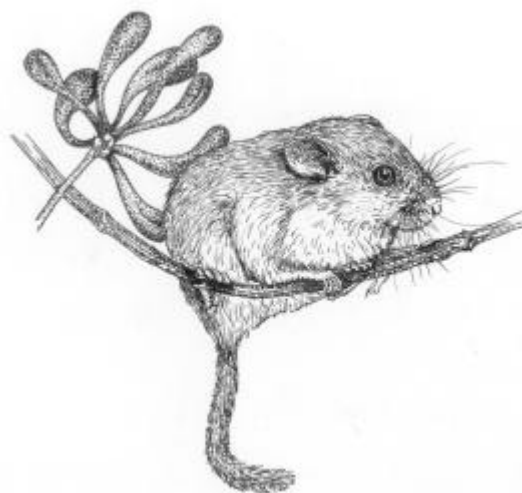


DORMOUSE *MUSCARDINUS AVELLANARIUS* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The dormouse has been identified in the UKBAP as a priority species and a national plan has been prepared³⁹. It is therefore of biodiversity conservation locally.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S) (1998)	P
EC Habitats Directive	Annex I Va
Conservation Regs 1994	Sch. 2
Berne Convention 1982	-
Bonn Convention 1979	App. III
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981	Sch. 5
IUCN Red List of Endangered Animals 1994	lower risk – near threatened



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

Dormice feed on fruit, insects, flowers, pollen and nuts, spending the day asleep in

nests constructed as much as 5m above the ground. However, during the winter they hibernate in nests at or below the woodland floor. Hibernation lasts until about April or May and breeding takes place during the summer with an average female dormouse rearing one or two litters a year, each usually of about 4 young.

There has been a significant decline in numbers of this species throughout Britain in recent years. The dormouse does not occur in Scotland or Northern Ireland, and in Wales there are few known populations. It has become extinct in up to 7 English counties (comprising half its former range) in the past 100 years. It is absent from the north, except for small populations in Cumbria and Northumberland, and although dormice are still widespread in southern counties (Devon to Kent) they are patchily distributed. Population densities everywhere are less than 10 adults per hectare, even in good habitats.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

As throughout Britain, the dormouse in Caerphilly county borough is widely scattered with low density, small populations. The southern part of the county is an important area for the dormouse where several known populations exist although this may be due in part to a bias in surveying. Woodlands with a high proportion of hazel are most frequently found to support dormice. Hazel nuts are an important part of the dormouse's diet, the smooth inner edge of the hole gnawed in them serves as a telltale sign of dormouse feeding activity.

2.3 Links with Habitats

The dormouse usually inhabits deciduous woodlands with a well-developed shrub layer and overgrown hedgerows and is an agile climber using stems and branches as pathways.

- **Deciduous Woodlands**
- *Wildlife Corridors* (hedgerows)

The requirements of this species should be considered in all woodland and forestry action plans.

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Changes in woodland management practice, notably cessation of hazel coppicing and stock incursion into woodland.
- Fragmentation of woodland leaving isolated non-viable populations, short distances, possibly as little as 100m form absolute barriers to dispersal unless arboreal roosts are available.
- Inappropriate woodland management usually because the presence of dormice is not known.
- Destruction of ancient semi-natural woodland.
- Continual climatic variations. Wet and cool summers dramatically reduce the survival prospects of newly born animals.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Sites where dormice are present have been identified as SINCs⁸.
- 4.2 Schemes such as the Hedgerow Renovation Scheme and Tir Gofal encourage positive management for the dormouse through the maintenance and renovation of hedgerows.
- 4.3 The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 protect hedgerows that may be important for the dormouse.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

- 5.1.1 Maintain and enhance dormouse populations in all the counties where they still occur.
- 5.1.2 Re-establish self-sustaining populations in at least 5 counties where they have been lost.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Maintain and enhance the dormouse population in Caerphilly county borough (Target: halt the decline by 2005).
- 5.2.2 Enhance breeding success through putting up dormouse boxes and promoting positive woodland management (Target: ongoing).
- 5.2.3 Re-establish self-sustaining populations in suitable areas through woodland management (Target: ongoing).

6. ACTION AND KEY PARTNERS

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.1 Policy and Legislation											
6.1.1 Ensure Policies and Strategies do not adversely affect existing populations.	CCW	CCBC NAWAD FC WDA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.2 Consider the requirements of dormice when reviewing agri-environment schemes, such as Tir Gofal and Woodland Grant Schemes / Woodland Improvement Grants.	CCW	NAWAD FC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.3 Seek to designate important breeding sites as SINc, SSSI or LNR.	CCW	CCBC GWT GLWT									✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Sites supporting dormice should be identified and advice provided to land managers on appropriate management.	CCW	CCBC Coed Cymru FC Gwk landowners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.2 Grant aid and incentive schemes such as WGS, Coed Cymru and Tir Gofal should be used to encourage owners to manage suitable habitats sensitively.	CCW	CCBC Coed Cymru NAWAD FC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.3 Manage woodlands and hedgerows to maintain current populations and prevent further habitat fragmentation.	CCW	FC GWT GLWT CCBC Coed Cymru landowners	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.4 Ensure dormice are fully considered when assessing any development which may impact upon the species paying particular attention to its protection under UK and European legislation, including the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.	CCBC	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.5 Ensure dormice are fully considered during any woodland/forestry management which may affect the species.	FC	Coed Cymru NAWAD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.6 Ensure European and UK dormouse legislation is applied when assessing any hedgerow removal notice which may affect the dormouse.	CCBC	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.7 Seek to include dormouse requirements in all relevant management plans, agri-environment schemes and tenancy, or similar agreements.	CCW	CCBC NAWAD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Extend current dormouse nest box schemes.	GWT GLWT	CCBC CCW Coed Cymru Gwk	✓								
6.3.2 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Raise awareness of landowners and managers to dormouse requirements in order to promote appropriate management.	CCW	CCBC FC GWT GLWT VWT Gwk Coed Cymru	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.4 Advisory (continued)											
6.4.2 Support training in conservation of dormice both for land managers and advisors and to provide advice on sympathetic management for dormice.	CCW	CCBC FC GWT GLWT VWT Gwk Coed Cymru	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Survey to identify further dormouse populations and pass information gathered during survey and monitoring to JNCC in order that it can be incorporated in a national database and contribute to the maintenance of an up-to-date red list (e.g. take part in the 'Great Nut Hunt' national survey).	CCW	JNCC CCBC GWT GLWT landowners general public	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 Ensure that landowners, agencies and the local authority are aware of the requirements of dormice, especially the impact of woodland and hedgerow management and the effects of habitat fragmentation.	CBP	-	✓								
6.6.2 Raise public awareness of dormice through production of leaflets and guided walks to promote dormouse conservation.	CBP		✓			✓			✓		