

## Mammals (except bats and marine)

The recording of most species of mammals has been rather haphazard. Exceptions are the recent surveys of bats by the Fife Bat Group and of badgers by the Fife Badger Group. On the other hand a considerable amount of historical information is available, summarised by Rintoul & Baxter (1935): *Vertebrate fauna of the Forth*. A provisional atlas was published by Fife Nature in 1994: Corbet, GB & Smout, A-M, *The mammals of Fife / A provisional atlas*. Most species of mammals have had a very direct interaction with human activity in one way or another, as objects of the hunt for food, furs or sport, as pests threatening his domestic stock, crops and stored food, or simply taking benign advantage of his structures as in the case of bats roosting in houses or barns.

Bats and marine mammals will be listed separately.

Species for which Local Biodiversity Action Plans have been prepared are followed by **LBAP**.

**Update/Revision History: Revised by Gordon Corbet, January 2006.**

### Insectivora: Insectivores

Hedgehog; *Erinaceus europaeus*: Widespread in most habitats.

Mole; *Talpa europaea*: Widespread in grassland and woodland.

Common shrew; *Sorex araneus*: Widespread in most habitats.

Pygmy shrew; *Sorex minutus*: Widespread in most habitats.

Water shrew; *Neomys fodiens*: Local in wetlands but occasionally far from water; probably under-recorded.

### Lagomorpha: rabbits and hares

Rabbit; *Oryctolagus cuniculus*: Widespread, a serious pest of agriculture. Originally introduced as a domestic animal, with warrens recorded at Crail by 1264 and the Isle of May by 1329. Although later most abundant on dune grassland, most dune systems in Fife are now adjacent to golf courses where rabbits are strictly controlled. They are still abundant at Dumbarnie Links where they help to maintain a species-rich dune flora.

Brown hare; *Lepus europaeus*: Widespread but patchy, mainly on arable land.

[Mountain hare; *Lepus timidus*: Doubtfully on the Cleish Hills.]

### Rodentia: Rodents

Red squirrel; *Sciurus vulgaris*: Widespread but sparse in conifer and mixed woodlands; in danger of replacement by grey squirrel. LBAP.

Grey squirrel; *Sciurus carolinensis*: Widespread in all but pure coniferous woodlands. Derived from a deliberate introduction at Pittencrieff Park, Dunfermline in 1919.

Bank vole; *Clethrionomys glareolus*: Widespread in woodland and hedgerows.

Field vole; *Microtus agrestis*: Widespread in rough grass, including road verges, dune grassland and grassy moorland.

Water vole; *Arvicola terrestris*: Local and declining in wetlands. LBAP.

[Musk rat; *Ondatra zibethicus*: Escapes from fur farms established in 1930s, subsequently exterminated.]

Wood mouse; *Apodemus sylvaticus*: Widespread and abundant in woods, hedges, gardens and, especially in winter, in houses.

House mouse; *Mus musculus*: Widespread in towns, villages and farms.

Harvest mouse; *Micromys minutus*: Recorded at one site near Aberdour in 1994, the northernmost in Britain.

Common rat; *Rattus norvegicus*: Widespread pest in towns and on farms.

Ship rat; *Rattus rattus*: A long-established population on Inchcolm (confirmed still there in 1998).

### Carnivora: Carnivores

Fox; *Vulpes vulpes*: Widespread.

[Pine marten; *Martes martes*: Extinct since c.1878.]

Stoat; *Mustela erminea*: Widespread.

Weasel; *Mustela nivalis*: Widespread.

[Polecat; *Mustela putorius*: Extinct since 1880s, but escaped ferrets (derived from polecats) sometimes become established in the wild, as at Dumbarnie Links.]

Mink; *Mustela vison*: An American species that became established in the wild following escape from fur farms in the 1960s. Now widespread in wetlands and probably at least partly responsible for the recent decline in water voles.

Badger; *Meles meles*: Widespread; sparse in West Fife, now abundant elsewhere. LBAP.

Otter; *Lutra lutra*: Sparse, but now present on all rivers following near extinction in the 1960s. LBAP.

Feral cat; *Felis catus*: Widespread.

[Wildcat; *Felis silvestris*: Extinct since c.1900.]

### **Artiodactyla: Ungulates**

Roe deer; *Capreolus capreolus*: Widespread.

[Red deer; *Cervus elaphus*: Extinct probably since 17th C., now only on deer farms.]

Sika deer; *Cervus nippon*: In Devilla Forest (since 1890) and on Lomonds.

[Fallow deer; *Dama dama*: Introduced probably in Mediaeval period, extinct since late 18th C?]

Chinese muntjac; *Muntiacus reevesi*: Mapped for NO20, 1972-2002, by Ward (2005): *Mammal Review* 35: 169, but details not yet known.