

Polecats come in from cold

by Avril Mechant

URBAN polecats are clawing their way into the affections of wealthy families living in Alderley Edge and Wilmslow, whose love knows no bounds. The wild creatures have found a safe haven away from their countryside habitats and are living in the lap of luxury in executive homes, sharing garden delights and even swimming pools.

Countryside expert Martin Turner explained last week that the ferret like mammals had retreated, like foxes, from the rural to an urban environment because of rich and easy pickings. He said polecats were among species of wildlife forced out of their natural domain by intensive farming. Householders in Alderley Edge and Wilmslow have reported more frequent sightings of hedgehogs,



voles, shrews, dormice and hares. And polecats, frequently mistaken for ferrets, had taken a particular fancy to Alderley Edge and Wilmslow.

Alice Henchley, from Mammals are Us UK, said: "Fields are getting bigger and farmers are using different pesticides and it is getting harder for them

to live in rural areas. Animals have to find somewhere else to live."

The trust is appealing to householders for information about the new urban species so that they can be protected

Alice added: "It is important that people contact us with sightings, information we can pass on to all sorts of organisations to raise awareness. And if people do notice wildlife in their gardens, they might want to make it more welcoming, adding a small pond, or rough edges."