

Dormouse Action Plan

Introduction and Vision Statement

The dormouse (*Muscardinus avelanarius*) is a small nocturnal mammal which feeds mainly on nuts, fruit, flowers and insects. They are typically associated with ancient coppiced woodland and small copses linked by species-rich hedgerows. Unfortunately the ongoing fragmentation of these habitats, coupled with the dormouse's poor powers of dispersal, has resulted in many localised extinctions and contributed to a marked national decline over the last 100 years.



In Britain the dormouse is largely confined to southern England and Wales, with a few outlying populations in northern England. It has suffered considerable recent losses, particularly in central and northern England. Even within its core range of Devon across to Kent, the dormouse is often patchily distributed. It is even more localised in Wales, where it occurs at the western edge of its range.

The dormouse has been the subject of fairly intensive recent recording in Carmarthenshire. This work has provided a good insight into its local distribution and has highlighted parts of Carmarthenshire as something of a relative stronghold for the species.

Dormice occur occasionally within the triangle formed by Carmarthen, Llandeilo and Llanelli. They are also found along the wooded valley of the Afon Sawdde, but elsewhere in the county they seem to be genuinely rare. The woods and copses of south Carmarthenshire, with their well-developed understories, appear to provide good habitat for dormice. Hedgerows are very important as they often link woodlands and can be important habitats in their own right. They also provide pathways for aerial dispersal, reducing the risk of population isolation. Wide, unmanaged hedgerows are especially important but there is evidence that dormice use dense, frequently cut hedges to build summer nests in. Locally scrub and bramble habitat is important.

Population isolation through habitat fragmentation is a problem as it can lead to localised extinctions. In addition decline of woodland management (particularly coppicing) and incursion by stock, leading to habitat degradation are also problems.

Within Carmarthenshire our vision for dormice is have a good understanding of their population size and distribution and to expand their range and increase their numbers. This would be by providing the range of interconnected habitats that they need to survive and to work with landowners/organisations to encourage appropriate management.

Action Plan Objectives

- DOR1SP** To maintain and increase the population of dormice in Carmarthenshire
- DOR2DCM** To gather data on the distribution and status of dormice in Carmarthenshire
- DOR3RA** To raise awareness of the importance of dormice in Carmarthenshire and provide advice on habitat management
- DOR4POL** To ensure that surveys are undertaken to inform decision making/planning of any project that has the potential to affect dormice

Actions

CODE	TEXT	START/ END DATE	Lead contact	Action goal	Key partners	Funding	Priority L,M,H	Report Jan–Dec 2010	Report Jan–Dec 2010	Formatted Table
DOR1SP1	Undertake dormouse project on habitat adjacent to Rhos Cefn Bryn (SN560673)	2010	WTSWW	Project completed	CCC Consultant Landowners	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connectivity survey undertaken identifying areas where hedgerow enhancement is required and sites where boxes could be erected. Completed/ongoing follow-up work and seeking funding for additional work (hopefully student placement) 		
DOR1SP2	Identify suitable sites for habitat management/nest boxes for dormice, based on current records data	2010– 2014	CCC	Site list produced	CCW, WTSWW Consultant	✓		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bryndias Farm, Pembrey identified from site visit. WTSWW project has identified sites around Rhos Cefn Bryn. CCW-funded project report produced in Jan 2010. 		
DOR1SP3	Establish nestbox scheme/s at identified sites	2010– 2013	CCC	At least 2 schemes established	CCW, WTSWW Consultant Landowners Vols Country Parks	✓		Scheme to be established at Bryndias Farm, Pembrey after dormouse nuts were re-found there. Funding from PTES/CCW for 50 boxes received. To be monitored as part of the NDMP. (SN435043)		
DOR2DCM1	Collate all current survey data/reports for dormouse in the county	2010– 2011	WWBIC	GIS Layer produced	WTSWW, CCW, Volunteers					
DOR2DCM2	Identify sites in Carmarthenshire where dormice surveys should be targeted to try and get better understanding of range and improve connectivity	2010– 2014	CCC	Site list produced	CCW, WWBIC, WTSWW Consultant FCW	✓		Priority list produced based on current records. Key area identified: Ammanford area/Amman Valley, Cross Hands, Pembrey/Burry Port/Llanelli area		
DOR2DCM3	NBGW - continue participation in National Dormouse Monitoring programme (SN521183)	2010– 2014	NBGW	Annual monitoring undertaken				In process of making 50 new dormouse boxes due to be placed in best known sites this spring. Monitored by volunteer.		
DOR2DCM4	Identify other sites that could be included in National Dormouse Monitoring programme	2010– 2012	CCC	List of sites	WTSWW, CCW Consultant FCW			Bryndias Farm, Pembrey will now be included in the scheme. Funding for boxes received from PTES/CCW.		

								(SN435043)		
DOR2DCM5	Organise survey/monitoring scheme at sites identified as having potential for dormice	2010–2013	CCC	At least 3 sites surveyed	WTSWW, CCW Consultant Landowners	✓		• Volunteers surveyed area around Cross Hands on October 9th 2010 signs found. • Bryndias farm resurveyed and signs found. (SN435043)		
DOR2DCM6	Organise survey/monitoring scheme at Llyn Llech Owain CP (SN566150)	2010-2014	CCC	Survey/monitoring scheme established	Llyn Llech Owain CP Vols	✓ KWT		• Survey of 550m hedgerow. • Dormouse presence established and boxes erected. • Further boxes and tubes planned for 2011.		
DOR3RA1	Revise and relaunch dormouse advisory sheet through WTSWW project	2010–2010	WTSWW	Leaflet produced	CCC	✓		Action complete. Leaflet distributed. 200 copies have been given to Tir Gofal staff for use and around 100 have been distributed to Wildlife Trust members and at events in Carmarthenshire and via biodiversity officer.		
DOR3RA2	Promote collection and identification of dormouse nuts as way of collecting data on dormice in Carmarthenshire	2010–2014	CCC	ID sheet produced and promoted: PR Newsletter	WTSWW CCW			Great Nut Hunt promote in the county. PR sent out and items in Biodiversity newsletter and council's Community News. Over 100 packs sent out.		
DOR3RA3	Hold an event as part of the 21 st anniversary of the National Dormouse Monitoring programme in 2010	Jan 2010–December 2010	CCC	One event held	WTSWW CCW Consultant	✓		Event held at NBGW on Saturday 18th September. Vols helped out. Dormouse info on display and guided walk. (SN521183)		
DOR3RA4	Organise a training event for landowners/public on dormouse conservation/survey to increase local participation	2010–2011	CCC	One training event held	WTSWW CCW Consultant	✓		Not started.		
DOR4POL1	Ensure that dormice surveys and mitigation plans are submitted for all planning applications or projects that may affect dormice habitat	2010–ongoing	CCC	100% of relevant applications				Applications with surveys/ or where surveys have been requested: 17 Commented on 4 applications in 2010 requesting dormice mitigation/compensation. Protection conditions and advisory notes for potential sites added for 8 sites. No mechanism at moment to assess area or whether this was carried out.		

