



The Official Website for

East Surrey Badger Protection Society

For enquiries, please contact ESBPS by email: esbps.badgers@gmail.com

History of ESBPS



In 1979 following a series of attacks on badger setts in a Sanderstead woodland, which included gassing and digging into the setts, a group of concerned residents called a meeting in a nearby Scout hut. The meeting was well attended and there was a great determination to combat this mindless persecution of one of Britain's best loved animals. From this meeting evolved a fledgling organisation called 'The Badger Protection Society' - one of the very first badger groups to be formed in the country. Badger groups started to spring into existence all over the country in response to similar threats to local badger populations, although at this time they operated in isolation unaware of the existence of other groups. In the early eighties a number of meetings were held involving badger groups from all over the country to exchange information and, where appropriate, coordinate activities. Our Society decided to change its name to the 'Surrey Badger Protection Society', to reflect our area of operation.

In 1985 the SBPS hosted the National Badger Groups Conference which proved to be a milestone in the badger protection movement. It was agreed to establish a national umbrella body that could co-ordinate the excellent work done by the various local badger groups in the country, and represent the interests of badgers at a national level. So the SBPS played the lead role in establishing the National Federation of Badger Groups with our Vice-Chairman John Taylor becoming the first Chairman of the NFBG.

When the West Surrey Badger Group was formed, it was appropriate that the SBPS concentrate on the eastern part of the county. In 1996 the group name was changed to the East Surrey Badger Protection Society (ESBPS) and it became a registered charity. The two groups work closely together to conserve and protect the badgers of Surrey. The county is fortunate in having a healthy population of badgers, but increasing pressure on their traditional habitats eg. busier roads, more pressure for house building and problems with illegal persecution mean there is no room for complacency.

Although the group was established initially to combat local badger persecution, the scope of the work has broadened considerably. Much now relates to monitoring planning applications which may have an adverse effect on the local badger population. We have a good working relationship with the local authorities in Surrey and London Boroughs such as Croydon, who value our knowledgeable, unbiased and pragmatic approach. We are often called upon to give advice to land owners on issues relating to badger activity on their land. We also investigate allegations of illegal interference with badger setts. We are fortunate that we do not appear to have the scale of badger digging that goes on in other parts of the country, but we have no doubt that it occurs.

We have a close working relationship with the police and RSPCA. We also provide a 24 hour rescue service for, sick, injured, trapped and distressed badgers. Most of our call-outs relate to badgers that have been injured in road accidents (RTAs). We can supply leaflets telling you what to do with injured badgers and who to contact for help (**see Badgers in Trouble**). As badgers are such sturdy animals they often survive a collision that would normally kill a dog or a fox.

We ensure that badgers get whatever veterinary treatment is required (including euthanasia, where appropriate to prevent further suffering) and make sure there is a careful programme of rehabilitation and return to the wild. Badgers have an uncanny knack of getting themselves trapped in a way that makes rescuing them extremely challenging. This is specialist work, but with a bit of imagination and persistence we have never failed a badger yet. In addition to the above activities, we attend various fairs, countryside days and the like - publicising our work, giving help and information about badger issues, and raising funds for the Society.

In 2004 the ESBPS celebrated its 25th anniversary. Then in 2005 we entered a new phase in our history. For many years the ESBPS has worked closely with Simon Cowell, who is Director of Wildlife Aid, based near Leatherhead. This rehabilitation centre has excellent long term care facilities for a variety of wildlife, including badgers, and we have taken many badgers there. Young badgers are brought to the centre every Spring for rehabilitation. In 2005 Simon Cowell asked us to find a release site for 5 badgers. We built an artificial sett in a secure pen and released the badgers. Following this we returned 12 badgers to two sites in 2006, 13 badgers to two sites in 2007, 8 badgers to two sites in 2008, 5 badgers to 1 site in 2009, 14 badgers to 2 sites in 2010 and 20 badgers to 4 sites in 2011. The ESBPS has returned 77 badgers to the wild that would otherwise have died prematurely, been held in captivity or even been euthanased.

Although we are only a small group, we have achieved much, and can be justly proud of our record in aiding the many badgers that have needed our help. Badgers face just as many challenges as they did when the group was formed, in spite of stronger legal protection. The need for local badger groups with enthusiasm and expert knowledge is as great as it has ever been. They ensure that badgers continue to be a welcome part of our wildlife heritage.