

The Hole Story



Fancy getting out into the great outdoors, rather than sitting in watching endless telly? This might be your big chance! Why not look into it today?

All of the animals we see around us need certain things to survive. Food and water are the most essential things. Shelter is probably the next most important thing in their lives.

When you are out in the countryside, keep looking for holes.

- Holes a few mm across in banks and paths and under stones might be the homes of bees and wasps.
- Holes of 15 to 30mm in diameter in grassy banks and tussocks might be home to voles and mice.
- Water voles will live in holes of 50 to 80mm, but not more than about 3 metres from water.
- Rabbit holes are usually 100mm to 200mm across, and often in earth banks and the edges of fields.
- Badgers and foxes will need much bigger holes. They can be as small as 200mm, but are often much larger. Badgers often dig into the banksides, as it allows them to get deep quickly. Look at the edge of woodland, often in some sort of cover.
- A hole for foxes will be more oval in shape, though foxes will often live in setts dug out by badgers. They will often live together, but there is only ever one 'landlord', and that's the badger!
- If foxes are living in a hole, you might find old bones and feathers scattered around. The fox is happy to bring food home, and is pretty messy about cleaning up. You might be able to smell a fox, if you bend down near to the hole.
- Badger setts are often arched in shape. Badgers are wide and squat animals. They don't tend to leave food around, but you might find old bedding lying around the spoil heaps. It's usually hay and other dry vegetation.



If you think you've found a badger sett, please let us know. We don't mind if we already know it. But it might be one that we don't know about! Contact us via the website.

Wildlife Watch is the junior branch of The Wildlife Trusts and the UK's leading environmental action club for kids. If you care about nature and the environment and want to explore your local wildlife – this is the club for YOU!

There are **150,000** Wildlife Watch members around the UK. Taking part in Wildlife Watch is an exciting way to explore your surroundings and get closer to the wildlife you share it with.



Holes at a badger sett.



- **Birds that make holes in banks include the kingfisher and sand martins. Puffins will often use old rabbit burrows to nest in.**



One of the best ways to find out what is living in a hole is to look around for hairs. You can often find badger hairs in the spoil heap, but DON'T INTERFERE WITH THE SETT – IT IS A CRIMINAL OFFENCE!



Holes like these are not natural. They are 'crowning-holes' where someone has been trying to dig for badgers. If you see holes like these, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL BADGER GROUP. The last photo shows a crowning-hole 'backfilled'. © DCBG 2012 Adapted from information by The Wildlife Trusts. Wildlife Watch is the junior branch of the Wildlife Trusts.