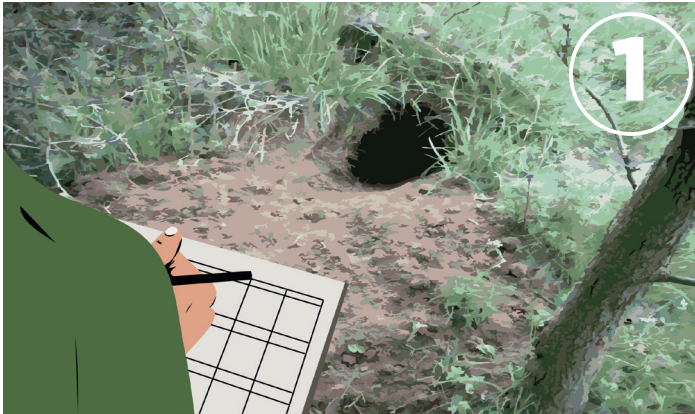


# An alternative to culling

Vaccinating badgers could play an essential part in a comprehensive programme of measures to control bovine TB (bTB). We believe that a badger cull will not be effective in tackling bTB and could make the problem worse by leading to increased movement of badgers (the perturbation effect). Badger vaccination has the potential to reduce bTB without the negative impacts of perturbation. Later in the year, the Trust will roll out a five-year vaccination scheme on some of its nature reserves. This will contribute to the local control of bTB in cattle by creating immunity in a population of Staffordshire badgers, supporting local farmers while protecting badgers. *Reserves assistant Lucy O'Toole explains the process.*



Our first job is to conduct surveys of reserves with badgers, mapping out the number of setts and identifying the best sites - essential preparation for the work ahead.

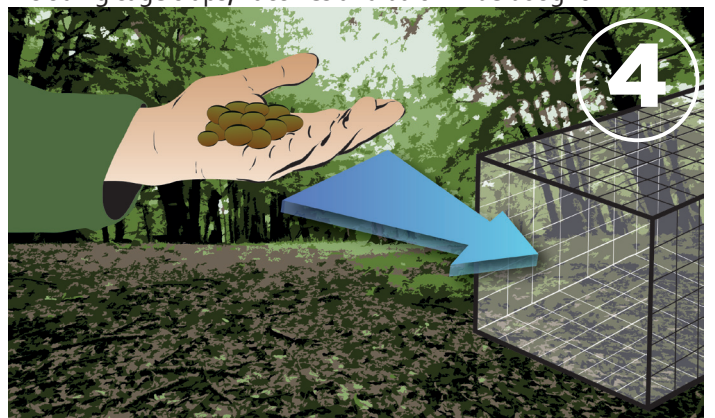


Illustrations by Jamie Wilson

Staff carrying out the programme will receive training in how to safely capture, vaccinate and release badgers. Equipment including cage traps, vaccines and bait will be bought.



Recorded, numbered cage traps will be carefully positioned. A small group of specially trained volunteers will be helping with this groundwork.



The traps, baited with peanuts, will be locked open for several nights to familiarise the badgers with them. Once they are used to them, the traps then go 'live'.



The following morning, the captured badgers are vaccinated and humanely marked. Afterwards the traps are reset and the process repeated for unmarked badgers.



The same areas will be revisited annually for five years, to ensure the majority of the local population is vaccinated.

This important work will take a lot of SWT time and resource but is currently unfunded. We will be writing to you after Easter to show how you can make a contribution to this project.