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Oxfordshire Museums Occasional Papers

- No. 1. An Atlas of Oxfordshire Mammals by R. Surch
& J. M. Campbell
No. 2. An Atlas of Oxfordshire Butterflies by R. Knight
& J. M. Campbell

Hot on the heels of Staffordshire, Sheffield, Essex, Kent etc. Museum Services with the production of local atlases, are Oxfordshire County Museums, who have just launched their new series, which aims to provide information for the public concerning the history, natural history and culture of Oxfordshire.

Mammals

It is good to see the first issue of a new series on the subject of mammals. They really are under-worked in many areas. Oxfordshire was no exception; only one account pre-dates this current publication (Victoria County History 1939). 'An Atlas of Oxfordshire Mammals' has at last set the record straight, and provided a firm basis, and hopefully lots of incentive for further work. Most species are mapped at the tetrad level, some at the 10Km² level for security reasons. Rarities and extinct species are mentioned briefly in the text. Some species are quite obviously under-recorded particularly the "small mammals", and a good bout of "bottling" (see B.C.G. Newsletter No. 10) would do this atlas a power of good! On the other hand, coverage for many other species is very good (Fox, Mole, Rabbit, Brown Hare, in particular) and some distribution trends are already beginning to emerge. For example there is a fairly good correlation between Pipistrelle (p. 11), and the map of 'Urban Areas' (p. 3). 'Woodlands' have been included as another environmental map for comparisons, and personally I would have found altitude and solid geology maps quite useful too. (The next issue maybe?)

However, this booklet is a good example of the sort of provisional county atlas that we should all aim for. It will be of interest to naturalists working in or visiting Oxfordshire, and to all mammalogists interested in field recording. At such a reasonable price too!

(D.W.)

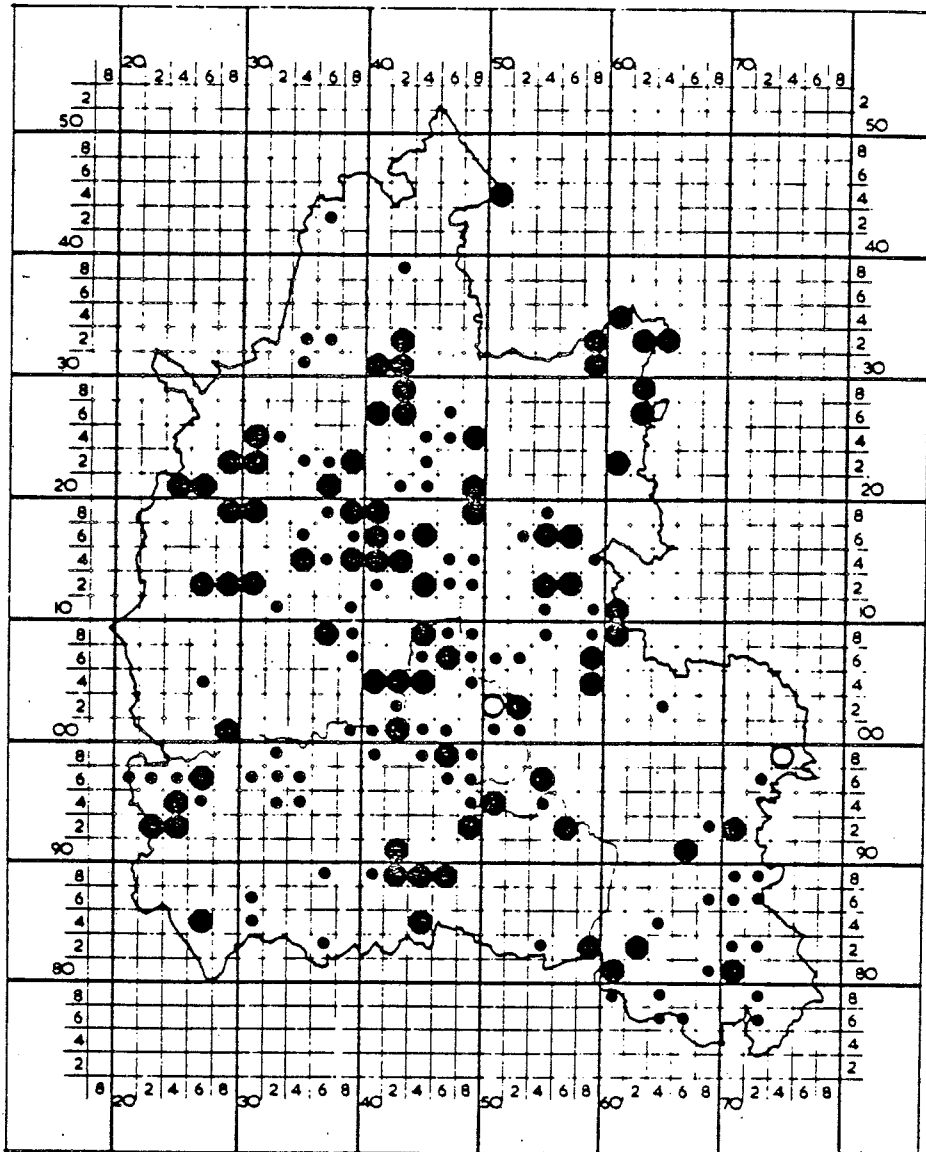
SPECKLED WOOD

Parage aegeria (Linn.)

○ Pre.1960 ● 1960-79 ● Post 1979

BIOLOGICAL RECORDING SCHEME - OCC. DEPT MUS SER

OXFORDSHIRE



M16

Bretherton 1939 describes it as very scarce, but Emmet 1947 considered it to be common. This species has continued to increase and today is widespread and common, being found along large hedges, around quite small patches of scrub and gardens.

Butterflies -

This booklet contains tetrad distribution maps of all but the rarest of Oxfordshire butterflies. The rarities are either no longer present or are not mapped for security reasons. The maps are clearly produced and separate three recording periods; pre 1960, 1960-79 and post 1979. Here I have one small criticism in that the black disc is obvious to all as the most recent class, but I always think of a circle next and finally a dot, so my "interpretation at a glance" has problems. I may be odd in this respect! As far as its uses and purposes (and price) are concerned I think that all is explained well by John Campbell in this extract from his letter.

"May I make one or two observations about the Oxfordshire Atlases. Apart from the ornithologists, there is now no county natural history publication. One or two local societies produce varying newsletters for their own patches. So we are filling a gap by publishing what are really base lines for the future.

The atlases are produced as cheaply as possible. One way has been to have a bulk supply of covers which can be used for future productions. Also we will improve the clarity in future atlases. It is hoped to do Odonata and Reptiles and Amphibians this winter.

We produced only 100 copies of each atlas and most have now gone. They went on sale at Easter. Cost is 70p each plus 26p for p & p (each). They are fulfilling their chief objectives in that some people are becoming more active in recording and others are plugging the gaps. Several people are annotating their atlases and have promised them to us for the winter when we can abstract the new records. One chap has made his own copies onto card and keeps them in his car so that they are immediately available."

In summary, a publication of great value to Oxfordshire naturalists, the Oxfordshire Biological Recording Scheme and to people in other areas of the country interested in the 'state of play' in other counties.

(S.P.G.)

Cheques and P.O.'s payable to the O.C.C. Department of Museum Services and crossed. Available from Oxfordshire County Council Department of Museum Services, Oxfordshire County Museum, Fletcher's House, Woodstock, OX7 1SN.

Blandford Mammal Society Series

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| The Harvest Mouse | by Stephen Harris |
| The Red Deer | by Brian Staines |
| The Common Dormouse | by Elaine Hurrell |
| The Greater Horseshoe Bat | by Roger Ransome |
| The Wild Rabbit | by David Cowan |
| The Red Squirrel | by Andrew Tittensor |

A most useful series of hardback books, originally published in 1980 and aimed at the younger reader. However, each volume is written by a specialist in the Mammal Society, and the information presented is clear, concise, detailed and accurate, which should be appreciated by older readers too! The books are lavishly illustrated (some colour photographs are superb) and also include line drawings showing skeletal structure and diagnostic anatomical details. The contents are arranged under headings so that it is easy to find and extract any particular piece of information.

Museum curators involved with writing labels, articles, lecturing or educational activities will find this series an invaluable aid - and such good value for money too!

The Mammal Society have acquired the remaining stock from Blandfords and are selling at £1.46 each or £7 a set (incl. post) from Pat Edwards, Harvest House, Reading RG1 5AS.

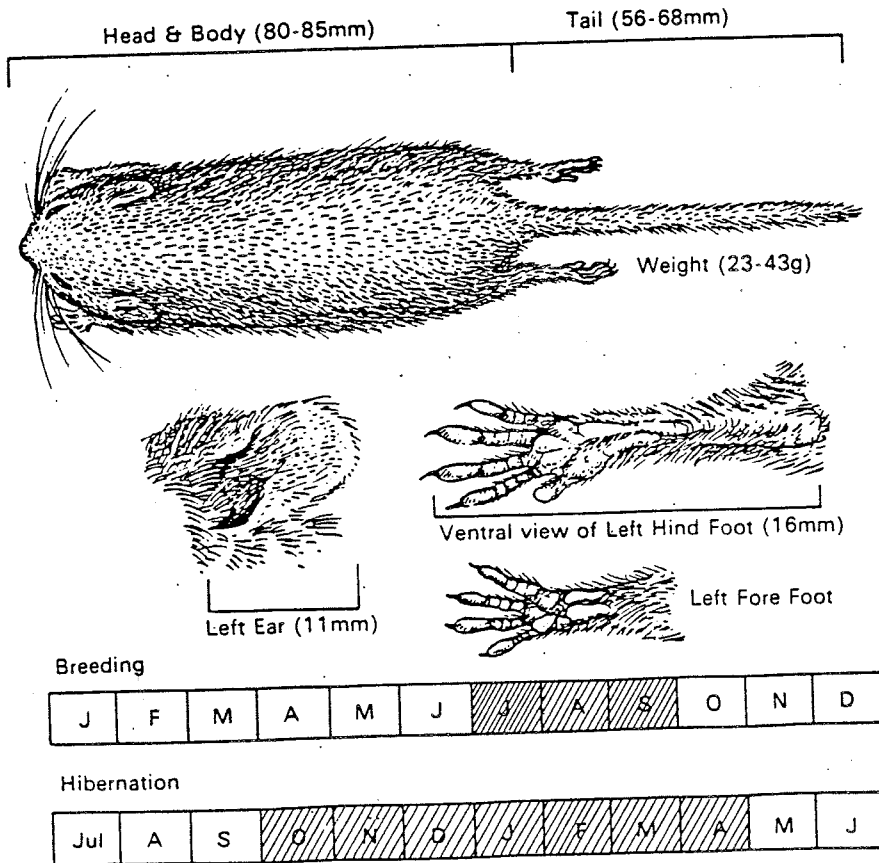


Fig.1 Measurements and breeding season for the British Common Dormouse population.

known as 'dory-mouse' and 'dozing mouse' respectively; in many counties it is known as the 'sleeper', the 'seven sleeper' or 'sleep-mouse'. Its attractive appearance has a fairy-tale charm and other delightful local names include 'chestle-crumb' and 'derry-mouse'.