

BADGER *MELES MELES* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

Although the badger is not a priority species in the UKBAP it is listed as a species of conservation concern. It is a victim of persecution in Caerphilly county borough and is therefore considered an important species for conservation locally.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority species (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	S
EC Habitats and Species Directive	-
Conservation Regulations 1994	-
Berne Convention 1982	Appendix III
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981	Sch. 6
Other Legislation	Protection of Badgers Act 1992



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

The badger has a widespread distribution, in woodlands and farmland areas throughout Britain and Wales. However, due to various pressures it has become rare and even extinct in some areas. A national study conducted in the mid-1990s (Bristol University) suggested that badger numbers are generally stable in the UK, but some areas of South Wales were shown to be declining²⁵.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

The badger is known throughout most of the county borough, in deciduous and coniferous woodlands. However, there are few records for the northern part of the Rhymney Valley, where there are less wooded areas. They can be quite numerous on lower slopes and pasture, and are found in both rural and urban areas. As it is nocturnal, regular observations are rare.

2.3 Links with Habitats

- **Deciduous Woodlands**
- *Planted Coniferous Woodland*
- *Species-rich Grasslands*
- *Wildlife Corridors* (hedgerows)
- *Common Land*
- *Post-Industrial Land* (re-vegetated colliery tips)

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Loss of habitat through urbanisation and road construction, in particular feeding habitat such as grassland. Increased road casualties and incidents of sett disturbance is also linked to existing and new housing, road and industrial developments (the number of badgers being killed on the roads is not accurately recorded).

- Deliberate mortality from persecution by farmers, land managers and members of the public because of worries about livestock, through the 'sport' of badger baiting, involving the digging of setts and setting of dogs onto the captured badger.
- Lack of knowledge of the species and its habitat and conservation requirements, particularly livestock farmers.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Membership of local badger groups (Gwent, Glamorgan). These groups carry out monitoring and surveillance of setts in an attempt to deter and reduce digging and lamping incidents. Badger Groups and local constabulary liaise with landowners and farmers.
- 4.2 Gwent Police (Wildlife Liaison Officers) enforce national legislation such as the WCA 1981 and the Badger Act 1992, particularly in circumstances of sett disturbance and persecution.
- 4.3 EN has produced a useful leaflet entitled *Badger Guidelines for Developers*¹³.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

Not applicable to this species.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Maintain the current populations of badgers on known sites in the county borough. (Target: ongoing)
- 5.2.2 Carry out survey work to identify further sites (in particular, the northern Rhymney Valley) and as a part of the planning process for any new developments. (Target: 2003 and 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 Seek to ensure that badgers are taken into account in all new roads, bridges, industrial, commercial and residential developments.	CCBC	GBdG GLBdG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Protect and prevent further loss of feeding habitats. Pursue planning refusals or satisfactory mitigation where proposed development threatens to erode these vital areas.	CCBC	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Ensure badger surveys are undertaken before any developments are given planning permission and as part of a routine monitoring scheme.	CCBC	GBdG, GLBdG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.2 Encourage people to report persecutions, digging, baiting, sett disturbance, etc. to the police and the local badger groups, providing an emergency contact number in any publicity materials and other items.	GBdG GLBdG	Gwent Police	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.3 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Produce and disseminate information about badgers to farmers and other landowners and land managers, including sympathetic habitat management advice and information on the behaviour of the species on farmland and in relation to the safety of livestock.	CBP	GLBdG Coed Cymru	✓	✓							
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Continue to monitor all existing sites for population density, behaviour and any possible threats such as badger-digging/baiting evidence.	GBdG GLBdG	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5.2 Seek to expand sett monitoring and surveying to further deter digging and lamping activities through local group and possible community groups.	GBdG GLBdG	-	✓								
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 Encourage membership of badger groups and/or local wildlife trusts to promote the badger in the area.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.6.2 Provide schools and colleges in the county borough with information in order to educate children, parents and teachers about the conservation status of badgers in the local area. Promote the need for reporting of sightings, road accidents and sett disturbance incidents to local Badger Groups.	CBP	Schools, Youth Forum		✓							

BATS SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The UKBAP identifies five British bats as UK priorities (with UK SAPs) and a further nine as Species of Conservation Concern³⁹. The species included in this action plan are listed below including three UK priorities (*) and the rest are species of conservation concern:

- **Brown Long Eared Bat** *Plecotus auritus*
- **Daubentons Bat** *Myotis daubentonii*
- **Greater Horseshoe Bat*** *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum**
- **Lesser Horseshoe Bat*** *Rhinolophus hipposideros**
- **Natterer’s Bat** *Myotis nattereri*
- **Noctule** *Nyctalus noctula*
- **Pipistrelle Bat*** *Pipistrellus pipistrellus**
- **Whiskered/Brandts Bat** *Myotis mystacinus/Myotis brandtii*

Relevant Legislation/Species Status								
	brown long eared	daubentons	greater horseshoe	lesser horseshoe	natterers	noctule	pipistrelle	whiskered
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	S	S	P	P	S	S	P	S
EC Habitats and Species Directive	IVa	IVa	IIa, IVa	IIa, IVa	IVa	IVa	IVa	IVa
Conservation Regs 1994	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Berne 1982	II	II	II	II	II	II	III	II
Bonn 1979	II	II	II	II	II	II	II	II
CITES 1975	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
WCA 1981	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6	Sch. 5, 6

2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

All British bats are insectivorous and feed in habitats such as woodland, scrub, along hedgerows, wetlands, watercourses/water bodies and species-rich grasslands. All bats need warm breeding sites in summer and cold, safe hibernation sites in winter. Each species travels between summer and winter roosts every year. Relatively little is known about the current status of bats, although it is widely acknowledged that all bat species are declining nationally.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

With its diverse landscape and its history of past mining activities, Caerphilly county borough provides suitable habitats for most bat species. Of the fourteen species of bat in Britain, eight species have been recorded in the county borough.

2.2.1 Brown long-eared bat

This medium sized bat is the second most common species and is widespread through the whole of Britain. It mainly feeds on moths, beetles, flies, bugs, earwigs and spiders and, remarkably will sometimes land on the ground to catch or handle prey. This bat also flies close to the

ground, making them vulnerable to attack by predators, such as the domestic cat. It is probably the most commonly seen species in attics of houses with medium to large open spaces. Summer roosts are found in older buildings, barns, churches and trees. Caves, tunnels, mines, icehouses and probably trees provide their winter roosts. This bat is reliant on open woodland, parkland and orchards. Although little data currently exists, brown long-eared bats are known to be breeding in the county borough and are probably quite common, but a survey is needed to confirm this.

2.2.2 Daubenton's bat

Daubenton's bat is a medium sized bat, often associated with water habitats. In Britain it is a fairly widespread bat, feeding on insects from and close to the waters' surface. Food sources include small flies, caddisflies and mayflies. Summer roosts are commonly found in trees, but also in tunnels, under bridges, caves and mines. Winter roosts are in caves, mines and other underground sites. It has been recorded in Caerphilly county borough, although a more detailed survey will be needed to determine breeding sites, hibernation sites and population status.

2.2.3 Greater horseshoe bat

This very rare bat is heavily reliant on species rich grassland, woodland and hedgerows. It feeds on large insects including chafers, dung-beetles moths and crane flies. Greater Horseshoe bats are traditionally cave dwellers but many now use large houses and churches. There are currently 35 recognised maternity and all year roosts and 369 hibernation sites in the UK. Caerphilly has no confirmed maternity or hibernation roosts but there is a male roost in the county borough.

2.2.4 Lesser horseshoe Bat

This is a rare bat that feeds on insects in the woodland canopy, with a heavy reliance on hedgerows. It is traditionally a cave dweller but is now more reliant on man-made roosts such as attics in houses and churches however, it will also utilise smaller spaces than the greater horseshoe bat. Lesser horseshoes feed on smaller flying insects such as craneflies, flies and small moths. There is one known site for lesser horseshoe bats in Caerphilly county borough, although it is not known if they are breeding. This species is widespread but uncommon in Wales and South- West England.

2.2.5 Natterers bat

This medium sized bat is generally scarce, although widespread. Habitats include open woodland, parkland, hedgerows and along waterside vegetation feeding on flies, moths, spiders and other small insects. Summer roosts are often found in old stone buildings with large wooded beams such as castles, manor houses and churches, or older large timbered barns. They are traditionally tree roosting species and will occasionally use bat boxes. The preferred winter roosts of natterers are the cool entrances of mines and caves but they will hibernate in many underground shelters. They usually hibernate singularly or in small groups, which may include other species. Again, little is known about this bat, except that its presence has been recorded in the county borough, therefore more survey work is required.

2.2.6 Noctule bat

The noctule is one of the largest British bats and has a scattered distribution. It is not common and is dependant on woodland, parkland, pasture, water and forest edges where it feeds primarily on moths, dung and chafer beetles, mayflies and winged ants. Most food is caught on the wing. They are opportunist feeders and can be seen feeding on moths around street lamps in urban areas. They very seldom roost in buildings, preferring instead rot holes and woodpecker holes in trees. When found in buildings, they roost behind tiles, large soffits; and occasionally in

tall disused industrial chimneys and cavities in bridges. Hibernation occurs mainly in trees or rock fissures and hollows, but also in bat boxes and buildings. Noctules are declining throughout Britain. They have been confirmed as present and breeding in Caerphilly county borough, in association with diverse habitats of large open countryside such as ancient woodlands, post-industrial sites and suburban areas.

2.2.7 Pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus* spp.)

The pipistrelle is Britain's most common and smallest bat. Often associated with human habitation. It feeds on small flying insects such as midges, caddis flies, mosquitoes, mayflies, lacewings and small moths. Habitat requirements are water, marshy areas, in open woodland and at woodland edge, farmland, hedgerows and urban areas. Pipistrelles are crevice dwellers mainly and prefer to roost in confined spaces in buildings such as behind hanging tiles, weatherboards and soffits and in cavity walls, rarely roosting in attic spaces. They will sometimes fly during the day to catch insects. Winter roosts are often isolated individuals or small groups in crevices in buildings and trees. In Caerphilly county borough, as in the rest of the UK, the pipistrelle is probably widespread and numerous, although it has undergone significant declines in the last 25 years. Pipistrelle bats have recently been divided into two separate species, the common pipistrelle (*P. pipistrellus*) and the soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*). The two species are widely distributed throughout Caerphilly county borough but the exact distribution is not yet known.

2.2.8 Whiskered/Brandts bat

These two species were only separated as distinct species in 1970. They are extremely difficult to differentiate and have a superficial resemblance to pipistrelles. They are probably under-recorded for this reason. They rely on wooded country, often near water and feed on moths and other small insects and spiders. Summer roosting sites are mainly buildings and tree and winter hibernation sites are largely unknown, although small numbers have been recorded in caves and tunnels. Whiskered and brandts bats are found throughout England and Wales. One whiskered bat has been found in Caerphilly county borough, although no breeding or hibernation roosts have yet been confirmed.

2.3 Links with Habitats

- *Wetlands* (water courses and water bodies)
- ***Deciduous Woodland***
- Forestry action plans
- ***Wildlife Corridors*** (hedgerows)
- *Species-rich Grasslands*
- *Common Land*
- *Post-Industrial Land*
- *Urban Habitats*
- Orchards, parklands, and scrub

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

Threats to these species are poorly understood, but low population density, low reproduction rates and an aversion by the public to sharing their properties with bats, make them particularly vulnerable.

- Loss and fragmentation of habitats. Hedgerow removal was probably a significant factor in the decline of most bat species, although this trend is being slowed by the introduction of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- Loss of and damage to roosting sites:
 - Loss of summer, and occasionally winter roosts in buildings through disturbance and/or non-tolerance by human residents.
 - Loss or disturbance of winter hibernation sites, in buildings, caves, disused mine shafts and tunnels, houses, pill boxes and cellars through disturbing recreational activity and maintenance/inspection of structures.
 - Loss of summer and winter roost sites in trees because of the degradation of woodland structure and through the felling of veteran trees in woodland and parkland.
- Reduction in insect prey because of intensive farming methods, overgrazing and the use of pesticides.
- Use of toxic chemicals in timber treatment and in new timbers.
- Significant increase in the numbers of domestic cats causing increased predation.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Current legislation exists to protect bats and bat roosts.
- 4.2 CCW, CCBC, bat groups and the wildlife trusts are working together to raise the profile of bats.
- 4.3 Use of agri-environment schemes such as Tir Gofal and organic food production to reduce stocking densities and pesticide use.
- 4.4 Enhancement of habitat by the addition of bat boxes.
- 4.5 Public awareness raising through bat walks and talks arranged by Caerphilly county borough council in country parks.
- 4.6 Monitoring of selected breeding sites.
- 4.7 Education of demolition companies, industries, timber treatment companies, home insulation companies, tree surgeons, and cavers and pot-holers.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

- 5.1.1 Maintain the current range and population.
- 5.1.2 In the long term, expand the current range through natural re-colonisation and landscape enhancement into areas where research shows that climate and landscape features are suitable.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Establish the baseline status and distribution of all species of bat occurring in Caerphilly county borough. (Target: 2005)
- 5.2.2 Halt the decline in the breeding population in Caerphilly county borough. (Target: 2005)
- 5.2.3 Enhance roosting sites (including hibernation sites) and important feeding habitats, where necessary, particularly around maternity roosts with the aim of increasing population levels within the county borough. (Target: ongoing)
- 5.2.4 Enhance breeding success through protection of roost sites. (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 consideration of maternity and hibernation roost sites and the surrounding habitat when developing structure plans and assessing planning applications. Provide alternative roost sites to mitigate any loss, and survey on planning applications for old buildings.	CCBC	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.2 Ensure routine survey of mines or other underground sites due for closure or change of use, or otherwise considered vulnerable, with a view to protecting any bat colonies identified.	CCW	GBG GLBG CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.3 Ensure that all Policies and Strategies do not adversely affect bats and their roosts. Develop a strategy for the consideration of bats within CCBC work, such as tree management and design of bridges.	CCBC	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.4 Work with the EA to ensure that bats are included in LEAPs.	CCW	EA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.5 Seek to designate important roosts and feeding areas as SSSI/SINC/LNR.	CCW	CCBC			✓					✓	✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Ensure important roost sites are protected through liaison with owners.	CCW	GBG GLBG CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.2 Encourage the use of low toxicity timber treatments in all buildings and encourage 'bat-friendly' design features in new buildings and other structures, and in the renovation of existing structures.	CCW	Coed Cymru FC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.3 Raise awareness among those managing trees and woodlands about bats and encourage appropriate management, particularly of land adjacent to important roosts.	CCBC	Coed Cymru FC CCW	✓			✓				✓	

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:									
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management (continued)												
6.2.4 Enhance existing underground sites to make them more suitable for hibernating bats. Where appropriate promote the construction of purpose built hibernacula and the 'grilling' of cave and disused tunnel entrances to protect important hibernation sites.	CCW	CCBC GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
6.2.5 Develop a good code of practice in relation to the conservation and management of trees that are of value to bats.	CCBC	CCW	✓									
6.2.6 Enhance bat habitat, where appropriate by the addition of bat boxes to trees and buildings and promote the restoration or re-creation of insect rich habitats.	CCW	GBG GLBG CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.7 Consider the use of management agreements to improve important habitats or roosts.	CCBC	CCW	✓									
6.3 Species Management and Protection												
6.3.1 Continue to protect known breeding roosts and hibernacula from development, destruction and disturbance through maintaining and improving current training procedures for those who may come into contact with bats.	CCW	CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.2 Establish a bat group in Caerphilly county borough.	CBP	GBG GLBG		✓								
6.3.3 Install artificial roosts such as bat boxes and bat bricks and monitor these in important sites.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.4 Encourage members of the public, local businesses, consultancies and other wildlife/environmental groups to report bat sightings. Coordinate the collation of records obtained by the above to produce a database of information.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.5 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4 Advisory												
6.4.1 Increase tolerance of the bat by raising awareness of the conservation importance of bats to landowners and householders.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4.2 Continue to support and contribute to the current network that provides bat conservation advice.	GBG GLBG	CCW CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4.3 Advise householders on the use of less harmful pesticides for timber treatment, choice of timber and the timing of the works.	Coed Cymru	FC CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

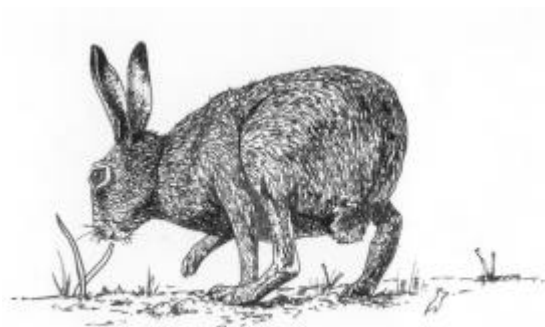
Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:								
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
6.4 Advisory (continued)											
6.4.4 Advise on the location of important maternity roosts and hibernacula (where appropriate) and stress the importance of habitat management for the surrounding areas, to encourage provision for the species in old buildings and on best tree management practices in the vicinity of important bat sites, particularly to: project officers for WGS and Tir Gofal; organisations associated with the care and restoration of old buildings; organisations engaged in underground activities (research and recreation); Environment Agency (along water courses); tree surgeons, tree wardens and foresters; key landowners and house-holders, vesters; and other relevant organisations.	CCW	CCBC CADW SCW GWT GLWT GBG GLBG FC EA Coed Cymru	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Survey to estimate the relative numbers in differing habitats and roost types, particularly churches, mine-shafts, caves and ice-houses. Continue to search for maternity roosts and hibernation sites, mating roosts, underground sites and satellite or minor summer sites to provide estimates of local population size and to determine the extent of species decline. Undertake a survey of maternity roosts to determine distribution of the two pipistrelle bat phenotypes (this may be part of a national scheme). Assess the importance of each site with a view to establishing protection for key sites.	CCW	GBG GLBG	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5.2 Undertake research to identify the habitat requirements, ecology and appropriate management of feeding areas to maintain bat populations. The findings should be used to develop guidelines and policies for habitat protection, creation and management around roost sites.	CCW	GBG GLBG		✓							
6.5.3 Develop and maintain a database for bat records and support setting up a Local Record Centre.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5.4 Participate in national monitoring schemes, but carry out additional monitoring as necessary to establish a baseline survey of summer roosts. Survey and monitor known and potential underground sites.	GBG / GLBG	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Action	Key Partners		Year to be complete or in place by:									
	Lead	Partners	2003	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
6.6 Communications and Publicity												
6.6.1 Raise awareness of the conservation importance of large old houses, farm buildings, churches and old trees as roost and hibernation sites amongst the general public, land managers and businesses.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
6.6.2 Operate a programme of educational activities and events, and publicity for locally important species, working towards changing the public's perception of bats.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓
6.6.3 Promote the legal status and conservation importance of bats to landowners, builders, CCBC staff and others whose actions may affect bats.	CBP	GBG GLBG	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓

BROWN HARE *LEPUS EUROPAEUS* SPECIES ACTION PLAN**1. INTRODUCTION**

The brown hare is a familiar mammal of open countryside throughout most of Britain. It is primarily nocturnal and feeds on grasses, cereals and root crops. It is a UK priority species with a UK SAP³⁹ and CCW has identified it as a priority in Wales.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	P
EC Habitats Directive	-
Conservation Regs 1994	-
Berne Convention 1982	Appendix III
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981	-
Other Legislation	Ground Game Act 1880
	Hare Protection Act 1911
Other Species Status	RDB Mammals (1993)



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2. CURRENT STATUS**2.1 UK and Wales**

The brown hare is widespread throughout the UK and Ireland, although its numbers have declined substantially since the 1960s. Current brown hare population estimates range between 800,000 - 1,250,000, only 20% of the estimated hare population that occurred in 1880. The Ground Game Act 1880 affords the species limited protection during the breeding period, from the beginning of March – end of July.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

The current population in Caerphilly county borough is not known, as a detailed survey of the area has never been undertaken. There are a few known sites for the brown hare in the county borough, but it is likely that it is under-recorded due to several factors, including its nocturnal habits, possible confusion with the rabbit and because it is not considered rare or threatened.

2.3 Links with Habitats

- **Species-rich Grasslands** (lowland neutral, acid and wet grasslands; rhos pasture)
- **Heathland** (lowland heath)
- **Common Land**
- **Arable fields**

2.4 Links with Other Species

Other species that share similar habitats to the brown hare include:

- *Grey Partridge*
- *Skylark*
- *Song thrush*
- *Tree Sparrow*

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Conversion of grassland to arable farmland.
- Loss of general habitat diversity in the agricultural landscape, such as field margins and hedgerows as well as crop diversity.
- Intensive farmed land (includes high stocking rates and improvement of grassland through reseeding, fertilising, ploughing, levelling and improving drainage).
- Changes in planting and cropping regimes.
- Wet springs are thought to have adverse effects on breeding performance.
- Changes in the fox population, as they are a key predator of leverets.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Sympathetic management under the Tir Gofal agri-environment scheme benefit hares.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS**5.1 UK Objectives and Targets**

- 5.1.1 Maintain the current range and population.
- 5.1.2 In the long term, expand the current range through natural re-colonisation and landscape enhancement into areas where research shows that climate and landscape features are suitable.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Establish the baseline status and distribution of the brown hare in Caerphilly county borough. (Target: 2004)
- 5.2.2 Halt the decline of the breeding population in Caerphilly county borough (Target: 2005).
- 5.2.3 Enhance breeding sites and important feeding areas with the aim of increasing hare population levels within the county borough. (Target: ongoing)
- 5.2.4 Enhance breeding success through protection of breeding sites. (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 hares.	CCW	CCBC WDA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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 (continued)											
6.1.2 Ensure that consideration is given to breeding sites and the surrounding habitat when developing structure plans and assessing planning applications; and establish mechanisms to ensure a regular survey of suitable grasslands allotted for development.	CCBC	CCW WDA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.3 Consider the requirements of hares when reviewing agri-environment schemes, such as Tir Gofal and Woodland Grant Schemes /Woodland Improvement Grants (CCW, NAWAD, FC) and in habitat creation/reclamation schemes (WDA).	CCW	NAWAD FC WDA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.4 Consider designating sites with breeding brown hare populations as SINCs, SSSIs or LNRs.	CCW	CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.1.5 Work with the EA to ensure the needs of hares are taken into account in LEAPs.	CCW	EA CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Review management of habitats owned and managed by CCBC. Develop a good code of practice in relation to the conservation and management of grasslands which are of value to hares.	CCBC	CCW		✓							
6.2.2 Consider the use of management agreements (Local Authority and Tir Gofal, etc) to improve important habitats.	CCW	CCBC			✓						
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Introduce favourable management of existing sites.	CCBC	CCW WDA FC NAWAD	✓								
6.3.2 Liaise with neighbouring Wildlife Trusts/Local Authorities/FWAG to formulate a recruitment strategy.	CBP	-				✓					
6.3.3 Encourage members of the public, local businesses, consultancies and other wildlife / environmental groups to report hare sightings.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.4 Coordinate the collation of records obtained by members of the public and other sources within the region to produce a database of information from which distribution maps can be produced.	CBP	-		✓							
6.3.5 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Advise project officers for WGS and Tir Gofal of the location of key breeding sites, their importance and surrounding area habitat management.	CCW	CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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 Raise awareness of hares and advise key landowners and managers, and other relevant organisations in the vicinity of important populations on appropriate habitat management for conservation.	CCW	CCBC	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Carry out a county-wide survey to provide estimates of population size and distribution.	CCW	CCBC GWT GLWT Mammal Soc.		✓							
6.5.2 Develop guidelines and policies for habitat protection, creation and management on and around breeding sites.	CCW	CCBC			✓						
6.5.3 Search for and assess the importance of breeding sites with a view to establishing protection for key sites.	CCW	CCBC GWT GLWT			✓						
6.5.4 Develop and maintain a database for hare records.	CBP	(CCW)	✓								
6.5.5 Participate in national monitoring schemes.	CBP	(CCW CCBC)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 Provide leaflet on species and habitat management.	CBP	-			✓						
6.6.2 Operate a programme of educational activities and events to raise awareness of hare conservation issues amongst the general public, land managers and businesses. Consider using relevant organisations and appropriate media sources.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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		✓			✓			✓		

EUROPEAN OTTER *LUTRA LUTRA LUTRA* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The European otter *Lutra lutra lutra* is a UKBAP priority species which suffered a dramatic decline in the 1960s³⁹.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	P
EC Habitats Directive	Annex IIa, IVa
Conservation Regs 1994	Sch. 2
Berne Convention 1982	App. II
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CI TES 1975	Annex A
WCA 1981	Sch. 5, 6



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

Otters utilise all wetland habitats, including rivers and streams, lakes and ponds, but also ditches, marshes, reedbeds, swamps and wet woodland alongside watercourses. They feed mainly on fish but will also take amphibians and crustaceans, and occasionally small birds and mammals. Generally nocturnal, they require dense cover for lying-up during the day and for breeding, normally provided by tree root cavities, riverbank burrows, scrub or tall waterside vegetation.

The otter population decline in the 1960s was attributed mainly to the use of organochloride pesticides, such as DDT in agriculture, but they are also affected by hunting and habitat fragmentation. The decline in south Wales probably occurred during the period of industrialisation in which many rivers were polluted, destroying the food supply. National surveys have indicated a gradual general recovery since the late 1980s, and in recent years repeated surveys carried out by the Vincent Wildlife Trust have demonstrated that otters are generally widespread throughout Wales. There are good populations in the North and South, and since the last national survey there is evidence of a spread into the South Wales Valleys.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

The otter is known to be present in the county borough, but the exact distribution has not yet been identified. The 1991 Vincent Wildlife Trust otter survey found positive signs of otters on the Rhymney and Bargoed-Rhymney rivers, and the lower reaches of the Ebbw. Other surveys have found signs on the Nant Bargoed, and most rivers in the area probably now support otters. Lying-up or rest sites are quite widespread but no breeding sites have been confirmed. Two artificial holts were built on the Sirhowy to help the re-colonisation of otters in this area.

2.3 Links with Habitats

- **Wetlands** (rivers, streams, ponds, reedbeds, swamps, lakes and reservoirs)
- *Deciduous Woodlands* (wet woodland)
- *Species-rich Grasslands* (rhos pasture)
- Dense scrub

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Lack of prey due to poor water quality and poor habitat.
- Riparian habitat loss due to development along the river corridors and grazing pressure.
- Incidental deaths, mainly road traffic accidents.
- Disturbance due to development close to rivers and wetlands.
- Pollution of watercourses, both physical and chemical.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 The Wildlife Trust's Welsh Water Otters and Rivers Project was launched in April 2000, and is based with the Glamorgan Wildlife Trust in the South Wales area. An advisory leaflet for landowners was produced in 2000.
- 4.2 The Environment Agency published an *Otters and Rivers Handbook* in December 1999.
- 4.3 Actions for otters are included in the Environment Agency LEAPs¹⁵ and the Agency considers impacts on otters when dealing with applications for work in or adjacent to rivers.
- 4.4 Road traffic accident black spots have been identified in Wales.
- 4.5 Highways Agency has produced guidance on mitigation work for otters in new road and bridge construction works.
- 4.6 Rehabilitation facilities for injured or orphaned otters are available locally.
- 4.7 Keep Wales Tidy runs educational programmes for its river care groups (Clean Rivers Project) including otter survey and otter holt construction training days.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

- 5.1.1 Maintain and expand existing otter populations.
- 5.1.2 By 2010, restore breeding otters to all catchments and coastal areas where they have been recorded since 1960.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Clarify the current status and distribution of the European otter in Caerphilly County Borough. (Target: 2004)

- 5.2.2 Protect existing populations and encourage natural recolonisation through appropriate management, restoration and re-creation of suitable habitats, in particular breeding sites. (Target: 2008 and ongoing)
- 5.2.3 Reduce the threat of road traffic accidents in the county borough. (Target: 2005 and 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 the UDP and LEAPs contain policies and actions to protect otters and their habitats.	CCBC	CCW EA	✓								✓
6.1.2 Seek to designate important breeding sites as SINC, SSSI or LNR.	CCBC	CCW	✓								✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Identify important areas of otter habitat/breeding sites and safeguard through management agreements.	CCBC	EA CCW GWT GLWT	✓								
6.2.2 Ensure that all new road/bridge construction/other developments do not have adverse effects on otters.	CCBC	CCW EA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.3 Seek to improve or create otter habitat as opportunities arise.	EA	KWT CCBC CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Facilitate mitigation to safeguard otters on roads, e.g. underpasses.	CCBC	CCW NAW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.2 Continue to require otter surveys and mitigation for planning applications.	CCBC	CCW EA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.3 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Provide advice on otter conservation and habitat management to landowners, developers, anglers, fisheries and farmers.	EA	CCBC CCW KWT VWT		✓							
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Undertake surveys to monitor the distribution of otters.	EA	CCW VWT KWT GWT GLWT		✓			✓			✓	
6.5.2 Continue to provide training for river care groups, and other interested groups and individuals.	KWT	EA	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
6.5.3 Support the setting up of a local record centre for South Wales, and seek to establish an otter database with information on distribution, nature and condition of breeding sites.	CBP	(EA CCW)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 Raise public awareness of otters and the importance of reporting sightings/road kills.	CBP	-	✓			✓			✓		

WATER VOLE *ARVICOLA TERRESTRIS* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The water vole is a UKBAP priority species³⁹ and is in urgent need of action both nationally and in Caerphilly county borough.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S) (1998)	P
EC Habitats Directive	-
Conservation Regs 1994	-
Berne Convention 1982	-
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981 (as amended)	Sch. 5



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

The water vole is found throughout mainland Britain in a variety of bank side habitats and is the UK's largest vole. It was once considered a widespread and common riparian mammal, but it has declined dramatically over the past 40 years. It was estimated that by the year 2000 there would have been a 94% loss in the number of water voles since 1939. This is mainly attributed to habitat deterioration and pollution of watercourses. The explosion of the mink population in Britain has also had an impact because they commonly feed on water voles.

The water vole inhabits slow-moving rivers, streams, ditches and ponds, particularly those with well-developed banks. Unusually for a small mammal, the water vole is more active during the day than at night. It feeds on grass and waterside vegetation, and is a skilled swimmer, both underwater and on the surface. Breeding takes place in underground tunnels and therefore an adequate bank in which to dig a series of burrows is necessary. It also requires slow-moving waters in order to escape from predators. It is now an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to the habitats the water vole uses for shelter, or to disturb the species whilst occupying such habitats.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

Although it is likely to occur in the county borough records are scarce. A sample survey carried out by the Vincent Wildlife Trust in 1989-1990 recorded water voles on the Monmouth-Brecon Canal between Abergavenny and Brecon, however no survey has been undertaken on the Crumlin section of the canal.

Evidence of the species has been found at several sites away from traditional main rivers, occurring in wet pastures and fen sites, and it has been recorded in the following SINCs⁸:

- 55: **Nelson Bog (SSSI)**
- 119: **Tir Waun Meadows**
- 164: **Gypsy Lane Wetland**

Further work is needed to confirm the importance of these and other sites in the county borough.

2.3 Links with Habitats

- **Wetlands** (rivers and streams, ponds, fens, reedbeds, lakes and reservoirs)
- *Species-rich Grasslands* (rhos pasture)

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Lack of data on the distribution of the species may have led to accidental loss of the species from some areas.
- Loss and fragmentation of habitats.
- Predation, especially by the American mink (*Mustela vison*).
- Alteration of watercourses, e.g. culverting, diversions, and water abstractions, and flood defence maintenance work.
- Erosion of bank habitats, resulting from the trampling and overgrazing of bankside vegetation.
- Pollution of watercourses and poisoning by rodenticides.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Actions for water voles are included in LEAPs, including the Eastern Valleys LEAP covering the river catchment area for Caerphilly county borough¹⁵.
- 4.2 The Environment Agency considers impacts on water voles when dealing with applications for work in or adjacent to rivers.
- 4.3 The Vincent Wildlife Trust conducted a national survey for water voles in 1989-90, and there is ongoing research by the Environment Agency and Wildlife Trusts.
- 4.4 The VWT re-surveyed the 2,970 sites which comprise the Water Vole Survey of Britain in 1996-98.
- 4.5 The *Water Vole Conservation Handbook* provides practical management advice to developers, conservation organisations, planners and water engineers, etc¹⁴.
- 4.6 British Waterways have prepared a corporate BAP which will include positive actions to protect the water vole.
- 4.7 The Rhiw 2 Mill river care group (KWT) are managing ditch habitat adjacent to the River Sirhowy in order to encourage water voles back to the area.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

- 5.1.1 Maintain the current distribution and abundance of the species in the UK.

- 5.1.2 Ensure water voles are present throughout their 1970s range by the year 2010, considering habitat management and possible translocation of populations to areas from where they have been lost.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

- 5.2.1 Clarify the current status and distribution of the water vole in Caerphilly county borough. (Target: 2004)
- 5.2.2 Maintain the current species population and distribution. (Target: ongoing)
- 5.2.3 Enhance, restore and create water vole habitat, setting population recovery targets according to local threats. (Target: 2010)

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 the UDP and LEAPs contain adequate conservation policies and actions to protect water voles and their habitats.	CCW	CCBC EA	✓								✓
6.1.2 Seek to designate important breeding areas as SINC, SSSI or LNR.	CCW	CCBC	✓								✓
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Identify important areas of water vole habitat, particularly breeding sites and safeguard through management agreements.	CCBC	EA CCW GWT GLWT VWT KWT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.2.2 Seek to improve or create water vole habitat as opportunities arise, in particular to reduce the fragmentation of habitats in the county borough.	CCW	EA CCBC GWT GLWT KWT	✓								
6.2.3 Limit the use of herbicides on bankside/semi-aquatic vegetation, and provide information on best practice. Also consider the use of rodenticides.	EA	CCW	✓								
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Continue to require surveys and mitigation for planning applications potentially affecting the species.	CCBC	CCW EA	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.3.2 Investigate the distribution of mink in the county borough. Assess whether mink controls would benefit water vole recovery/re-colonisation.	EA	CCBC CCW KWT GWT GLWT VWT	✓								
6.3.3 Consider a reintroduction programme once suitable habitats have been identified, further to investigation of status and distribution (6.5.1).	CCW	EA CCBC GWT GLWT		✓							
6.3.4 Continue to implement wildlife legislation.	Gwent Police	CCW	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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											
6.4.1 Provide advice and information on water vole conservation and habitat management to key groups, including landowners, anglers, developers and farmers.	EA	VWT KWT CCBC FUW NFU GWT GLWT NAWAD	✓								
6.4.2 Develop guidance notes on the use of rodenticides in areas of known water vole activity, circulating to pest controllers, farmers and agri-businesses.	CCBC	CCW EA		✓							
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Undertake surveys to identify the distribution of water voles and mink. It may be possible to link otter, water vole and mink survey work and base a countywide survey on river care group areas.	EA	KWT river care groups VWT CCBC GWT GLWT	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
6.5.2 Continue to provide training for river care groups, and other interested groups, in identifying evidence of water vole and mink.	KWT	river care groups	✓			✓			✓		
6.5.3 Regularly monitor known key sites/colonies of water voles annually.	EA	KWT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.5.4 Support the setting up of a local record centre for south Wales, and seek to establish a database for information.	CBP	VWT	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 Raise public awareness of the water vole in the county borough, their decline and the need for conservation.	CBP	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

YELLOW-NECKED MOUSE *APODEMUS FLAVICOLLIS* SPECIES ACTION PLAN

1. INTRODUCTION

The yellow-necked mouse is not a priority species in the UKBAP but its southwesterly distribution in the UK makes the South Wales population particularly important. It is considered an important species for conservation in Caerphilly county borough.

Relevant Legislation/Species Status	
priority (P) or species of conservation concern (S)	-
EC Habitats Directive	-
Conservation Regs 1994	-
Berne Convention 1982	-
Bonn Convention 1979	-
CITES 1975	-
WCA 1981	-



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2. CURRENT STATUS

2.1 UK and Wales

The yellow-necked mouse is a nocturnal species of deciduous woodlands and parklands. It feeds on fruits, berries, buds, insects and seeds collected from ground level and in trees of around 20 metres. Its distribution is mainly restricted to the south and west of England and South Wales, but even here much suitable woodland areas are apparently without them.

2.2 Caerphilly County Borough

Recent surveys have found most populations and highest densities in well-drained broadleaved deciduous woodland areas, probably some of the highest densities of southern Europe. It could also be found in some suitable hedgerows and gardens, but there has been no systematic survey undertaken on this species in the county borough.

2.3 Links with Habitats

- **Deciduous Woodlands** (mixed deciduous/broadleaved woodlands on well-drained banks and slopes)

3. CURRENT FACTORS AFFECTING THE SPECIES

- Felling of broadleaved woodlands and replanting with conifers.
- Over-use of rodenticides.
- Clearing of fallen timber nest sites.
- Parks are often kept 'too tidy'.

4. CURRENT ACTION

- 4.1 Sympathetic woodland and parks management.

4.2 Provision of nest boxes specially designed for mice.

4.3 Annual monitoring of known breeding sites⁴¹.

5. OBJECTIVES AND TARGETS

5.1 UK Objectives and Targets

Not applicable to this species.

5.2 Caerphilly Objectives and Targets

5.2.1 Maintain the unique population density of this mouse by protecting broadleaved woodland and parkland habitats in the county borough. (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											
None proposed at this time.	-	-									
6.2 Site Safeguard and Management											
6.2.1 Maintain the current extent and quality of foraging habitats through appropriate management.	CCBC	Coed Cymru landowners	✓								
6.2.2 Seek to create new nesting sites for the species by providing nest boxes and maintaining the diversity of structure of broadleaved woodlands, for example, leaving fallen trees.	CCBC	Coed Cymru landowners	✓								
6.3 Species Management and Protection											
6.3.1 Identify and protect key breeding and feeding areas.	GWT GLWT	VWT CCBC		✓							
6.4 Advisory											
6.4.1 Produce and disseminate advice to local authority staff and private woodland and parkland managers.	CCBC	Coed Cymru	✓								
6.5 Future Research and Monitoring											
6.5.1 Monitor all known breeding and feeding sites on a regular basis.	GWT GLWT	VWT CCBC		✓		✓		✓		✓	
6.6 Communications and Publicity											
6.6.1 Provide information to schools and colleges, and other interested organisations and individuals.	CBP	GWT GLWT Schools Youth Forum			✓						