

# Strategic mink control in the Eastern Region

Harnessing volunteer effort for water vole conservation



**Darren Tansley**

Chairman UK Water Vole Steering Group

# A great photo

But is it one for the Countryfile calendar? (Mink mistaken for an otter)

A black and white photograph of a mink standing on a rocky bank next to water. The mink is facing left, with its head turned slightly towards the camera. Its fur is dark and wet, and its long tail is visible. The background shows a rocky bank and some water.

**See it, snap it, send it!**

CARL Balls, of Sparrow Road, Great Cornard, took this picture of an otter about to go for a dip in the River Stour at Liston.

This impressive shot wins him £10 courtesy of Sudbury Property estate agents.

Send us your shots of life around Sudbury – no bigger than 2MB – to [newsdesk@suffolkfreepress.co.uk](mailto:newsdesk@suffolkfreepress.co.uk), along with your name, address, phone number and a brief description of your photo.

The logo for Sudbury Property, featuring a circular emblem with a stylized animal and the text "SUDBURY PROPERTY" and "Independent Estate Agents".

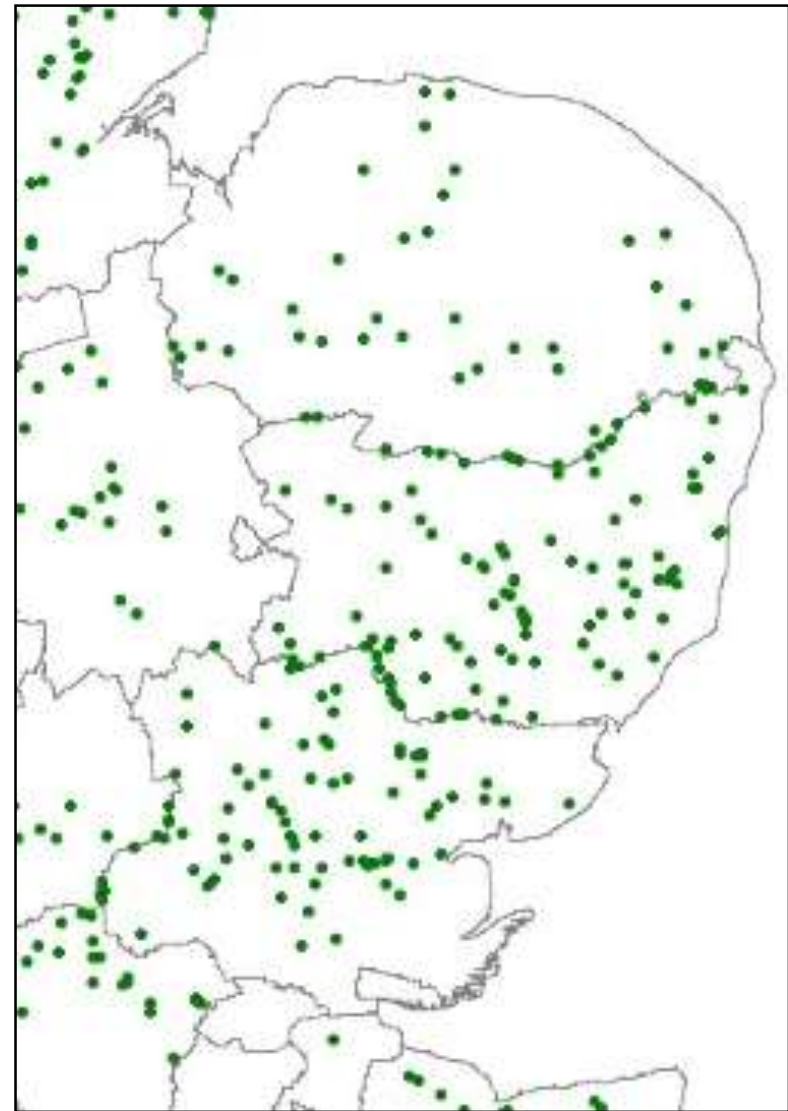


# Eastern Region mink distribution 1952-2012\*

\* Source National Water Vole Database and Mapping Project



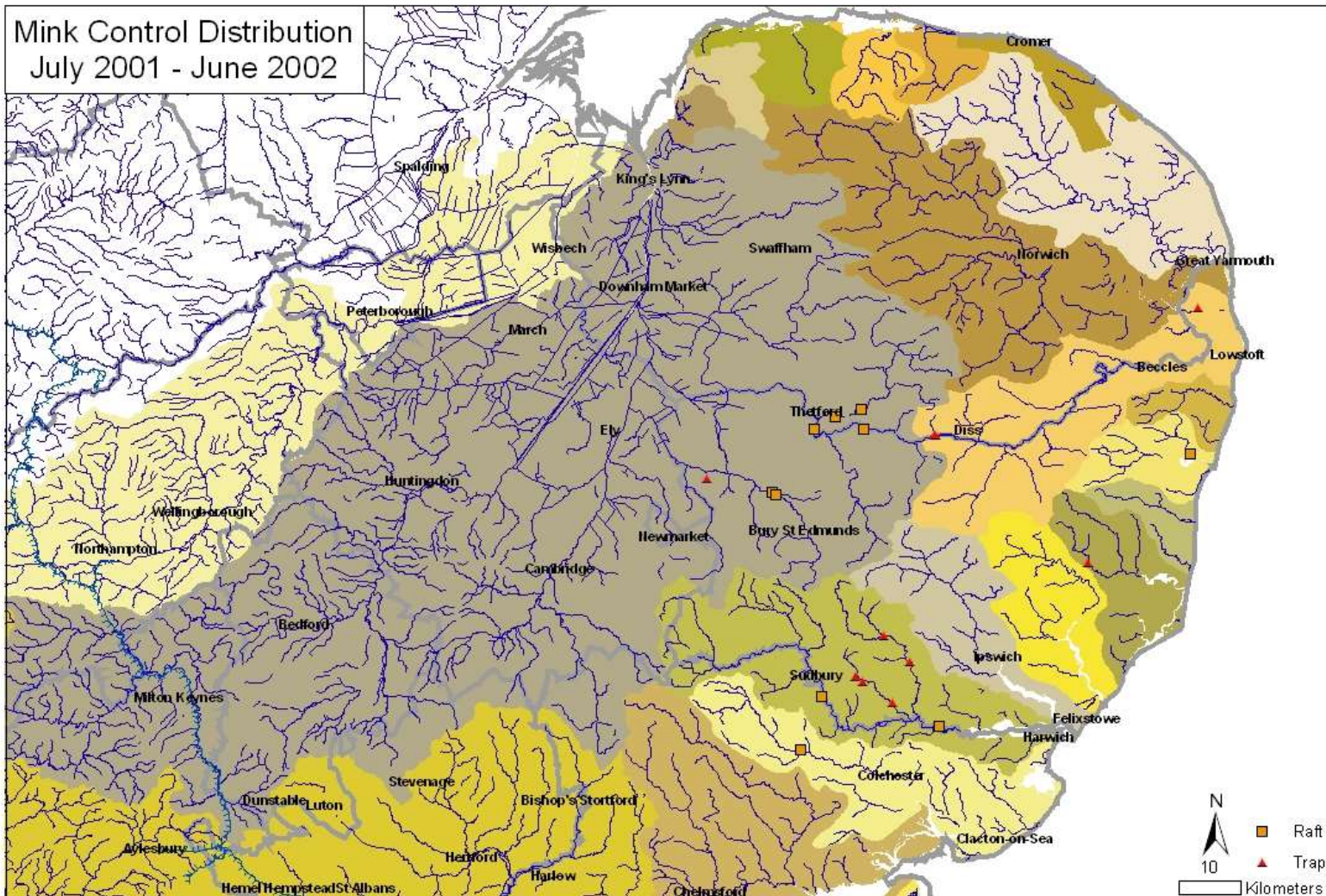
Young mink on River Roding – Steve Jellett





# The Eastern Region Mink Control Group

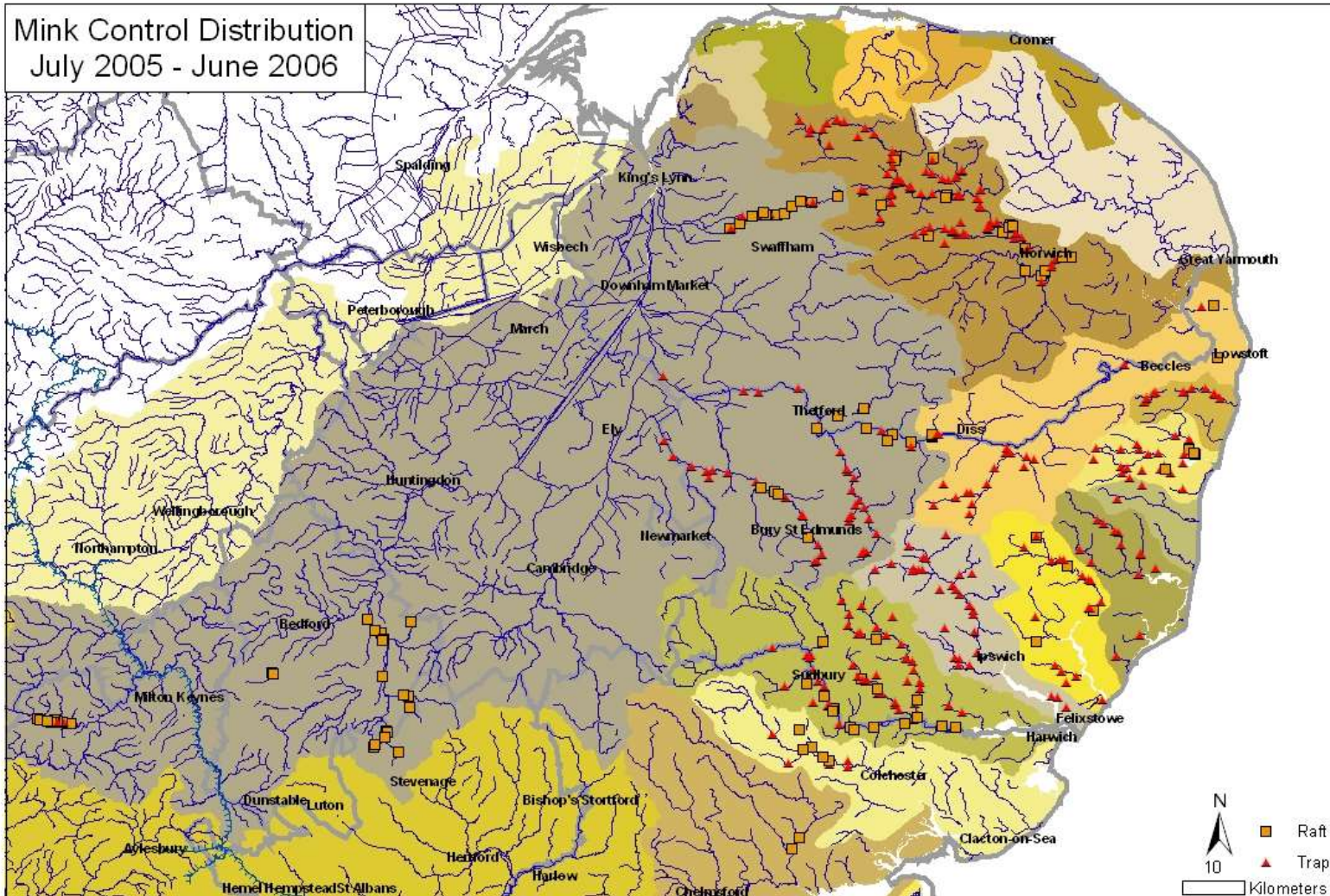
## 2001 Small sub-catchment projects



This map is produced from Ordnance Survey data with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office. © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Environment Agency, 100026390, 2006. The information on this map is the result of a partnership project between: Beds, Bucks and Oxon Wildlife Trust; Beds, Cambs, Northants and Peterborough Wildlife Trust; Beds, Essex and Cambs Wildlife Trust; Essex Wildlife Trust; Norfolk Wildlife Trust; Norfolk Wildlife Trust; Norfolk Wildlife Trust and individual landowners who have donated their records.



**By 2006 this was already a landscape scale project approx. 6,000km<sup>2</sup>**



## Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future



## Known water vole colonies 1998



# Disappearing water voles Essex/Suffolk border

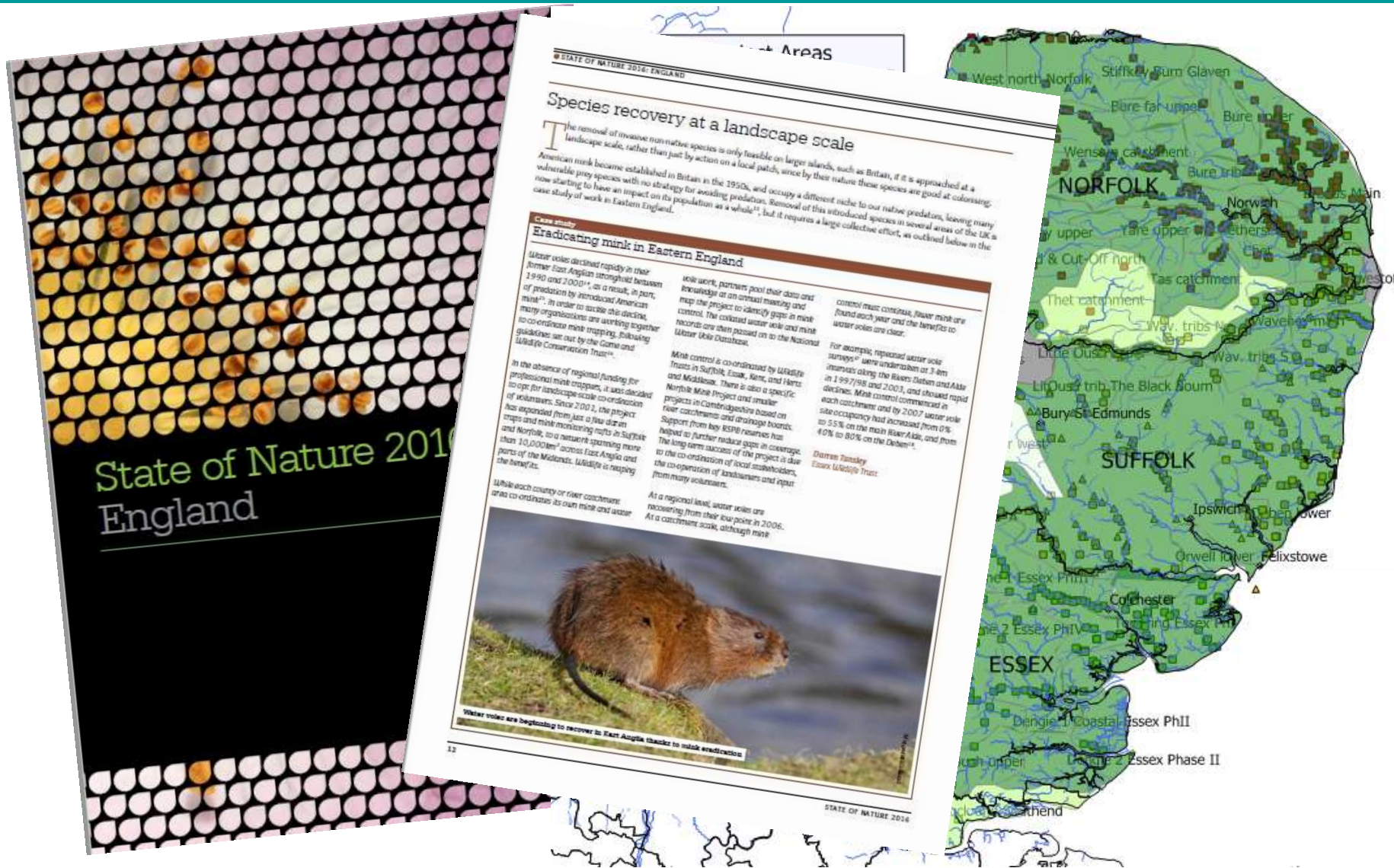
Known water vole colonies 2006





# The State of Nature report 2016

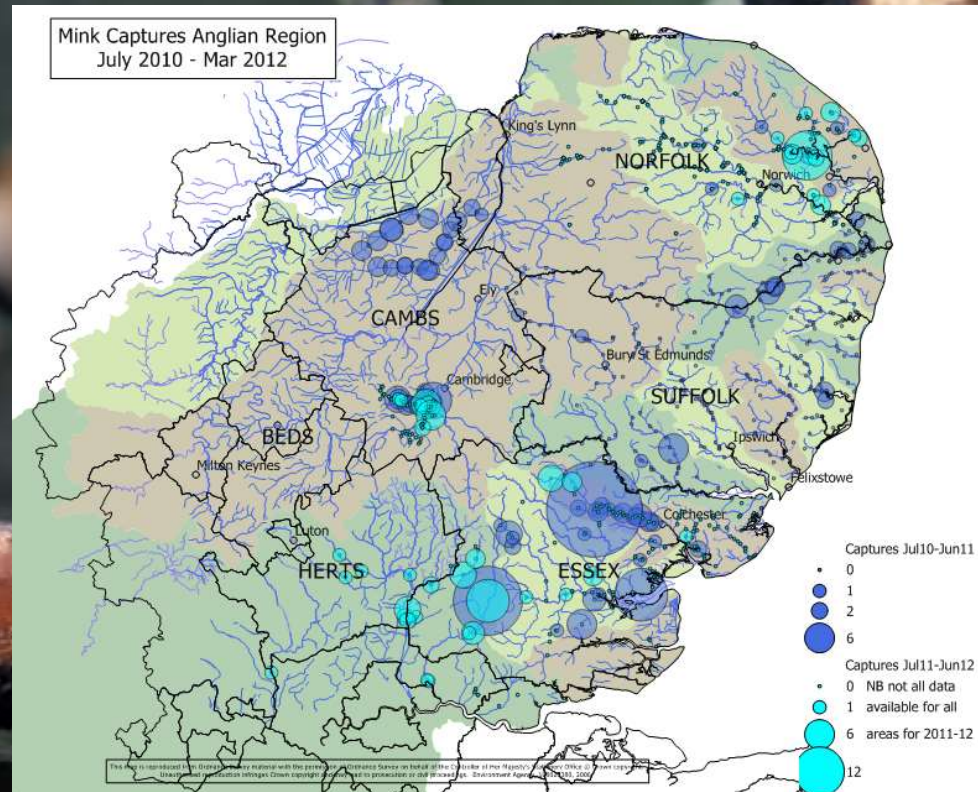
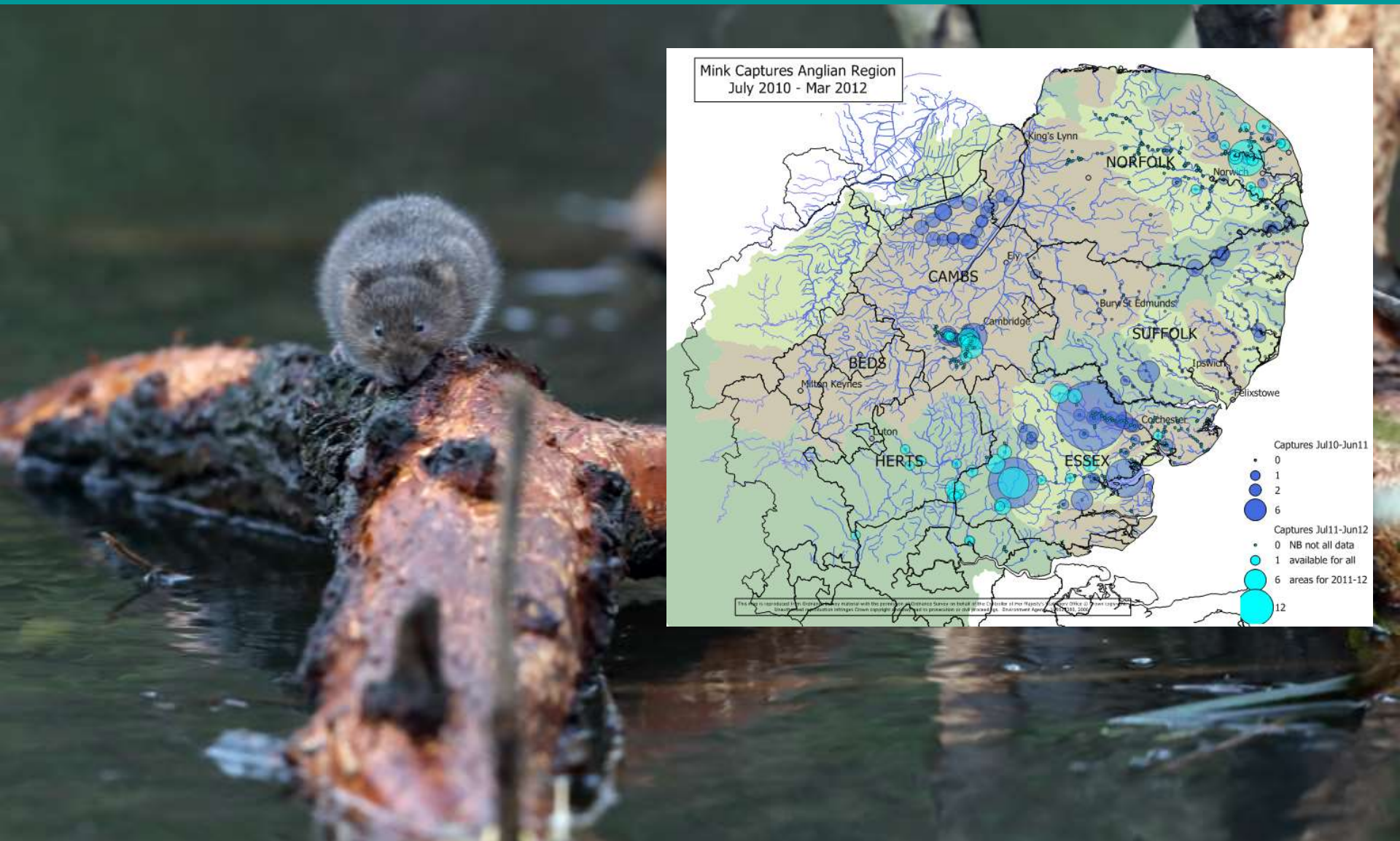
## Species Recovery at a Landscape Scale – approx. 18,000km<sup>2</sup>





# New Study by Suffolk Wildlife Trust

## 15 years data from the Eastern Region Mink Control Project





# Reserves are simply not enough

Thinking at the landscape scale



Essex Wildlife Trust reserves occupy approx 0.02% of Essex so reserve management alone cannot tackle landscape scale issues



# Strategic planning at a County & Regional scale

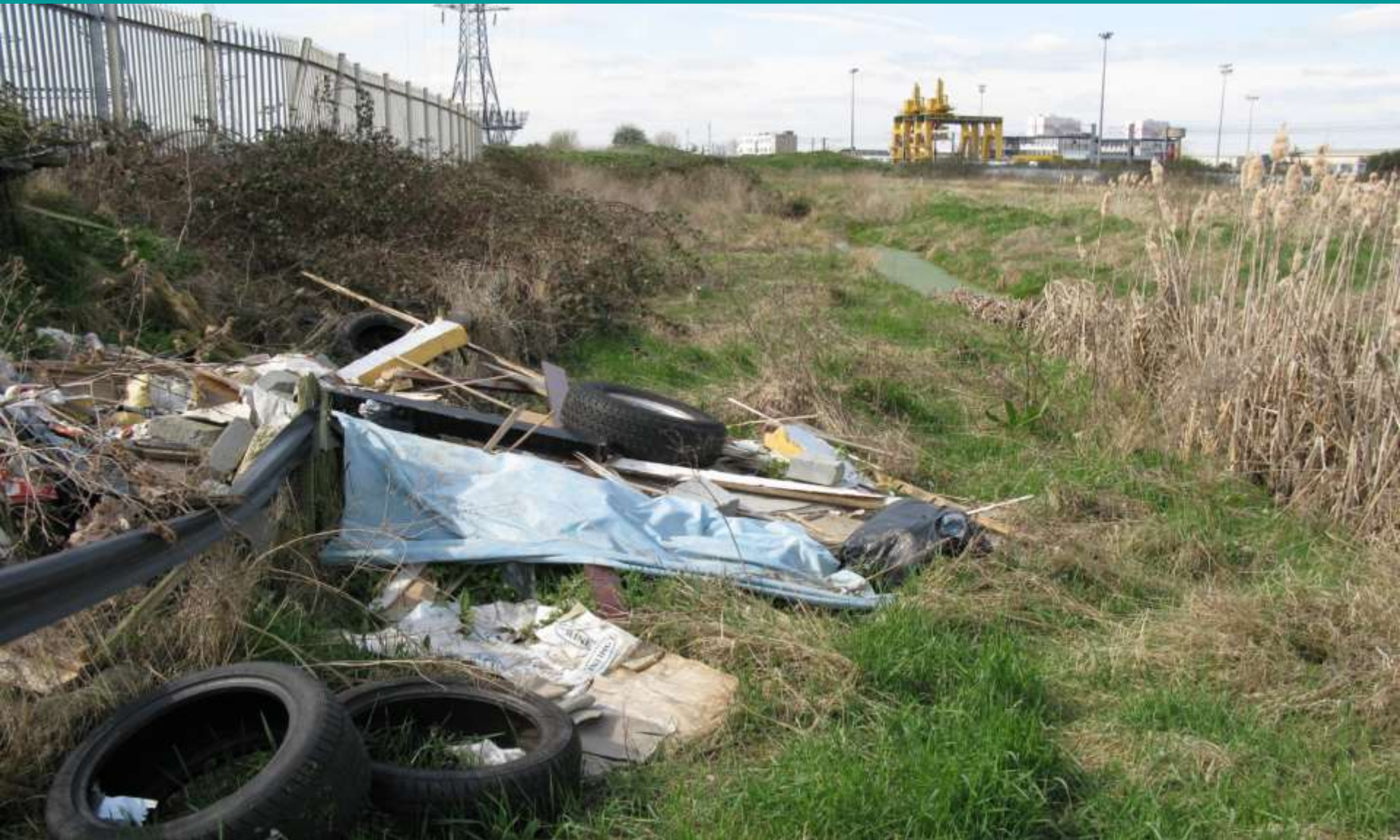
Displacement of 350 water voles from Thames container port DP World





# The site based solution to water vole displacement

A water vole translocation site at Barking Reach on the Thames





# New opportunities for water vole conservation

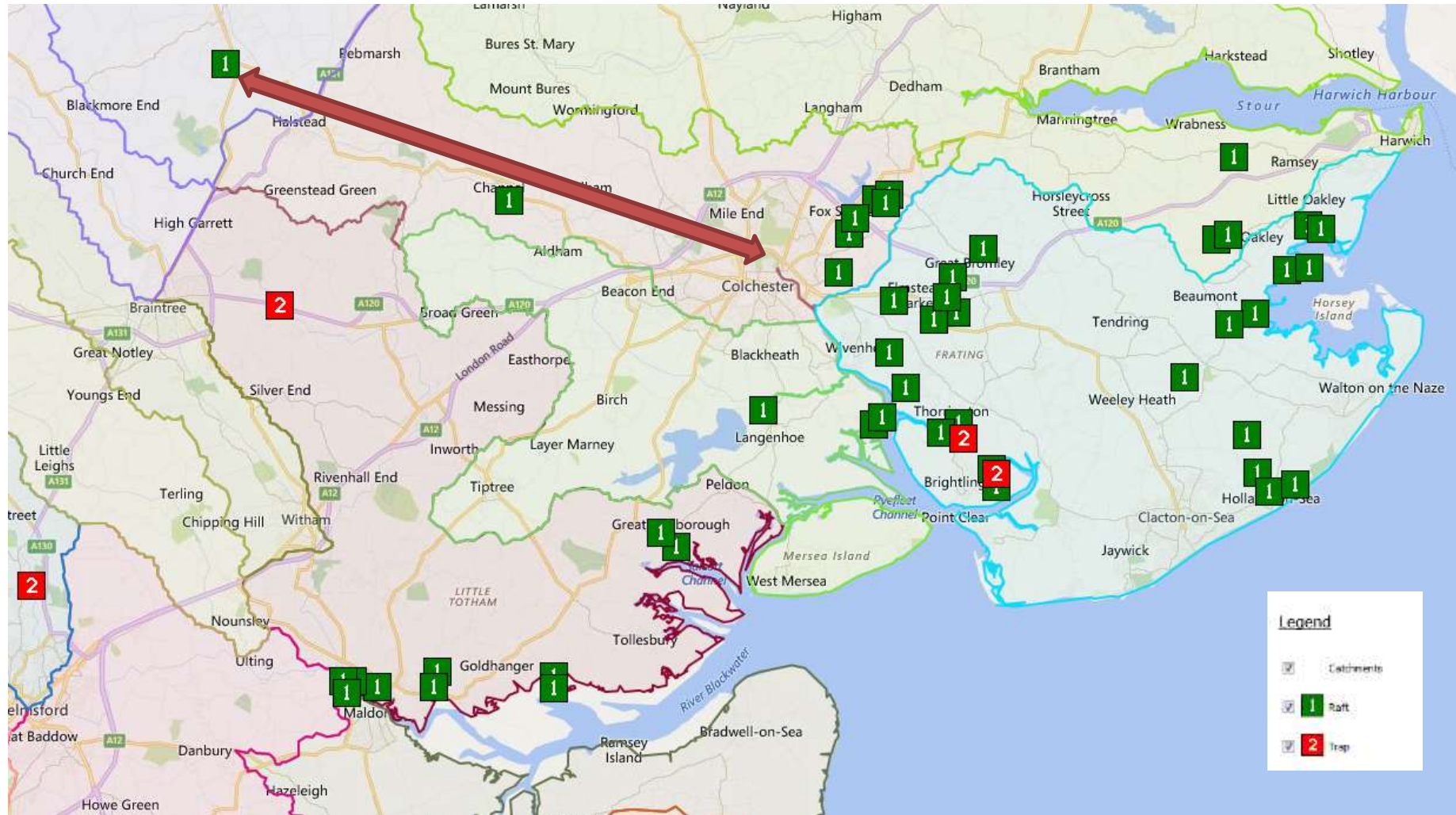
Turning a translocation into a catchment scale reintroduction in good habitat





# Essex Mink Monitoring 2008

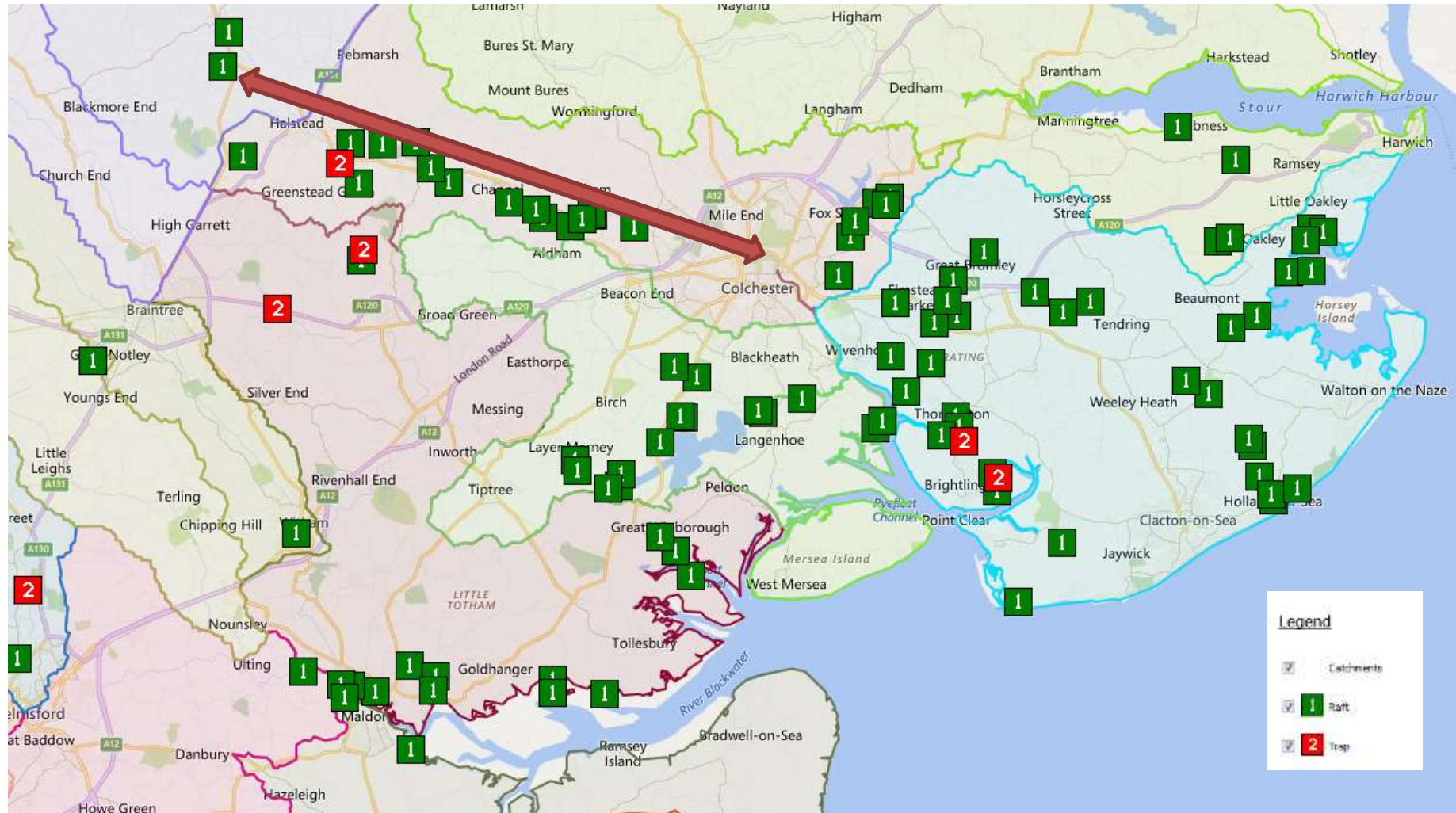
Protecting coastal water voles – ‘cordon sanitaire’ approach extended to R. Colne





# Essex Mink Monitoring 2010

Year two of five years funded mink control through Colne catchment





# Essex Mink Monitoring

Five years funded mink control 2009-2014 (In all weathers!)

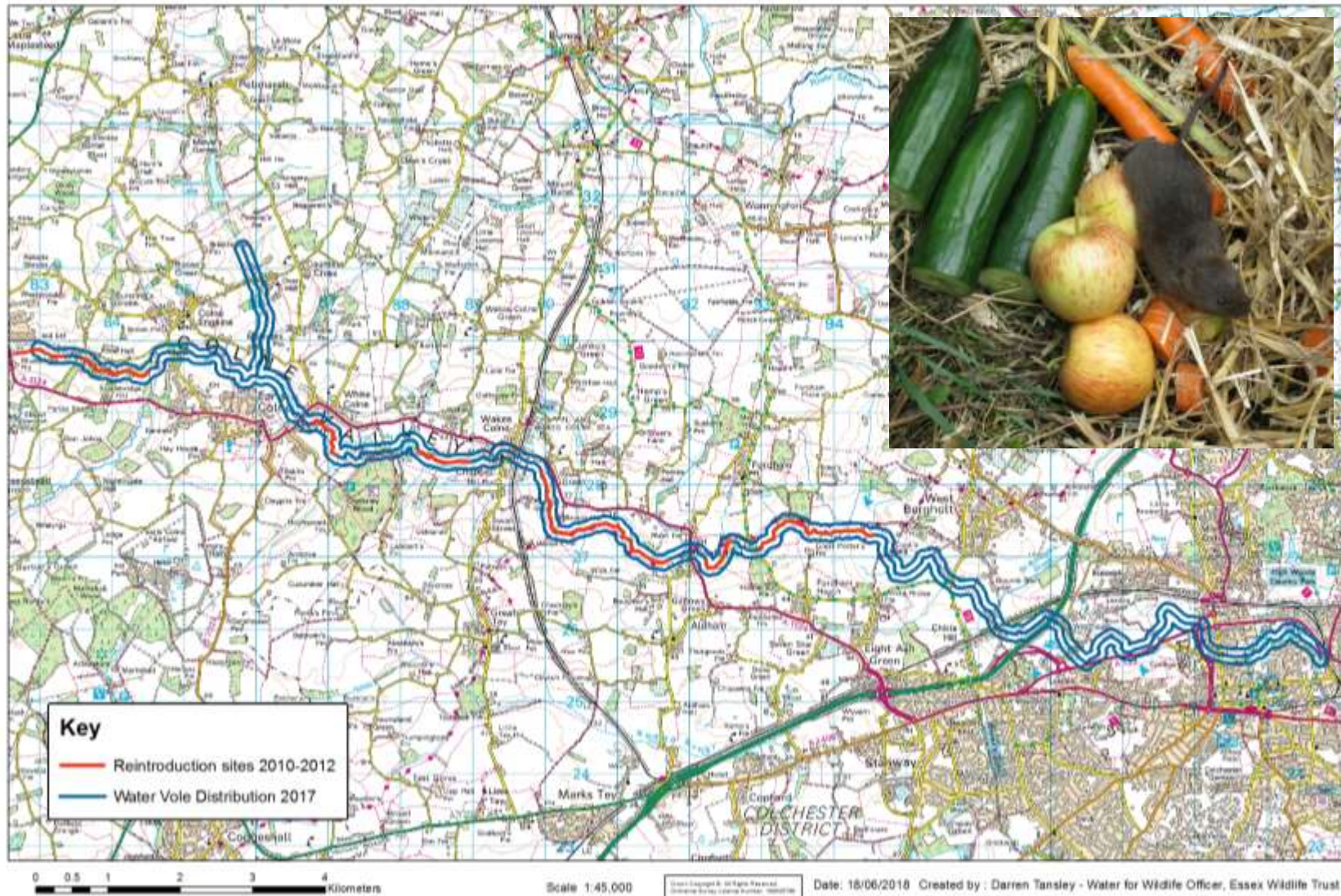


Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future



# 2010-2012 – 600 water voles released

## Turning a translocation into a catchment scale reintroduction





# Mink Monitoring Rafts

Can be checked by trained volunteers – non-lethal monitoring tool



Protecting **Wildlife** for the Future



# Mink Monitoring Rafts

Otter and mink visiting a raft



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# Camera traps

Confirmation of mink in presence of similar species



Mink

○ 44F 07C 26/05/17 05:19:22



Stoat

○ 37F 03C 18/11/17 22:54:23



Polecat



# Camera traps

Just 24 hours on our Wrabness Reserve monitoring raft

Camera trap photos:  
Stephen Scutchey



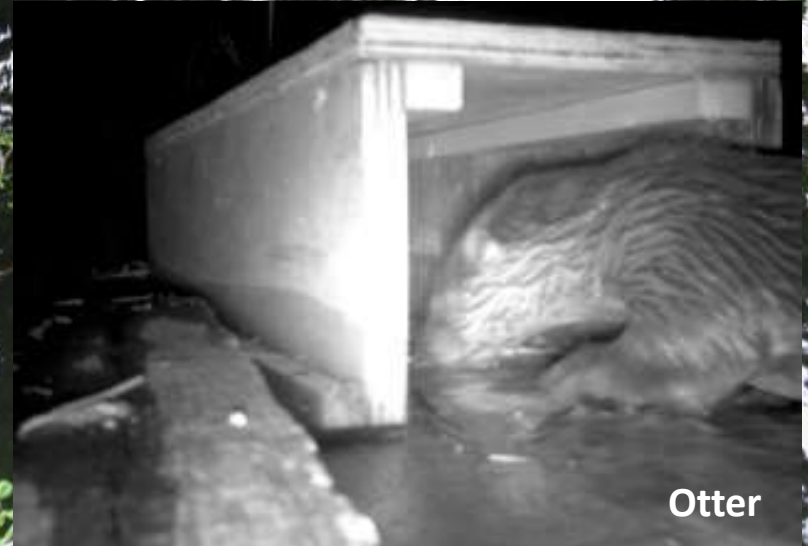
Water rail



Water vole



Wood mouse



Otter

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# Monitoring for mink on land

Clay pads in bankside monitoring stations





# Monitoring for mink on land

## Underside showing water reservoir for clay pad





# Monitoring for mink on land

Water can be topped up through tube – tunnel will be covered with brash





# Traps set if mink are detected

MUST be checked every day – we will give training



25



# Traps set if mink signs detected

Person trapping MUST sign to say they will adhere to our humane dispatch guidelines



## Essex Water Vole Recovery Project 2018 MINK TRAP / RAFT LOAN CONSENT FORM



Site (locality)	
Name	
Type (river) (tributary) (pitch/stock) (lake/brook) (pond) (reservoir) (wooded)	
Catchment	
Notes (Contd. overleaf)	
Rat/Traps (Point)	
Name (number)	
Date installed	
Grid Reference	
Contacts	
Name	
Organisation if applicable	
Home (UK)	
Contact address	
Telephone	
Mobile	
E-mail	

Number of traps supplied (circle as applicable) (0) (1) (2) (3) (4)

Signed to agree to the loan conditions: \_\_\_\_\_

### Conditions of loan:

You have agreed to say you agree to following conditions:

1. To allow contact details to be stored securely on the Essex Mink Database. Essex Wildlife Trust will never supply these to any third party, or use them within EWT for any other purpose, eg. Fundraising appeals.
2. To use mink traps and/or rafts solely in connection with the work of the Water Vole Recovery Project.
3. To complete and return trapping records by mail, text, phone or email.
4. Undertake not to modify traps and/or rafts or remove fitted other guards from traps.
5. To follow recommended best practice with regard to humane dispatch of trapped mink, and to release unharmed (at the same location) animals not classified as vermin.
6. Allow access to representatives of the Water Vole Recovery Project for the purposes of checking, repairing and maintaining rafts as required.
7. To return traps and/or rafts, either at end of the project, or if ceasing to continue with monitoring or trapping.



# Traps set if mink signs detected

In remote locations 'mink police' remote text alert units used – animal welfare benefits





# Trapping mink on land

Either place trap in tunnel or dig in





# Trapping mink on land

Either place trap in tunnel or dig in (and install otter guard!)





# 2017 Monitoring rafts and problem plastic

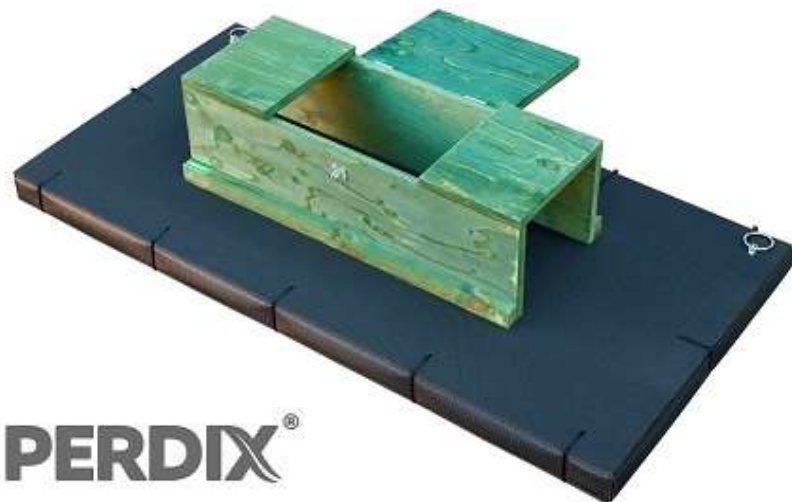
Erosion of polystyrene flotation material





# Monitoring rafts and problem plastic

Avoiding marine and aquatic plastics – working with Perdix on a better design



Essex Crouch Estuary saltmarsh  
polluted with litter



# The final piece of the puzzle

Norfolk and Essex databases online and Suffolk database being set up





**Essex**  
Wildlife Trust

## Essex Wildlife Trust

### The Mink Control Database



Database Navigator

Logout

User:  
*Darren Tansley*

Reports  
*for EWT*

Summary Maps  
*for Administrators*

Return Here   Clear Return

About

Welcome Darren Tansley

Database Management & Reporting   User Details

Active Communications	You have 2 overdue communications.
Administrator's Tasks	Manage Administrators, Coordinators, Catchments & other Account-level functions.
Coordinator's Tasks	Manage Personnel, Localities and Points and record mink events.
Reports	Define and display reports, maps and charts of the data held in the database



# Essex Mink Database

## Thinking strategically about mink control



### Essex Wildlife Trust The Mink Control Database

**Database Navigator**

Logout  
User: *Darren Tansley*  
Coordinator's Tasks  
for EWT  
**Manage Points**  
in Colour Legend

**Manage Points**

On this page you can manage the details of the Points in the selected catchment.

Select:  Record No:  of 30

Name:

Locality:  Established:

Type:  Completed:

Description:

Insert Update Delete

Personal Links Mink Events



### Essex Wildlife Trust The Mink Control Database

**Database Navigator**

Logout  
User: *Darren Tansley*  
Coordinator's Tasks  
for EWT  
**Manage Personnel**  
in EWT  
**Equipment**  
and to [redacted]

**Manage Equipment**

On this page you can manage the equipment that you have lent to landowners, tenant, trappers, etc.

Select:  Record No:  of 3

Date Lent:  Status:  Date Returned:

Item:  Notes:

Quantity:


Insert OK? Update Delete Cancel?



# Essex Mink Database

## Current points in 2017





### Essex Wildlife

#### The Mink Control Database

#### Database Navigator

Logout  
User:  
Darren Tansley

Reports  
for EWT

Summary Maps  
for Administrators

[Return Here](#) [Gear Return](#)  
[About](#)

#### Report Builder

No:	Name:	Description:
1	Tally of New Points	Display the number of Points that are CURRENT on a grid square basis, during the time period specified. The Years, Quarters and Months are sequential and generate a time window. For example, if you select Year = 2010 you will get all the points that were current in 2010, but if you ALSO specify Month = January and Month = April, you will get all points that were current between 1/1/2010 and 30/4/2010.
2	Tally of Current	Display the number of Points that are CURRENT on a grid square basis, during the time period specified. The Years, Quarters and Months are sequential and generate a time window. For example, if you select Year = 2010 you will get all the points that were current in 2010, but if you ALSO specify Month = January and Month = April, you will get all points that were current between 1/1/2010 and 30/4/2010.

#### Catchments:

Beam & Rom Blackwater Blackwater S Brain & Pod's Brook Cam or Granta Can Canvey Island Chelmer Lower Chelmer Upper Cobbin's Brook Colne Lower Colne Upper Crouch Crouch Estuary N Crouch Estuary S Foulness Island Ingrebourne Lea or Lee Mardyke & Stanford Br Mersea Island Pant Pinney Brook Roach Roding Lower Roding Upper Roman River Stort Lower Stort Upper (Nav) Stour Lower Stour Upper Tending Ter Wid

#### Years:

2017

#### Quarters:

All

#### Months:

All

#### Legend

☒ 30km Grid Squares

0	0
1	1 to 4
2	5 to 8
3	9 to 12
4	13 to 16
5	17 to 20

[Clear InfoBoxes](#)

[View Report](#)

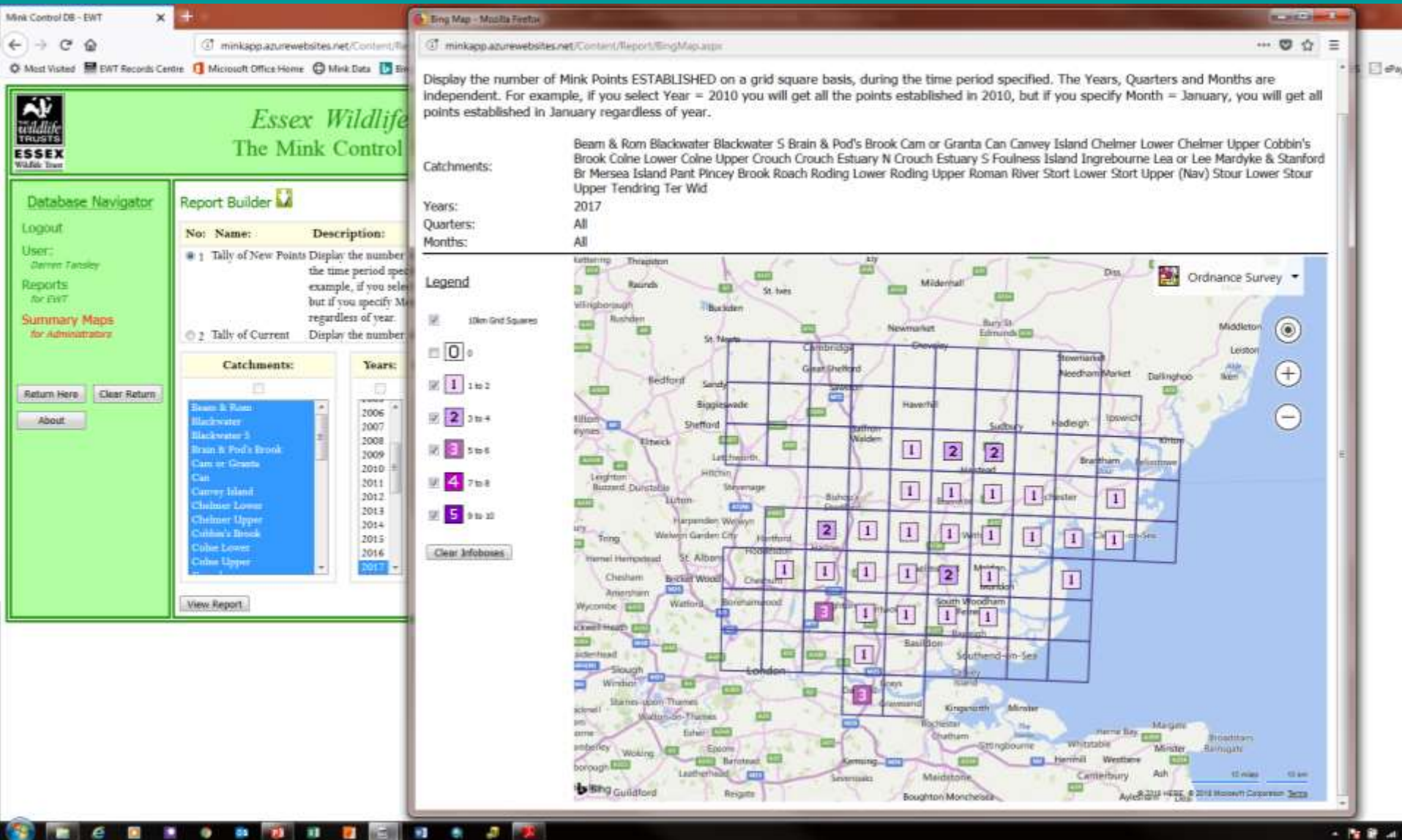
#### Tally of Current Points

Display the number of Points that are CURRENT on a grid square basis, during the time period specified. The Years, Quarters and Months are sequential and generate a time window. For example, if you select Year = 2010 you will get all the points that were current in 2010, but if you ALSO specify Month = January and Month = April, you will get all points that were current between 1/1/2010 and 30/4/2010.



# Essex Mink Database

## New points set up in 2017



Protecting Wildlife for the Future



# Essex Mink Database

Will simplify compliance with Environmental Permits for mink rafts

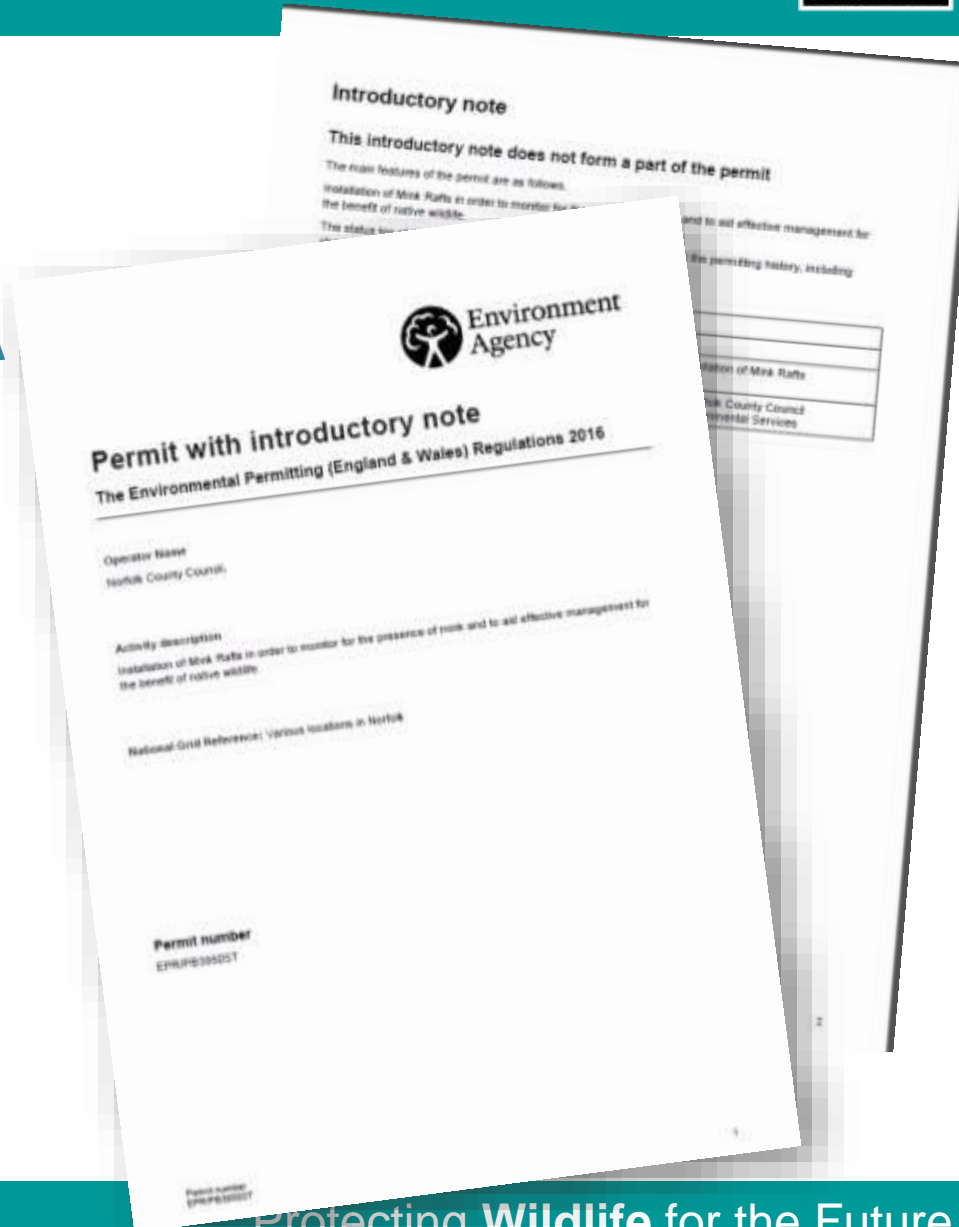


## Environmental Permits Key Facts

- Replaces Flood Defence Consents
- Being trialled for rafts on 'Main Rivers'
- All raft locations **MUST** be logged with EA
- Cost £150 – NO exemptions for charities
- Trial to be applied at a county level

## Trial of scheme in Eastern Region

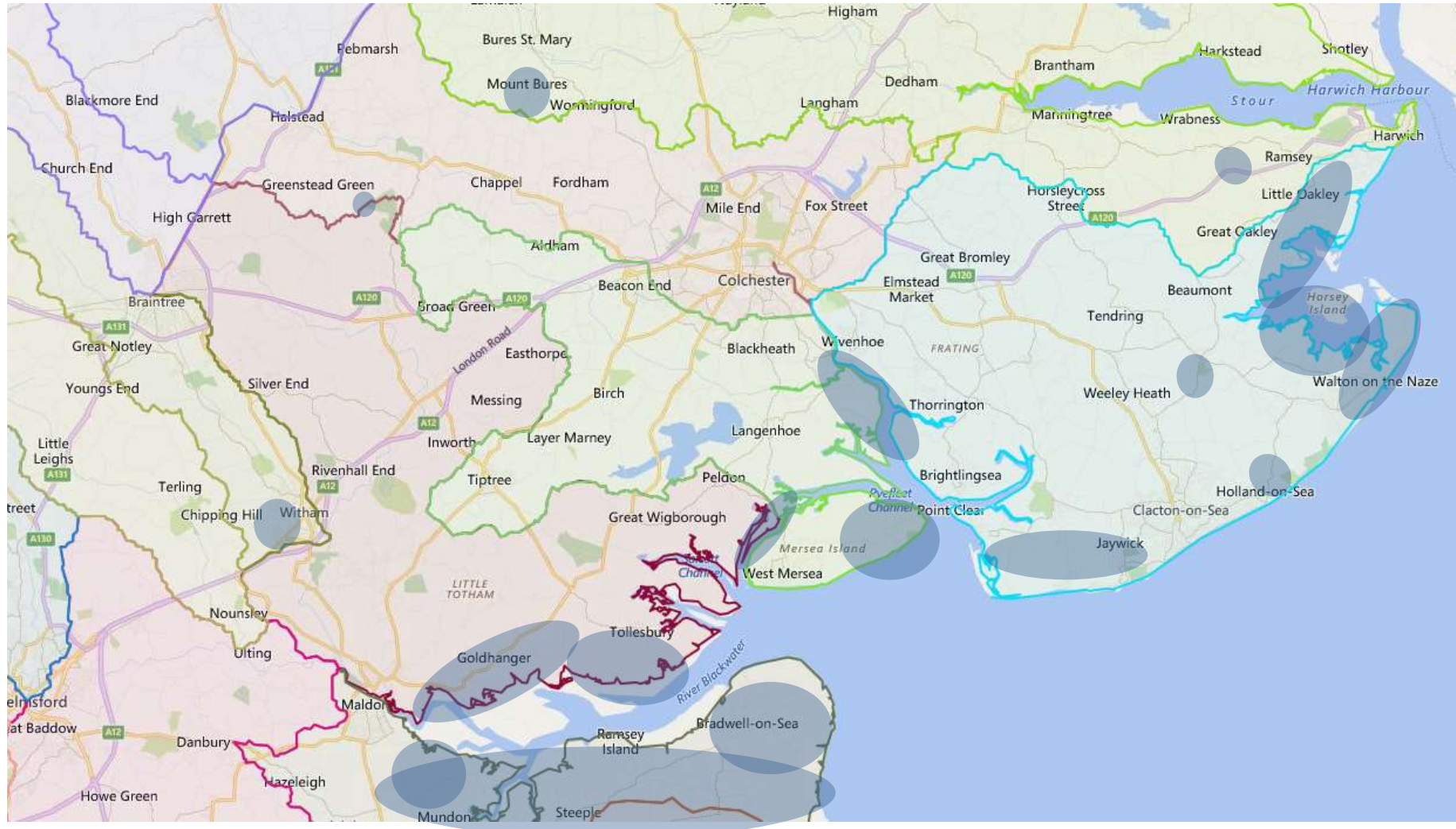
- County coordinators apply for license
- Norfolk & Essex will provide a New 'Guest' login for EA to access raft locations from the mink database
  - Reports available can be restricted by database user (No personal data available)
  - ALWAYS up to date – no need to compile ongoing reports





# Disappearing water voles Essex/Suffolk border

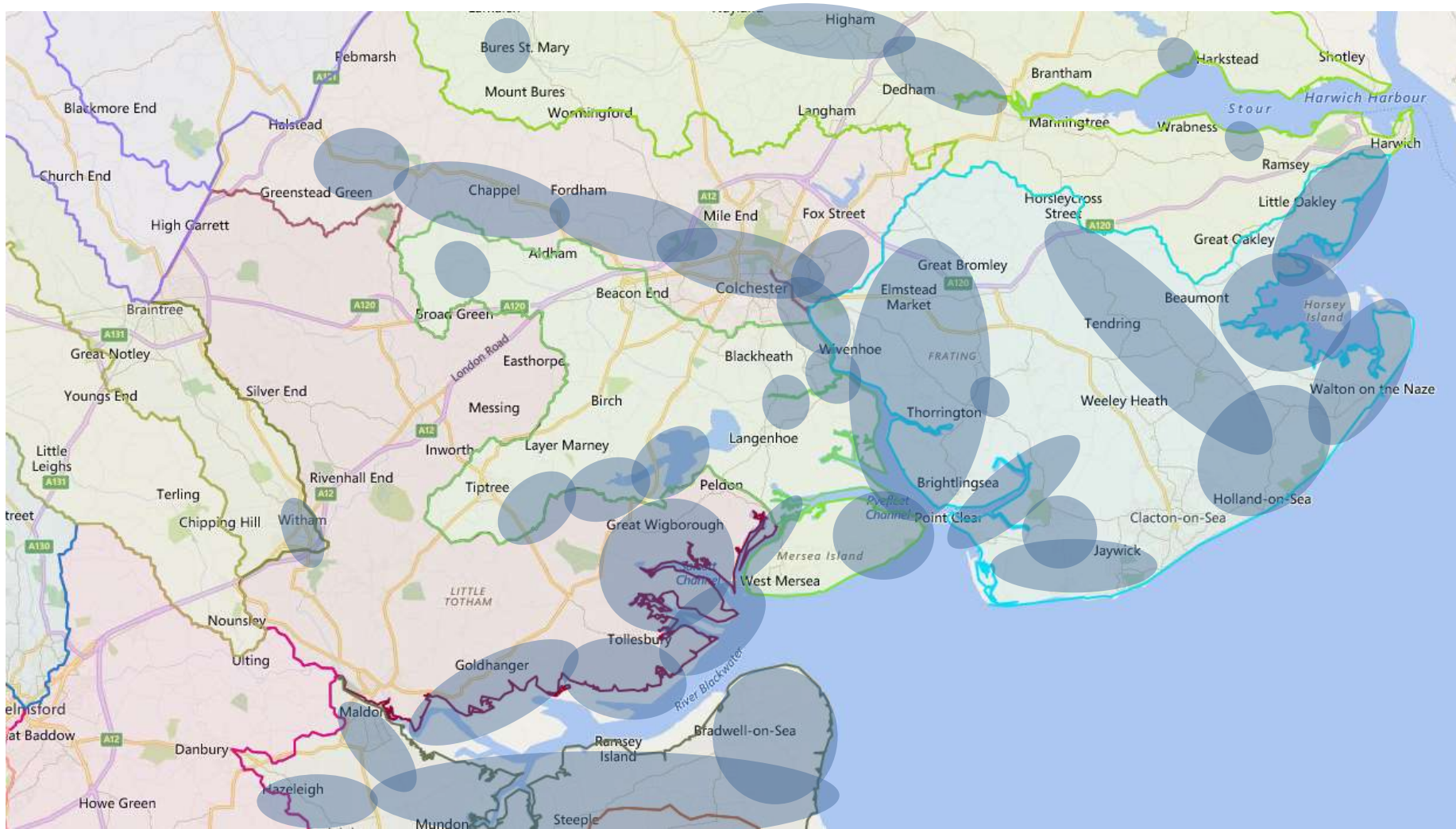
Known water vole colonies 2006





# Vole reversal - water voles NE Essex

## Known water vole colonies 2017





# Mink Monitoring Rafts

Sep 2016 - Mystery tracks on the River Wid were hedgehog



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# And finally...

## Thank you from our tree loving reintroduced River Colne water voles



Darren Tansley  
Chairman UK Water Vole Steering Group  
Twitter @EssexWT\_Darren  
Email darrent@essexwt.org.uk

Water vole:- Russell Savory

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