



Bunkers Park

Mammals

The new habitats within Bunkers Park have been created with mammals in mind. Mammals that are likely to be found in Bunkers Park include Foxes *Vulpes vulpes*, Muntjac Deer *Muntiacus reeves* and Rabbits *Oryctolagus cuniculus*.

Small mammals also use the park although limited monitoring on the mammal population has been carried out.

The grazing animals that are used to manage the grasslands are other mammals that are within the park. These are a mix of cattle and sheep. Grazing animals produce more structure in the grasslands by leaving unpalatable grasses as tussocks, which provides the structural diversity required by some invertebrates. Grazing animals also produce dung providing suitable habitats for the Dung Beetles many of which are becoming rare within the County. Grazing animals each have different requirements in terms of nutrition and therefore differ in their feeding strategies. The correct animal and the right timing and intensity of grazing are all essential to maintaining the grassland habitats in their optimum condition.

Muntjac Deer can occasionally be seen feeding within the woodland sections on the edges of the woodland. Muntjacs are not native to this country originally coming from China. They were introduced into the country by the Duke of Bedford at his Woburn estate in Bedfordshire, but since the 1900's escaped animals have bred in the wild and have become well established spreading as far as the north of England. Muntjac Deer are the smallest of the British deer the male measuring an average height of 48cm to the tops of its shoulders. These deer are active both by day and night but can often be seen at dusk feeding on grass, brambles and other plants.

Foxes in their natural habitat feed on whatever food they can scavenge from carcasses or killing small mammals, especially Field Voles and Rabbits. In summer they also catch a large number of beetles and in autumn feed on berries. Foxes usually shelter above ground but when breeding either dig their own burrow known as an earth or use an abandoned hole in the ground. A litter of four or five cubs is born in March or April.