



Let's All Go On a Shrew Hunt

Activities for Young Seabird Ambassadors

Introduction

The aim of this session is to learn about Scilly shrews, and how to find signs of them. Scilly shrews are Lesser white toothed shrews, which means they are different to their mainland cousins, the red-toothed shrew. Scilly shrews are endemic to Scilly (only found here) and this session will give young people the opportunity to consider how they feel about invasive species and how they can protect endemic species.

Learning Objectives

- Learn how to collect, record and present tracking data.
- Learn how to identify signs of birds, shrews and other animals.
- Have fun learning a new tracking skill



Wood Mouse



House Mouse



Scilly Shrew



Brown Rat

Materials

- Tracking tunnels (between 1 and 10). The mammal society produce tunnels or you can find out how to make your own http://www.mammal.org.uk/footprint_tunnel_survey .
- Inside your tunnels you will need white paper, black non-toxic poster paint and a lure – peanut butter!
- Locations (and permission to access) to place the tracking tunnels
- Recording sheet (see next page) for your return visit.

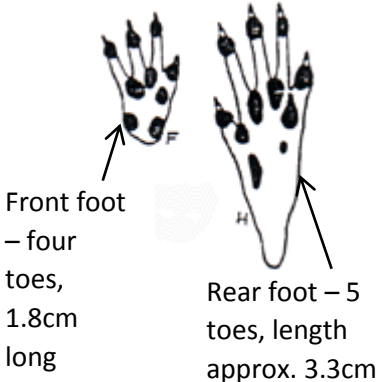

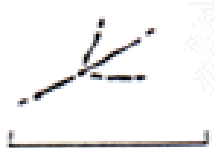
Setting up the Tunnel

- Place the tracking card (paper) inside the tunnel. White paper either side of black poster paint, means that as an animal passes through the tunnel, footprints will remain on the paper.
- Place a dollop of peanut butter in the middle of the tunnel on the ink area to entice the animal inside!
- Leave overnight – even better for three nights

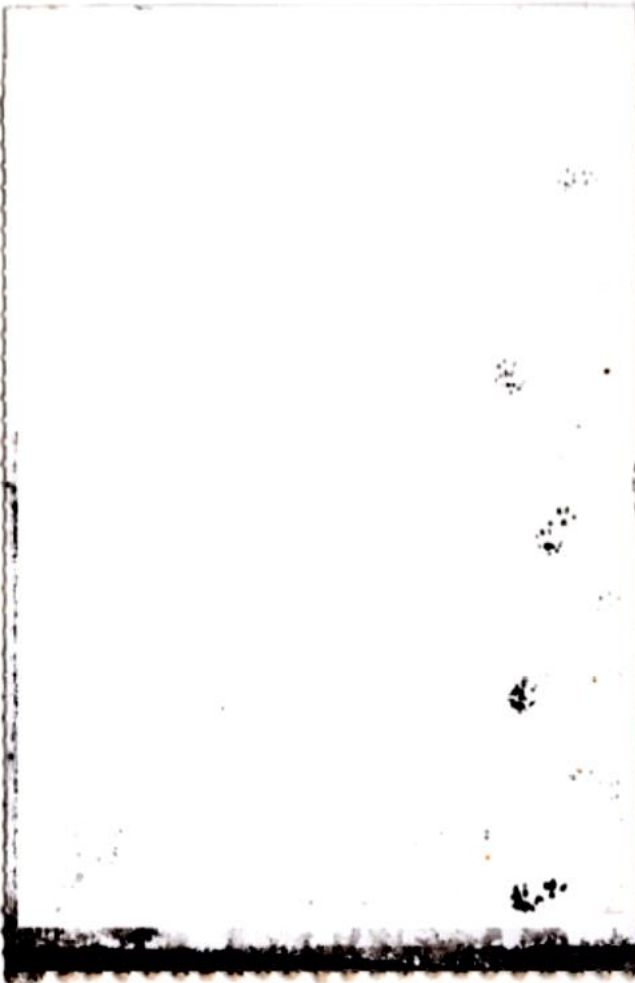


Tunnel Recording Form

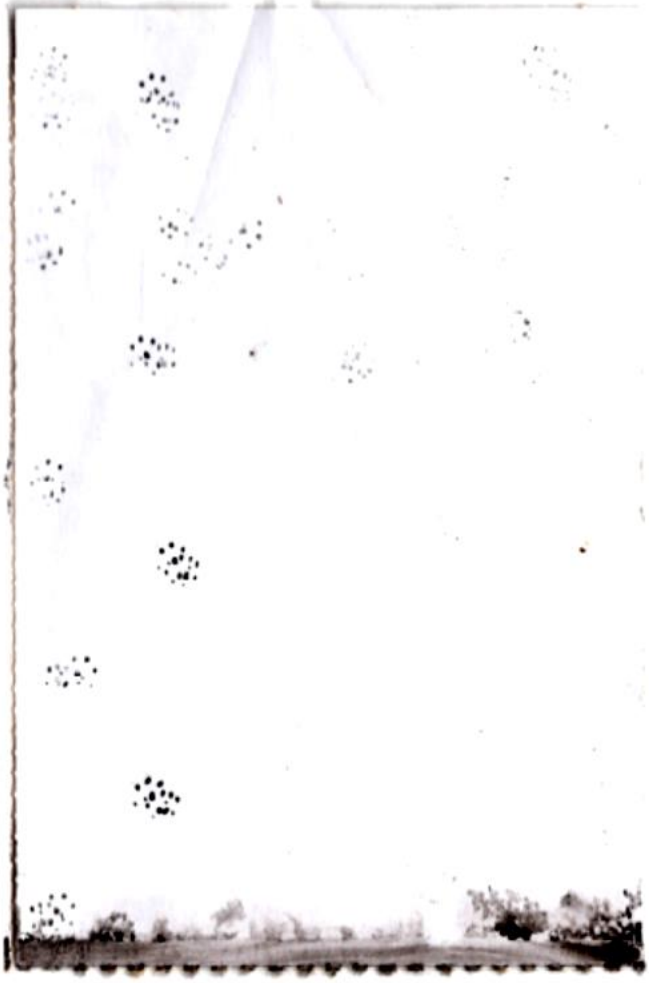
Observer Name		Habitat	
Island		Visit Date	

Tunnel Number	Species			
	 <p>Front foot – four toes, 1.8cm long</p> <p>Rear foot – 5 toes, length approx. 3.3cm</p>	 <p>Much smaller and very faint, with five toes on the front feet (rats have four)</p>		<p>?</p> <p>Please specify or take a photo if unsure</p>
	Brown Rat	Scilly Shrew	Bird	Other
For each sheet please score 1, 2, 3 or 4 – see overleaf for guide				
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
Number of tunnels showing presence		/10	/10	/10

Activity Index



Score of 1



Score of 2



Score of 3



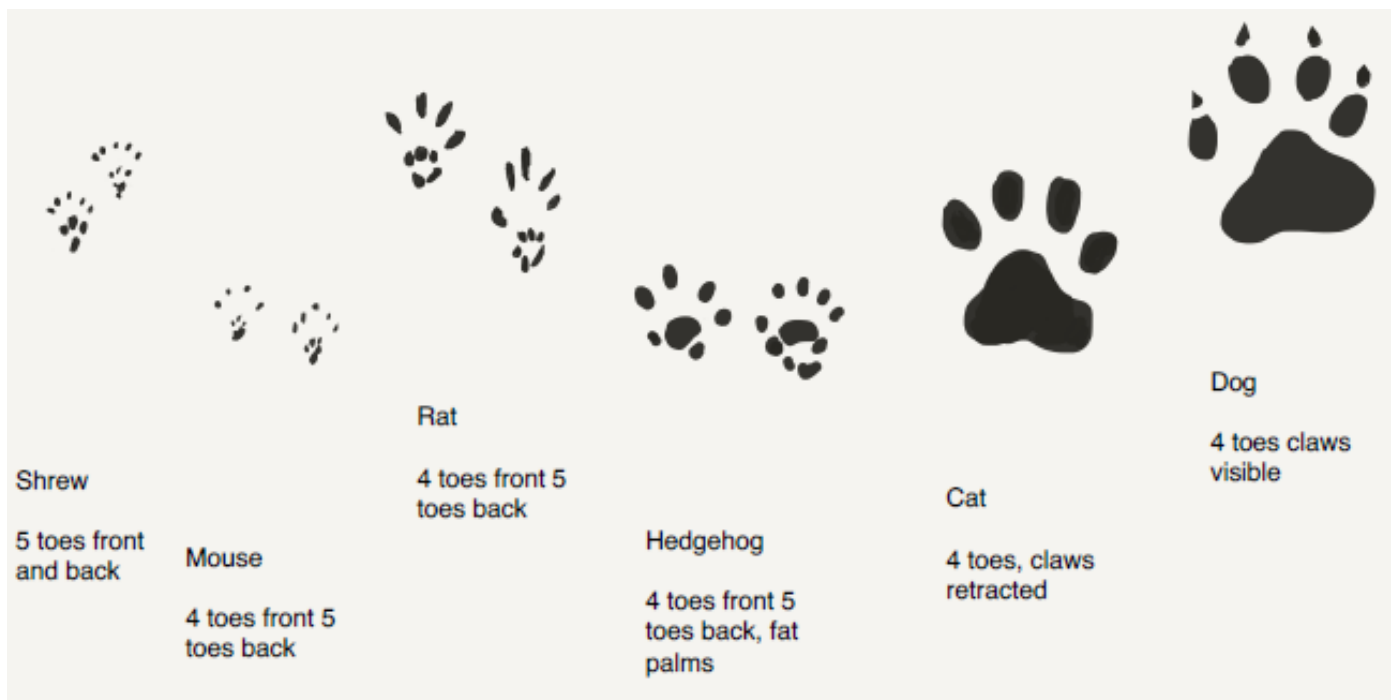
Score of 4

Returning to your Tunnel to Collect data

- Shrews are active and need to feed every 3 – 4 hours, so if a shrew is present in the area you should have footprints day or night.
- Slowly pull out the card – what footprint tracks can you see?
- Take the cards back to the classroom.

Analyse the Data

- Back in the classroom use the index of activity (on the previous page) to compare activity levels of animals at your different tunnel locations.
- Use the picture below to identify the specie on your card.
- Use the recording form on page 2 to record your data.
- You can represent your results in a pie chart or graph.
- Discuss! Why were certain animals found in different tunnel locations, suggestions maybe -
 - * If your tunnel is on a beach you may have found shrew footprints. This is one of their main foraging habitats. Also you may have blackbird footprints. What are both these species foraging on in the seaweed? – Hint, they both eat insects (insectivores).
 - * If your tunnel showed signs of mice were the tunnels near human habitation or out in the woods? Which species of mouse do you think the footprints belong to?
 - * If your tunnel showed signs of cats or dogs – was your tunnel in your garden?



Did you Know?

Scilly shrews are increasing on St Agnes and Gugh since the removal of rats. This is another species benefiting from the project.

Previous Feedback from the Activity

St Agnes School Head Teacher Lou Simmons “This is a great activity that the whole school can do together out in the natural environment around our school. We are delighted whenever we see the tiny shrew footprints and we have certainly seen an increase since the removal of rats.”

St Agnes School student Sylvie Hick “Looking in the tunnels is really fun, the footprints are really cute.”

More Information

For more information on the footprints you have found you can contact the team, they would like to hear from you. info@ios-seabirds.org.uk



What can you do for seabirds?

- Visit the website to find out about opportunities on the island to help the Seabird Recovery Project.

<http://www.ios-seabirds.org.uk/>

- Report and signs of rats on Agnes, Gugh or uninhabited islands by calling the number 01720 422153.

- Avoid seabird colonies.

- Keep dogs under close control.

- Dispose of waste properly and help keep beaches clean.

