

Stoat and mink: Intensive surveillance



Intensive surveillance: Responding to possible signs of stoat or mink (intensive monitoring)

Possible signs include

- Finding one or more dead birds showing possible signs of predation
- Unclear or degraded footprints or droppings
- Sightings made by people unfamiliar with stoat or mink (mustelids)
- Unclear sightings made by people who are familiar with mustelids.



Follow these 10 steps

These methods should be followed to confirm presence of a stoat or mink.

If there is any possibility or doubt that an otter is present then no kill traps should be deployed as they are a native protected animal

	Action
1	Contact your relevant decision makers to inform them of the intense surveillance required. Contact the 'Biosecurity for LIFE' team for guidance and support. Head to the 'Need expert advice?' section on the website. The team are here to help.
2	Set 10 x tracking tunnels at likely sites or near to stoat/mink activity.
3	Carry out visual searches for stoat or mink sign, such as dropping, feeding sign, footprints etc.
4	Freeze any fresh droppings found for DNA testing.
5	Use trail cameras (5) to look for evidence of animals on the island at night. (This is particularly important for suspected mink sign as it may be due to otters instead, which are a protected species).
6	Check of island by conservation detection dog. Get in touch with the 'Biosecurity for LIFE team'.
7	Check tracking tunnels and trail cameras if using daily for three days then twice a week for 8-12 weeks.
8	If no additional sign is found during 8 - 12 weeks, end the intensive monitoring and return to routine monitoring activities.
9	If probable or definite sign is found, immediately implement the full incursion response plan.
10	Record all signs found and actions taken.

Equipment

- Trail cameras and visual search will be very important.
- For footprint tracking tunnel equipment, [Gotcha tracking tunnels](#) are recommended, stoats can be detected in them (along with rodents) but these are too small for mink (or otter, a native protected species).
- Therefore to detect mink footprints we recommend you use the [GWCT mink raft](#).

Item
Laminated sheets showing mustelid sign.
Map of island with routine surveillance (tracking tunnels etc).
Notebooks, pens, pencils etc.
Tracking tunnels, ink pads and ink (for stoats).
Equipment for mink rafts using the 'The Game & Wildlife Conservation Trust Mink Raft Guidelines' PDF.
Trail cameras.
Large clear plastic boxes for storing reference and detection kit.

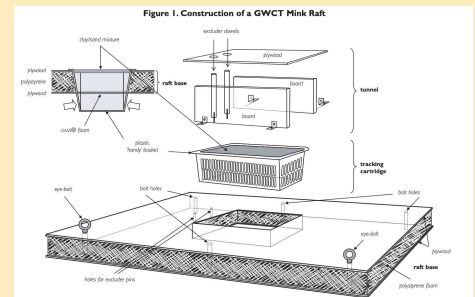
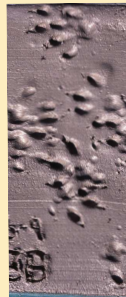
Idea of size and form for footprints of otter, mink and stoat



Footprint ink tracking tunnel pack
[Gotcha tracking tunnel](#)



[GWCT mink raft](#). Image of mink raft (left). Mink footprints (middle). Design plans to build mink raft (right).



The Biosecurity for LIFE team can support you. Head to the 'Need expert guidance?' section of the website biosecurityforlife.org.uk. Thank you.