

## Scottish Badgers Code of Conduct for Badger Photography

The proliferation of high quality digital cameras, internet photo sites and social media posts means that the pursuit of wonderful natural images has become a very popular pastime. Whilst it is marvelous to catch a glimpse of the secret world of badgers it is important that the pictures are taken ethically. Cutting corners or putting badgers at risk in pursuit of the “perfect shot” is completely unacceptable.

Below are some rules based on science, common sense and compassion.

- 1) **Know the law:** In Scotland it is an offence intentionally or recklessly to disturb a badger when it is using a sett, or knowingly to cause or permit someone to do so.
- 2) **Know your subject:** Are you sure that what you are doing is not disturbing or harming the badgers you are photographing? If you cannot answer yes to this question then please stop and seek advice before continuing. Your well intentioned attempts to get the “perfect shot” may be doing lasting harm to your subject.
- 3) **Keep your distance:** Approaching badgers and their setts closely is neither acceptable or necessary. Move back and use a longer lens. Do not encourage badgers to approach you. This is not their natural behaviour and it is putting them at risk.
- 4) **Do not bait with food:** Using food to draw badgers to, or to encourage them to stay in a particular area is wrong. It habituates badgers to people and exposes them to unnecessary risks. It makes poisoning far easier and encourages badgers to associate humans with food often leading to wildlife/human conflict in which the badgers come off worst.
- 5) **Do not alter the environment:** Clearing undergrowth at a sett or moving fallen timber to encourage badgers to assemble in a particular area is wrong and potentially illegal. Artificial lighting should be used sparingly, if at all, and only where it is certain not to disturb the badgers.
- 6) **Safeguard locations:** Advertising the locations of setts even just to trusted friends can result in large numbers of people gathering and make disturbance almost inevitable. Putting locations or identifying information on social media is idiotic.
- 7) **Earn public trust:** The public need to be sure that the photographs they admire were not obtained by compromising the safety and welfare of the subjects. There can be no respect for a photographer who shows no respect for wildlife.