

## North East Harvest Mouse survey – 2015

This year's survey was again a joint effort between Northumbria Mammal Group and Durham Wildlife Trust with the added bonus of Tees Valley Wildlife Trust surveying those of their sites where Harvest Mice had been found in the past.

The survey started promisingly with the training at Cowpen Bewley Woodland Park producing a total of six nests. Meanwhile on the same day, Don Griss was live trapping small mammals at nearby Saltholme and included a Harvest Mouse in his catch. As far as I know, this is the first time that Harvest Mouse has been live trapped in the North East, other than as part of the re-introduction programmes in the early part of this century. However he must have started a trend as Marie Athorn trapped one at Bovesfield the following month.

Unfortunately the weather dictated that things went downhill from that point. The wet and windy conditions that dominated much of the survey period moved rummaging around in long grass somewhat down the list of things to do when you have half a day's spare time. Nevertheless quite a few people braved the conditions and spent a couple of hours rooting around. As experience continues to show, looking for Harvest Mice in the North East results in failure more often than success but perhaps that just makes success all the more significant. This year a total of 19 surveyors, or sets of surveyors, checked 31 sites as part of the survey and found positive evidence of Harvest Mice at ten of them, five of which were new sites. Probably the most significant of these was by Vivien Kent at Seaham. This represents the furthest north in East Durham that Harvest Mice have definitely been recorded.

Outside of the survey a few other Harvest Mouse records have come to my attention this year. One was found after it had run into a house near Meadowfield, which from the detailed description clearly fitted Harvest Mouse. This is close to the other records for that area but moves their current distribution just west of the Browney and the Wear, which might otherwise have been potential barriers in the distribution. More significantly still in terms of distribution a tiny mouse was seen clambering around the top of some Campion stems at Clara Vale. Again from the description it seems like it would only have been Harvest Mouse, which moves its current distribution much further north and west in County Durham, although there are some records from the 1960s from that general area of the County. Just as significantly, Derek Crawley, who is co-ordinating the Mammal Society's National Mammal Atlas, found nests at Big Waters, near Newcastle; so Harvest Mice are still in Northumberland.

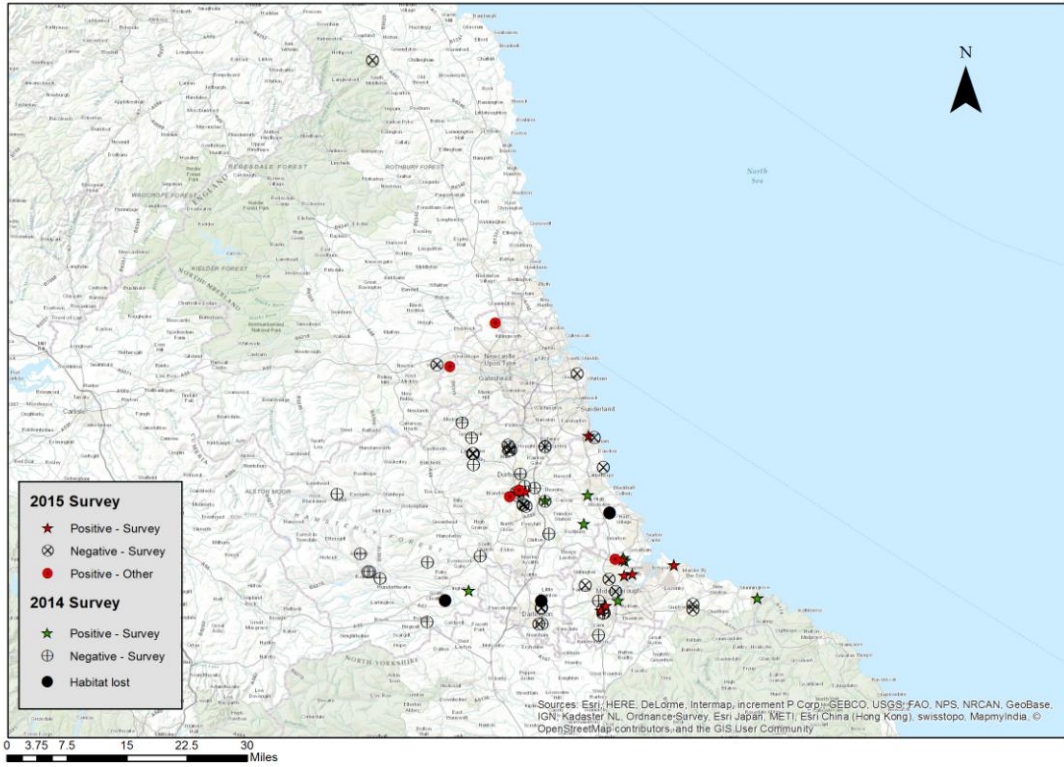
The results that have been sent in from 2015 are shown in Table 1 below and all results from 2014 and 2015 in the map in Figure 1. Those records that came to light outside of the survey are in italics at the bottom of the table. I have made a more detailed spreadsheet of the surveys, showing such as survey effort, habitat details etc, where these were reported. If anyone would like a copy of the spreadsheet please drop me an e-mail. Northumbria Mammal Group and Durham

Wildlife Trust would like to express their thanks to everyone who took part in surveys or sent in records. Apologies if anyone's efforts have been missed off, if so please let me know and I will make the necessary amendments.

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**Table 1. North East Harvest Mouse survey 2015 results**

Stephen Morgan	Rainton Meadows	NZ323487	Negative
Anne Kelly	Lanchester	NZ1776247220	Negative
Anne Kelly	Lanchester	NZ1795647274	Negative
Vivien Kent	Nettlesworth/ Waldridge Fell	NZ2512347977	Negative
Vivien Kent	Nettlesworth/ Waldridge Fell	NZ2544048061	Negative
Vivien Kent	Nettlesworth/ Waldridge Fell	NZ2487848932	Negative
Amy Carrick	Portrack Marsh	NZ4619	Negative
Dave Spence	Low Burnhall, Durham	NZ265395	Negative
Rachel Richards	Seaham Hall	NZ422505	Negative
Vivien Kent	Easington Colliery	NZ4408843970	Negative
Lorraine Watkinson	Great Burdon	NZ3161116392	Negative
Lorraine Watkinson	Great Burdon	NZ3158016179	Negative
Graeme Smart	Wylam	NZ1069965094	Negative
Ian Bond	Maidendale, Darlington	NZ3113	Negative
Alan Wrightson	Cleadon Hills	NZ3962	Negative
Elizabeth Hall	Northumberland	NT977264	Negative
William Jones	Wynyard Woodland Park	NZ404248	Negative
William Jones	Billingham Beck	NZ4522	Negative
Richard Lee	High Shincliffe	NZ302404	Negative
Christine Dent	Hett	NZ285367	Negative
Christine Dent	Hett	NZ280369	Negative
Christine Dent	Hett	NZ285371	Negative
Vivien Kent	Seaham Grange Farm	NZ4111850808	Nest
Ian Bond	Guisborough	NZ6216	Nest
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Don Griss	Saltholme	NZ5023	One caught in live trap
Patsy Ryan	Tot Fenny's Field, Billingham	NZ482278	Nest
NMG volunteers	CBWP - Greatham Bridleway	NZ479258	5 nests
Richard Lee	Shincliffe	NZ284396	Nest
Sarah Barry	Coatham Marsh	NZ582248	3 Nests
Jacky Watson	Preston Farm	NZ437157	Nest
Marie Athorn	Bowesfield	NZ445166	One caught in live trap
Elizabeth Jackson	Brownney	NZ251386	Live mouse in house
Dave Barlow	Billingham	NZ464260	dead mouse brought in by cat
Alan Gilbertson	Clara Vale	NZ132648	mouse seen climbing on Campion
Dave Sumpton	Lowburn Hall, Croxdale	NZ2711439982	Nest
Derek Crawley	Big Water, Newcastle	NZ2273	Nests



**Figure 1. Map showing results from 2014 & 2015 surveys**