

## The Water Vole Calendar

### DECEMBER – FEBRUARY

Numbers are at their lowest and although they don't hibernate, voles spend most of their time sleeping underground or feeding on stores of tubers, roots and rhizomes.

### OCTOBER-NOVEMBER

Water voles prepare for winter by building underground food stores. Territory disputes are put aside as voles live communally over winter. Overwinter survival is low, particularly amongst young voles who have not put on the extra weight needed for insulation and energy.

### MARCH – APRIL

The appearance of latrines (piles of droppings) marks the start of the breeding season. Nesting females set up and defend territories every 30 metres or so along the bank and males defend several females and their territories.



### APRIL – JUNE

Peak of the breeding season. Birth rate is at a high and females will mate again within a few days of giving birth and can have up to 5 litters a year with 5-8 babies in each.

### JULY – SEPTEMBER

Food is abundant and numbers are at their highest. Young males and low ranking females disperse and frequent tussles over territories occur.

