

Death on a country lane

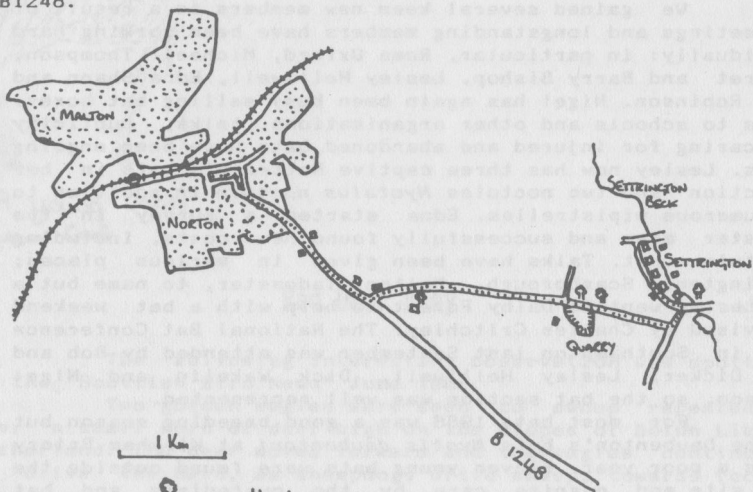
Introduction

Whilst cycling to and from work along a quiet country lane I became increasingly appalled by the large numbers of squashed animals I saw and this prompted me to make a daily record of species and numbers. A bicycle - especially an old one being ridden by a not very fit individual - is an excellent vehicle from which to do such a study as the slow pace makes it possible to scan the road surface for even very small species of vertebrate and to avoid squashing many of the numerous invertebrates crawling near the verges.

The record was kept for weekdays from January 1986 to December 1987 during which time 24 species (107 individuals) of vertebrate were seen: in this report I shall concentrate on the mammals. August was not recorded in either years due to summer holidays. Also, being a fair weather cyclist, I sometimes travelled by car when the weather was very bad and, although I still made a note of casualties, I may have missed some smaller species.

Site

The lane in question connects Settrington to the B1248.



It is a sinuous, hilly lane just wide enough for two cars to pass. The verges are uncut, very rich floristically (over 100 species of flowering plant were recorded) and are generally about three metres wide leading to hedgerows, fields and woodland. Records were also kept for the B1248 and the route through Norton to the railway station.

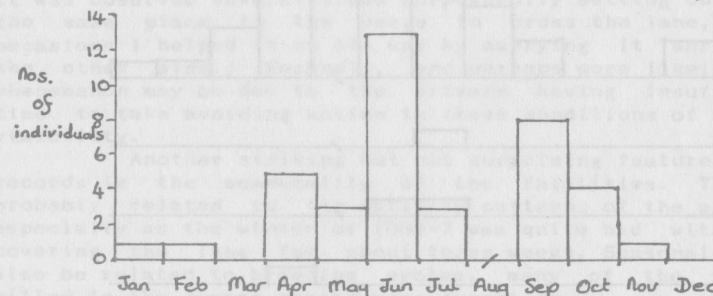
Results

Species list

Total number killed

Bank vole <i>Clethrionomys glareolus</i>	1
Woodmouse <i>Apodemus sylvaticus</i>	7
Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	9
Weasel <i>Mustela nivalis</i>	1
Rat <i>Rattus norvegicus</i>	7
Hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>	1
Rabbit <i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	32
Cat <i>Felis catus</i>	1
Pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	2
Badger <i>Meles meles</i>	1
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	7
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	3
Chaffinch <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	5
Crow <i>Corvus corone corone</i>	4
Great tit <i>Parus major</i>	1
Greenfinch <i>Carduelis chloris</i>	1
Moorhen <i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	1
Pheasant <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	1
Pigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	2
House sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	3
Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	2
Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	2
Willow warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	2
Toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	10

Total fatalities in 1986 [mammals, birds & amphibians]



Total fatalities in 1987 [mammals, birds & amphibians]

