a place where people of all ages and backgrounds can pursue their interests in Science, Nature, Art, Philosophy, Literature and Music in an awe inspiring landscape of woodlands, grasslands and ponds.

Drawing on our rich heritage as part of the Lubbock estate, where Charles Darwin spent many years developing his theories we take a "Head, Hearts & Hands" approach to our educational activities. We believe that education and access to nature should be available to all members of our communities regardless of age or background. It is our mission to provide positive, fun and educational experiences which support wider learning and promote respect and empathy for each other, our communities and our countryside.

Programme Overview

Small mammals are one of our most abundant groups of mammals but can be challenging to identify and many are rarely seen and under recorded despite being numerous and often important indicators of ecosystem health. This one day workshop will introduce participants to the ecology of common species in the area and the key identifying features. We will also cover the general ecology of small mammals along with survey techniques using Longworth traps. There will potentially be the opportunity to handle small mammals as part of the survey.

The course will consist of classroom components and activities in the field but cannot guarantee that any small mammals will be trapped.

Location

High Elms Country Park offers 250 acres of countryside to explore and the High Elms Estate, originally the country home of the Lubbock family. The estate is 15 miles from central London, located on the ridge of the North Downs on the rim of the Thames basin.

High Elms is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a Local Nature Reserve, enjoying the support of local environmental groups as well as the Friends of High Elms, Natural England and the Forestry Commission. There are chalk meadows and woodlands that support a variety of wildlife including species that are rare in London.



Indicative Timetable

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8.00am	Arrival & Refreshments
8.15am	Small mammal trapping in the field: Checking traps set the previous night and setting
09.30am	Break
10.00am	Common species identification, ecology and field signs, trapping methods
12.00pm	Lunch
1.00pm	Data recording, legislation & practical considerations
1:45pm	Trap check and collection
2.30pm	Finish

Course Objectives

- Demonstrate safe handling techniques for small mammals
- Understand how to safely and ethically use “live traps”
- Have a broad understanding of alternative survey techniques to liver trapping
- Identify a range of UK small mammal species
- Be able to identify tracks and signs of small mammals

What to Bring

- Lunch (there is a café on site)
- Suitable outdoor clothing (we will be walking off path in High Elms Country Park)
- Outdoor boots or wellies
- Notebook
- Camera

About The Tutor

Steven Lofting is the RSPB Biodiversity Advisor to idverde, developing a business partnership to enhance the London Borough of Bromley’s Greenspaces and idverde team for the benefit of Biodiversity, utilising the RSPB’s expertise in giving nature a home. Steven holds a BSc(Hons) in Landscape and Countryside Management within which he undertook his dissertation thesis on Water Shrews, one of Britain’s lesser understood small mammals. He also highly acquainted with live trapping techniques having undertaken population studies of Crofton Woods and Jubilee Country Park . He is also currently working towards his Dormouse licence and regularly assists with Bat work.

Risk Assessment

Risk assessments will be provided to each school or group prior to the session.



Facilities

There is parking in the main car park and disabled parking at the Green Roof Cafe. Toilet facilities are located indoors in the centre. Green roof café is location on site.

Gift Shop

We currently have a gift shop open which stocks the following;

- Wildlife guides and Books
- Toys and gifts
- Stationary
- Children's Wildlife kits
- Children's Books

We also stock a range of reading material related to Science and Nature, including historical links with Charles Darwin and the Lubbock family.

Please let us know if you would like to discuss creating a package which includes gift items.

Thank you for your booking and we look forward to welcoming you at BEECHE.

BEECHE team



