



Melanie Baker – ACCE DTP

2021-22 cohort

I completed my placement with the Vincent Wildlife Trust, where I analysed data collected from a citizen science project focused on Irish stoat (*Mustela erminea hibernica*) sightings over a two-year period. I was responsible for analysing this data for an internal report. I also wrote a paper that is now in peer review as first author.

Types of analyses included summary statistics of sightings (i.e, when and where stoats have been spotted), plotting densities of stoats per counties, generating a density heatmap plot, analysis anthropogenic influences to stoat sightings (i.e distance to buildings, roads, and urban areas, and human population density), and finally running habitat suitability modelling to try and understand where gaps may exist for stoat sightings. I used ArcGIS Pro for all the mapping of the data; I hadn't used this software before and by the end was quite confident using it. In addition, I learnt how to use Maxent for distribution modelling and how to do this in R.

I really enjoyed my placement. Jenny and Patrick from the Trust were very helpful and supportive. They made sure to have regular meetings to check in with me and support me with the modelling which I was not familiar with at the start of the placement. I would strongly recommend the VWT as a provider for future placements, and I would be happy to work as a researcher for a charitable organisation like the VWT in the future.