

# School of Professor Brock

Level **Standard**

## Reproduction in badgers



Adult badgers generally mate in Spring soon after the cubs are born BUT pregnancy doesn't start straight away. The fertilised egg (embryo) floats in the sow's uterus for up to 10 months. Only when the embryo implants in the wall of her uterus in December is she actually pregnant.

**Delayed implantation**

### WHY do badgers use DELAYED IMPLANTATION?

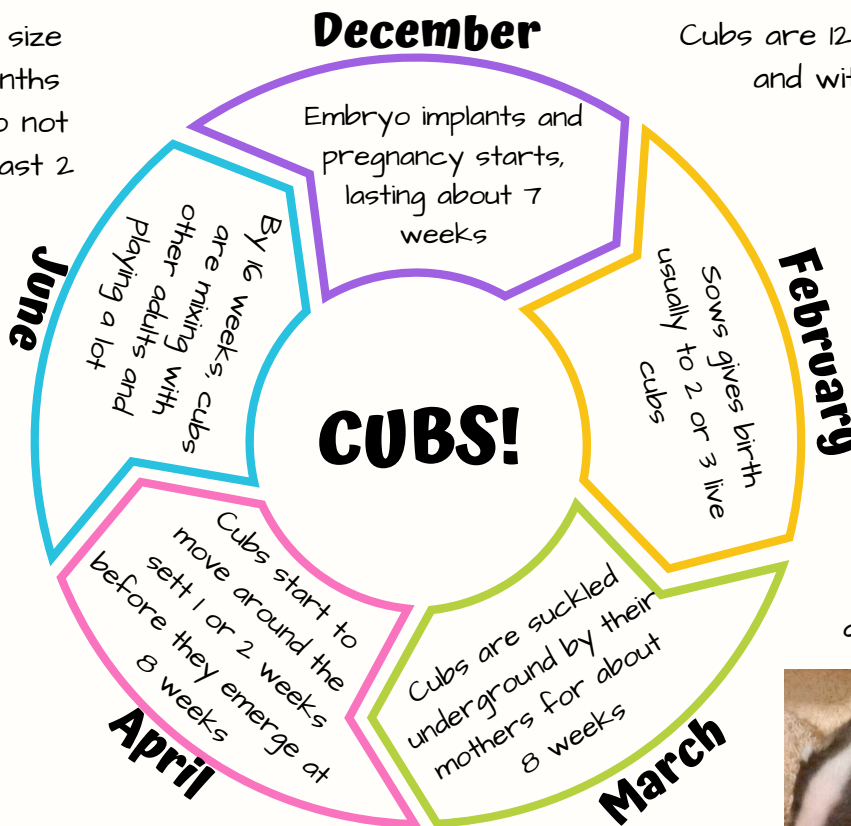
Mating and birth can both take place in Spring when adults are fittest and when there is most food for cubs to find.



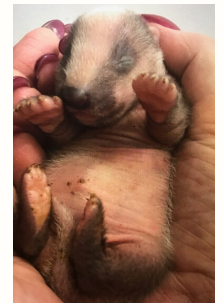
Only 40% of embryos implant successfully and 20-30% of those fail.

Cubs are adult size by about 6 months but generally do not breed until at least 2 years old

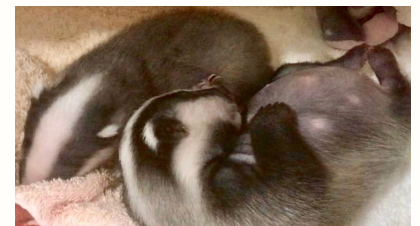
Cubs emerge in April but still stay close to mum for a few months when foraging. She will continue to suckle if food is hard for the cubs to find



Cubs are 12cm long at birth, blind and with very little hair



Cubs are born in chambers lined with bedding (vegetation) dragged in by the sow



To keep warm, cubs rely on heat from their mother's body and from the bedding, which acts like a radiator

