

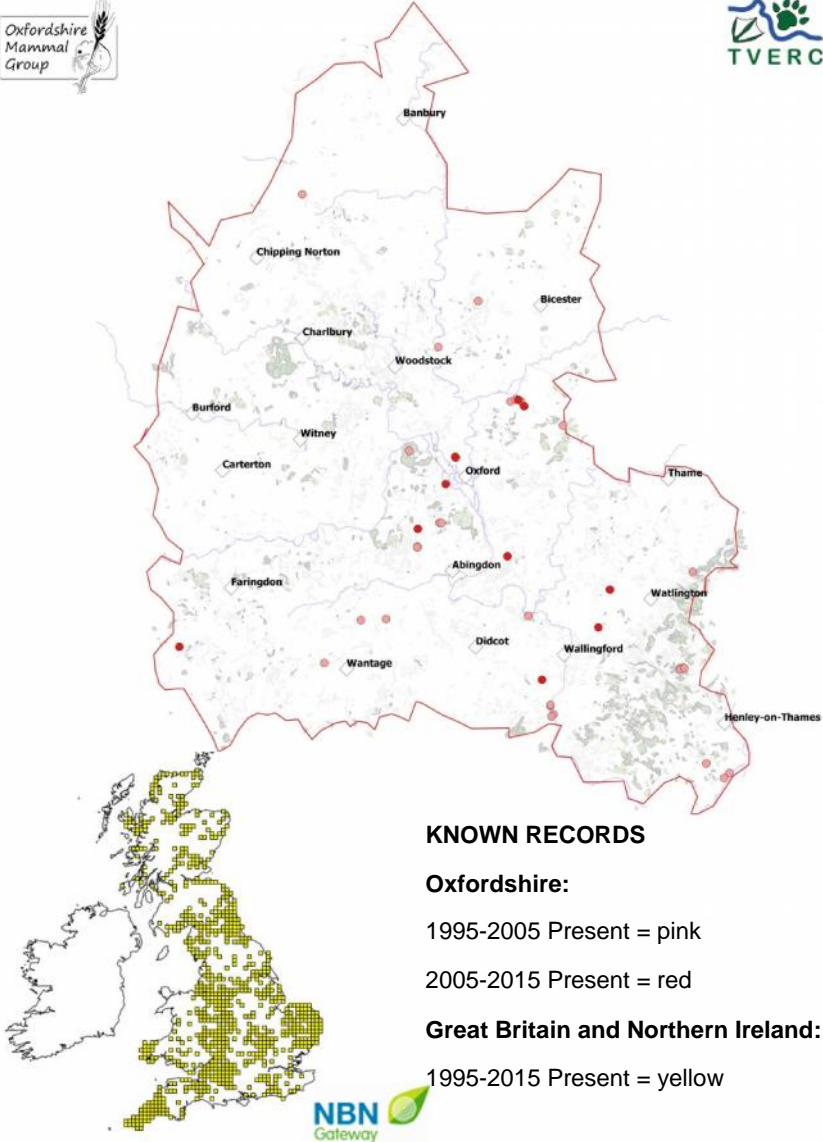


<b>Water Shrew</b>	<i>Neomys fodiens</i>			
<b>Description:</b> Short, black fur with clearly demarked, pale underside. Eyes and ears small, snout long and pointed. Tail long with line of stiff hairs underneath forming a keel. Teeth with red tips. Head and body length 67-96 mm, tail length 45-77mm. Adults 12-18g. Nocturnal. Venomous saliva which can cause skin irritation in humans.				
<b>Field Signs</b>				
<b>Burrows:</b> Burrows in ground, banks or moss, entrance up to 2 cm across. Surrounding vegetation undisturbed.	<b>Bones:</b> Skulls can be found in owl pellets and have long, narrow jaws c. 13mm long, with red-tipped teeth. Front tooth of lower jaw without cusp.	<b>Droppings:</b> Black, cylindrical. In piles along runs of disturbed soil under a log or along edge of bank. Only small mammal dropping to contain fragments of aquatic invertebrates.	<b>Footprints:</b> Less than 10mm, rarely seen. Look for tail drag between prints.	
<b>Diet:</b> Freshwater and terrestrial invertebrates. Occasionally eats fish, newts and small frogs.		<b>Habitat:</b> Semi-aquatic habitats: river banks, wet ditches, fens, ponds, water meadows and particularly watercress-beds. Dispersing young may be found in other habitats.		
<b>Lifespan:</b> 14-19 months.		 <p><b>KNOWN RECORDS</b></p> <p><b>Oxfordshire:</b></p> <p>1995-2005 Present = pink</p> <p>2005-2015 Present = red</p> <p><b>Great Britain and Northern Ireland:</b></p> <p>1995-2015 Present = yellow</p>		
<b>Breeding:</b> 2 or 3 litters of 3-15 young born April to September in dry grassy nest in burrow or under a log. Gestation 14-21 days. Adults die after breeding and young become sexually mature in spring.				
<b>UK Conservation Status:</b> Native. Locally common. <b>Oxfordshire:</b> Uncommon. <b>Legislation:</b> ♦ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 6				
<b>Don't confuse with:</b>  <b>Mole:</b> Both species have short, black fur and long, pointed snouts. However, the water shrew is much smaller, with a pale belly and long tail and lacks the obvious large, turned-out forefeet of the mole.  <b>Common and Pygmy Shrews:</b> The other two UK species of shrew are both much smaller than the water shrew and have dark brown rather than black fur above.				