

BADGER FAQS

The badger is a nocturnal animal, characterised by its black and white striped face, short legs and broad, thickset body. They're found in a variety of habitats throughout the UK, including woods, hedges, fields and cliffs.

WHERE DO BADGERS LIVE?

Badgers are sociable animals that live together in groups of up to 15 in a 'sett'. This will have many entrances and a network of tunnels and chambers which are lined with bedding made up of dry grass or leaves which is frequently replaced and the discarded bedding dragged outside the sett. Badger groups are strongly territorial, with dominant individuals who will challenge roaming badgers who approach the sett. Where food is plentiful the sett's territory will extend no more than two kilometres from the sett. Badgers do not hibernate, but in cold weather they may not venture out for several nights in a row.

WHAT DO THEY EAT?

A badger is a true omnivore - it will eat almost anything, from small mammals to insects, slugs and frogs and a wide variety of roots, plants and fruits. It's badger's favourite food is the earthworm and on mild, damp nights in autumn, they may forage for up to ten hours looking for them. Badgers will travel long distances in search of food and use the same paths, resulting in well-worn tracks across fields and through undergrowth. They usually leave the sett at dusk to look for food and as their eyesight is poor they rely on their acute senses of smell and hearing to detect food. Badgers usually forage alone and tend to only be sociable at the sett.

WHAT ARE THE BREEDING HABITS OF BADGERS?

Badgers will mate at any time of the year, but the most active time is February to March and up to four cubs are born underground in a special nursery area. They remain here for eight weeks, suckled by their mother and then begin to venture outside the sett with her to forage for food.

WHEN CAN I SEE THEM?

Badgers are easiest to watch in summer just before sunset. Look for well-worn paths, footprints and newly dug soil heaps around the sett entrances. Arrive at least an hour before sunset and choose a position down-wind to the sett, but do not walk over the sett to get there. Some badgers are easily scared, so if you would like a good view, keep very still and quiet.

WHAT DO I DO IF FIND AN INJURED/DEAD BADGER?

Please do not handle injured badgers. Contact the Avon Badger Group or the RSPCA. In case of an accident, please inform the Bristol/Avon Regional Environment Records Centre BRERC (0117 934 9833)

If you see people digging or baiting for badgers, do not approach them. Note the car registration number and call the police and the Avon Badger Group (07776 090816)

The badger is fully protected under the 1991 Badger Act, and it is illegal to disturb the animal or its sett.

Did you know?

- Setts may be shared with rabbits, mice, and even foxes.
- Scars above the tail are a sign of badger hierarchy, showing a recent skirmish with another badger to establish pecking order.

Useful numbers

Avon Badger Group 07776 090816

Adrian Coward 01749 671065

