

# School of Professor Brock

Level **Standard**

## Where do badgers live?

Badgers live underground in a **SETT**; a network of tunnels and nesting chambers

Badgers spend about 70% of their lives underground

1 to 30 or more D-shaped entrances

Width 30cm

Tree roots are often used to support tunnels

Setts are mostly found on slopes in woodland or hedgerows. A large spoil heap often shows their location

Tunnels - 20 to 100 metres long!

A badger clan may have multiple SETTS in their large **TERRITORY**. Only one will be their **MAIN SETT** which is the family home inhabited all year

Badgers are prodigious diggers & can extend their home readily. Sadly the number of holes does not tell us how many badgers live in a sett

### Keeping COMFORTABLE

- The sett keeps badgers dry in the rain, warm in Winter and cool in Summer, with little temperature variation between night & day
- Badgers sleep separately in Summer and together in Winter for extra warmth
- They line nesting chambers with bedding shredded from vegetation. This keeps them off the cold earth floor
- Bedding ferments and releases heat, allowing badgers to use it as a natural radiator - how cool is that

### Keeping CLEAN

- Badgers do not usually defecate inside the sett
- When stuck underground, defecation will be in a single latrine chamber
- Badgers refresh bedding regularly to reduce parasites
- Green bedding may even have insecticidal properties. Wow!

### Keeping VENTILATED

How do badgers ensure they have enough oxygen underground?

- Wind blowing in through sett entrances
- 5-10cm wide vertical ventilation shafts
- The piston effect, whereby their own movement causes air to move in and out of the sett

### Keeping TIDY

Spare bedding might be stored in an unused chamber; their very own laundry cupboard to keep tunnels clear

### Keep OUT!

A latrine immediately outside the sett entrance is a message to others: Keep out!

Nonetheless, foxes and rabbits may move into a disused sett or even a disused part of an active sett

Most tunnels are less than a metre below ground but can be deeper

Setts may be handed down over centuries from one generation to the next

