

## Derek Crawley: Foxes and Badgers

WWT Malvern Group, May 7th 2015.



Two of our commonest mammalian neighbours were the subject of the talk given to the Malvern Group on Thursday May 7<sup>th</sup>. Derek Crawley, from Staffordshire, showed many unusual and fascinating pictures of foxes and badgers, pointing out how in many ways they are similar. They are omnivores, they live in social groups, they help bring up young not necessarily their own, and they can be found in town and country. Foxes tend to be seen more often than badgers, and have adapted remarkably well to urban living.

Many people thoroughly enjoy watching both species in their back gardens and put food out for them.

However, foxes and badgers are controversial in different ways, and are regarded as vermin by some people. There was some discussion in particular, about the badger cull. Interesting facts emerged, for example that 80% of the foxes and badgers which die each year are in fact killed on the roads, and the effect of hunting and culling is surprisingly minimal. Furthermore, once the badger cull stops the badgers will recolonise the area in time, and overall the population is remarkably stable and resilient, reaching a carrying capacity each year. The possibility of vaccinations and more effective use of electric fences was also mentioned.



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