

## THE PROCESS OF BADGER VACCINATION

- Recorded, numbered traps are placed for 7-10 days at suitable locations.
- The traps are initially locked open and peanuts put down for several nights and then activated the night before vaccination.
- On the morning of vaccination, traps are visited.
- Badgers are vaccinated, marked with stock marker, recorded and released.
- Traps are reset and peanuts put down in the afternoon.
- Traps revisited the following morning.
- Unmarked badgers are vaccinated, marked, recorded and released. If any marked badgers are re-caught they are released.
- Traps removed, cleaned, disinfected and either relocated or returned to store.
- Vaccination work usually finishes after 2-3 nights.



Photos © Tom Marshall

## ADVICE TO THE PUBLIC

Traps will be clearly labelled so members of the public will be aware that the badger is to be released unharmed. There will also be a phone number for people to ring if they have any particular concerns. In the interest of not stressing the badger, only a small group of people will be involved in badger vaccinations. If you are interested in helping, please show your support by donating to our vaccination appeal so we can continue our work.

[www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/protectingbadgers](http://www.dorsetwildlifetrust.org.uk/protectingbadgers)

### BADGER VACCINE DEPLOYMENT



Badgers caught in this trap are part of Vaccine Deployment. They will be vaccinated and released and will not be harmed or injured in any way.

Should you have any questions or in case of emergency please phone 07769 863522.

If you are out walking at night, please do not disturb the badger traps. For further information, please contact us on 01305 264620

Out of hours if there is an emergency connected with DWT's badger vaccination project please call 07769 863522

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# BADGER VACCINATION

## Information



Part of a nationwide network of Wildlife Trusts

Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future



## BADGER CULLS

In an attempt to control the spread of the bTB in cattle, a pilot badger cull started in Somerset and Gloucestershire in 2013. This pilot led to wider culls of badgers, including many parts of Dorset.

## ABOUT BOVINE TB

Bovine tuberculosis (bTB) is an infectious disease of cattle and one of the biggest challenges facing the cattle farming industry today in the south west of England. bTB is caused by the bacterium *Mycobacterium bovis* (M. Bovis), which can also infect and cause TB in badgers, deer, goats, pigs and many other mammals. It is a chronic disease which can take years to develop.

## HOW IS BOVINE TB SPREAD?

The spread of bTB is primarily through the exchange of respiratory secretions between infected and uninfected animals. This transmission usually happens when animals are in close contact with each other. Cattle to cattle transmission is a serious cause of disease spread which is substantiated by scientific evidence. Badgers also suffer from bTB and are able to transmit the disease to cattle, and catch it from cattle.

Farmers are required by law to have their cattle tested for bTB and all cattle herds in Dorset are tested annually. A positive test for bTB will result in herd movement restrictions and the slaughter of



affected cattle. Around 33,000 in cattle were slaughtered for TB control in England in 2017. DWT understands the serious implications for farmers who lose stock as a result of bTB and we are acutely aware of the problems this disease causes in Dorset. We are very keen to see the eradication of bTB and want to see an effective solution based on scientific advice and evidence.

## WHY ARE WE VACCINATING BADGERS ON DWT LAND IN DORSET?

DWT will be vaccinating badgers where feasible on our land, to demonstrate that there is an alternative to badger culling. We believe that cattle vaccination is the ideal long-term solution but this is not yet available and is subject to regulatory approval and changes in EU legislation. In the mean time, badger vaccination has the potential to reduce bTB without the negative impacts which a cull can cause by disrupting badger territories and increasing contact between infected and healthy badgers.

In a clinical field study, BCG vaccination of wild badgers resulted in a 74% reduction in the proportion of badgers giving positive results to TB tests. A reduction in the prevalence and severity of the disease in badgers could reduce the degree of TB transmission to cattle.

DWT strongly believe that vaccination against bTB should play an essential part in controlling this difficult disease. Thanks to generous donations we were able to start a badger vaccination programme on a small scale on some nature reserves from October 2013. This programme was unfortunately interrupted in 2016 when there was a worldwide shortage of vaccine. We are now re-starting the work. This will be a five-year programme (the average life span of a badger) and the social groups that we will have treated should then have a high level of resistance to the bTB disease.

## HOW WE HAVE PREPARED FOR BADGER VACCINATIONS IN DORSET

- A small team of volunteers and DWT staff have completed a badger vaccination course run by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA) and have been issued with certificates of competence.
- Surveys of DWT nature reserves have been carried out to identify the number and type of badger setts.
- Detailed site surveys have been carried out to identify the best location for humane traps.
- We have located the necessary equipment and supplies.
- We have sourced a supply and suitable storage of badger BCG vaccine, prescribed by a vet.
- Vaccinators will be adhering to strict biosecurity procedures to eliminate any chance of spreading the virus between sites.
- We have obtained a licence from Natural England to proceed with the vaccination.

