

# Mammals

## Feeding Signs



### Plants or Grass

- Look for plants which have been nibbled by voles, rabbits or deer
- Piles of grass cuttings, bitten off with a slant. These are signs of field voles in the area.



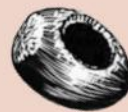
### Hazelnuts



- Squirrels prise the nut apart through a hole in the top. They leave jagged fragments or half nut shells.



- Wood mice leave toothmarks on the outside surface of the nut and across the edge of the hole.



- Bank voles leave no marks on the shell surface. Their toothmarks are across the inside, cut edge of the hole



- Hazel dormice leave scratchy gnaw marks on the outer edge of the hole with a smooth, scooped out inner ring. The hole is almost circular.



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## Acorns

- Squirrels break open the acorn by biting a hole across the top. Then they split the acorn in half lengthways.
- Mice and voles hoard acorns in boxes, old birds' nests in hedges or, especially bank voles, under debris on the ground
- Foxes and deer also feed up on acorns
- Squirrels often use a tree stump as a feeding station



## Pine Cones

- Squirrels leave ragged, stripped spindles of pine cones. Usually they start stripping out the seeds from the bottom of the cone. Can you find the seeds inside a cone?
- Bank voles and yellow-necked mice are very shy and carry pine cones away to feed on them
- Wood mice leave a very smooth central shaft, with no ragged ends. They often leave the scales at the top of the cone or may just chew off the scales on one side.



## Dead Birds

- Foxes eat birds if they can catch them! They tear off the feathers, often breaking them apart or ripping out chunks. Rats might clear up the carcass.
- If a bird has been killed by a sparrowhawk, the feathers are not ripped and the breastbone is left intact, cleaned of meat.



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### Rose hips and Berries

- Wood mice eat the seeds of blackberries but leave the juicy flesh!
- Voles eat the flesh but not the pips. They often carry away a rose hip and leave behind the outer skin and piles of seeds.
- Deer, foxes, rats and hedgehogs would eat the whole berries and rose hips



### Fungi

- Look for bite marks from squirrels, voles and mice on fungi. Do not touch, as they may be poisonous!
- Squirrels are bigger animals and leave a rough, chiselled hole in the fungus. They may leave stores of fungi in trees, at the base of the branches.
- Mice and voles leave shallow, stripy scratches on the rounded cap of the fungus



### Snail Shells

- Field voles, rats, shrews and yellow-necked mice eat snails
- If the coil on the shell is neatly nibbled away, it may have been eaten by one of these small mammals
- You may find a pile of snail shells, like this, under a log or in a disused bird's nest
- Thrushes take hold of the snails in their beak and smash the whole shell, against the hard ground





# Diet of Common Mammals



Wood mouse



Brown rat



Harvest mouse



Common shrew



Field vole



Bank vole



Grey squirrel



Rabbit



Pipistrelle bat



Badger



Hedgehog



Fox



herbivore



insectivore



omnivore