

# **Badger Hair Shaving Brushes**

In response to ongoing concern about the use of badger hair in shaving brushes, Badger Trust undertook some research. Our initial findings are presented below, in a question-and-answer format.

## **Which countries provide the hair?**

Those retailers, who said anything about the origin of the hair used in their brushes, stated that the hair was taken from badgers in China.

## **How is the hair obtained?**

Some time ago, one retailer of these products stated that the hair was obtained from badgers which were farmed for the purpose, and that the hair was clipped from the live animals. Although we now know that badgers are farmed in Korea, it does not appear that they are farmed for their fur. It also seems most unlikely that hair could be clipped from live badgers. No retailer seems to be making these claims any more. It appears that the hair is obtained from wild badgers which are captured and killed.

## **Does the killing of badgers for their hair involve any cruelty?**

When it comes to the methods by which badgers are captured and killed for their hair, the retailers of shaving brushes fall strangely silent. We have e-mailed several, but have not received any replies. If the badgers were being captured and killed humanely, surely the retailers would tell us? In the absence of any hard evidence, we fear the worst.

## **Is the killing of badgers for their hair a conservation problem?**

Some retailers of badger hair shaving brushes make the claim that their products are 'environmentally friendly'. Apparently, badgers in China are seen as agricultural pests and need to be controlled to prevent them from becoming too numerous. We have heard these arguments about badgers in the UK too and we are not convinced! No retailer provides figures for the size of the Chinese badger population, or the numbers that are killed each year, or any research that confirms that this practice is not endangering badger populations. Thus there is no way of knowing whether or not the killing of badgers for their hair poses a threat to the population. Unless the retailers of badger hair shaving brushes can substantiate their claims of 'environmental friendliness', they should withdraw them.

## **Is the importation of badger hair shaving brushes into the UK illegal?**

Trade in wildlife and wildlife products is regulated by CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species). Britain is a signatory to this Convention. However, the badger is not endangered and is not therefore listed on CITES, so the importation of badger hair is not an offence.

## **Is the sale, purchase or possession of badger hair shaving brushes illegal in the UK?**

Badgers in Britain are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under subsection 1(3) of this Act, it is an offence to possess or control a dead badger, any part of one, or anything derived from one.

However, there are exceptions to subsection 1(3). One of these exceptions is if the person possessing or controlling the dead badger (or part of one, or anything derived from one - such as a badger hair shaving brush) shows that the badger had died of natural causes, or that it had not been killed illegally. It is for the individual to prove that the badger was not killed illegally, rather than for the prosecuting authorities to prove that it was killed illegally.

The badger hair for shaving brushes sold in the UK is apparently taken from badgers killed abroad. Those badgers will not therefore have been killed in contravention of the 1992 Act, and so the possession or control of these badger hair shaving brushes is not an offence.

### **What can be done about the use of badger hair for shaving brushes?**

The first step is to gather more information about the methods by which badger hair is obtained. It appears that the shaving brush manufacturers and retailers either do not know, or do not wish to tell us this information. Therefore, pressure must be put on them to provide the facts.

If cruelty is involved, then further action will be required to end the manufacture and sale of badger hair shaving brushes.

You can help by passing on details of any company that you know to be selling badger hair shaving brushes (and providing copies of any adverts / catalogues, or the URL of the relevant web page) to:

Badger Trust  
P.O. Box 708  
East Grinstead RH19 2WN

Tel: 08458 287878  
Fax: 02380 233896  
E-mail: [enquiries@badgertrust.org](mailto:enquiries@badgertrust.org)