

Mammals of the Howe of Fife

S.T. Buckland

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I have included just those species that I have photographed in and around the Howe of Fife. I have included photos taken on the higher ground around the Howe.

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American mink

Introduced into the UK through escapes and/or releases from mink fur farms, the American mink has had a detrimental impact on many native species. This one was looking out from under the hide at Birnie Loch in February 2026.







Badger

Fairly widespread. These were at Kedlock north of Cupar. The youngster above would every so often break off playing with its siblings, and check what I was doing. Sometimes, it came so close my camera lens could not focus on it!







Brown hare

Widespread. The one above was watching the two below right. These were by Kedlock Feus. The one below left was at Darklaw Hill by Rathillet.







Brown rat

Common, perhaps too common! This one was at Kedlock Feus.







Common shrew

Common. This one was foraging out in the open at Balmerino.





European beaver

Recently re-introduced on Tayside, and rapidly spreading out from there. These shots were taken at Birnie Loch in August 2024.





Grey seal

Grey seals occasionally wander up the Firth of Tay. Those above and below left were hauled out on sandbanks off Balmerino in August and September 2025, while the one below right was feeding just off Balmerino in November 2025.







Grey squirrel

Grey squirrels are fairly widespread in and around the Howe of Fife. The squirrel above and below right was at Kedlock Feus, while the one below left was at Carphin.







Hedgehog

Fairly common, but hedgehogs have declined, possibly related to use of pesticides. These were at Kedlock Feus. The photos below were taken using a flash while mothing, whereas the above hedgehog was out feeding during the day.







Otter

Otters have made a remarkable come-back, and are once again fairly wide-spread, although not common. This one was at Gaddon Loch.









Rabbit

Common. These were at Elmwood Golf Course by Cupar.







Red fox

The dog fox below was at Elmwood Golf Course, and was caught out when fog suddenly lifted. With golfers approaching, he turned tail and ran. The above vixen was at Kilmany, and the fox on the right was on Forret Hill.









Red squirrel

The red squirrel remains fairly widespread in suitable habitat around the Howe of Fife. With the arrival of squirrel pox in Fife, which is carried by grey squirrels but is lethal to red squirrels, the Fife populations of reds are vulnerable, given the presence of many grey squirrels. The one above was at Carphin in October 2025, and the one below near Craigsanquhar in October 2024.





Roe deer

Common. The one above was on Darklaw Hill, and instead of running, it approached me, trying to figure out what it was seeing. When about 15m away, it decided that it was time to go. The one below was at Kedlock, and also approached me, while I was waiting for badgers to emerge from their sett.







Stoat

Stoats have become much less common than they once were. The one above was at Rossie Bog in early April 2023. It saw me and dived for cover, but I was standing between it and where it wanted to go, so eventually, it dashed past me, allowing me to get a single in-focus shot. The one below was by Forret Hill.







Weasel

Weasels have become quite rare in recent years. This one, showing a clean pair of heels, was on Elmwood Golf Course in late April 2022.





Wood mouse

Common. The wood mouse below lived less than two metres from a bench at Gaddon Loch, where people feed the birds. After dark, it would find plenty of left-overs. I took this shot of it sitting at its burrow using flash while out mothing. The above mouse was at Birnie Loch.

