

CARMARTHENSHIRE LBAP DORMOUSE ACTION PLAN

Introduction

The dormouse (*Muscardinus avelanarius*, Pathew) 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 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.

The local planning authority requires that surveys are undertaken to inform the planning/decision making of any plan/project that has the potential to affect dormice as part of their statutory/policy responsibilities.

Vision statement and objectives

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. All action would aim to meet one or more of the following objectives:

- DOR1** To maintain and increase the population and range of dormice in Carmarthenshire
- DOR2** To gather data on the distribution and status of dormice in Carmarthenshire
- DOR3** To raise awareness of the importance of dormice in Carmarthenshire and provide advice on habitat management

Summary of action achieved by LBAP Partners (for more information contact the biodiversity officer – Biodiversity@carmarthenshire.gov.uk) or visit the national Biodiversity Action Reporting System - <http://ukbars.defra.gov.uk>:

2010–12

- Rhos Cefn Bryn NR - dormouse monitoring undertaken - WTSWW/Vols DOR2
- Surveys carried out in Cross hands area - dormouse nuts found - CBP/vols DOR2
- Surveys carried out around Ammanford - dormouse nits found - CBP/vols DOR2
- NBGW - takes part in National Dormouse Monitoring Programme - NBGW DOR2
- Dormouse boxes put up at four sites in the county - near Pembrey Llyn Llech Owain, Carmel Woods and Troserch Woods DOR1
- Site monitoring at known dormouse sites with boxes in county - CBP/vols DOR2
- Information panel on dormice at Llyn Llech Owain CP - CCC DOR3
- Volunteers trained to get dormouse licence - DOR3
- Surveys/mitigation required for planning applications with suitable habitat for dormouse - CCC DOR3
- Dormouse advisory sheet produced - WTSWW/CCC/NRW DOR3
- Dormouse nut hunts promoted - CCC DOR3
- Habitat management undertaken on land close to Rhos Cefn Bryn Reserve - WTSWW/Vols DOR1
- Dormouse group established in county with Facebook page - DOR3
- Dinefwr park - dormouse nest tubes put up - NT DOR2
- Ongoing survey of dormouse in Crychan forest – Brecknock Wildlife Trust DOR2

2013

- Additional dormouse boxes installed at Ffrwd Farm Mire NR – WTSWW DOR1/2
- Annual monitoring of Rhos Cefn Bryn NR by vol – WTSWW/Vol DOR2
- Dormouse boxes replaced at Rhos Cefn Bryn NR - WTSWW DOR1/2
- Dormouse boxes put up at Mynydd Mawr Woodland Park – CCC DOR1/2
- Volunteers trained to get dormouse licence DOR3
- Sites identified for future survey – CCC DOR2
- Licence to undertake habitat work at Ynysdawela NP applied for - CCC DOR1
- Surveys/mitigation required for planning applications with suitable habitat for dormouse - CCC DOR3

2014

- Nest boxes monitoring being carried out at Rhos Cefn Bryn and Carmel NNR – WTSWW DOR2
- Dormouse boxes erected by local school at Mynydd Llangynderyn – RSPB DOR3
- Habitat survey for dormouse undertaken at Ynysdawela Nature Park – CCC DOR1
- Two CCC officers trained for dormouse licence – CCC DOR2

2015

- Nest boxes monitoring being carried out at Rhos Cefn Bryn and Carmel NNR – WTSWW DOR2

- Nest tubes monitored at CCC-owned sites in the county – CCC DOR2
- Nest boxes monitored at Mynydd Llangynderyn SSSI – NRW DOR2
- Training on dormice for conservation managers undertaken - DOR3
- Surveys undertaken and new records found on CCC-owned sites DOR3
- Surveys/mitigation undertaken for planning applications with suitable habitat for dormouse - CCC DOR3

Proposed future action

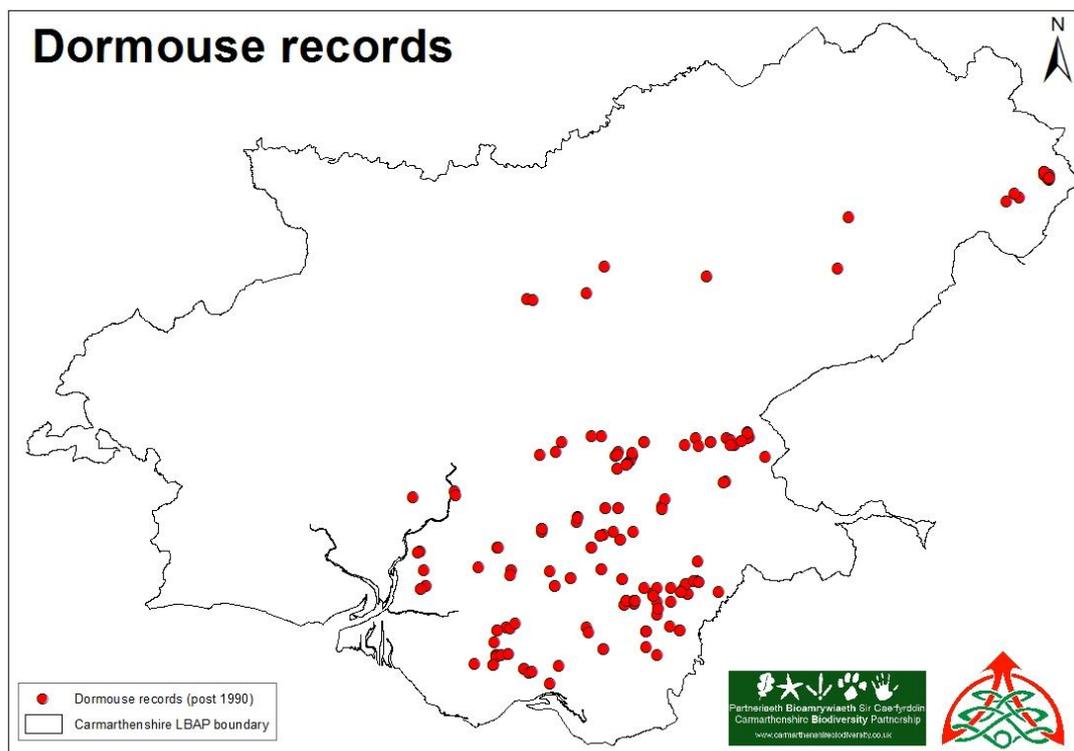
- Further surveys at potential sites for dormice - CBP/vols DOR2

Useful links:

- [The Dormouse Site](#)
- People’s Trust for Endangered Species - [dormouse](#)
- [Snoring dormouse](#) – YouTube clip.
- The Mammal Society - [dormouse](#)
- The Wildlife Trust – [dormouse](#)

Legislation

The dormouse is strictly protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The deliberate capturing, disturbing, injuring and killing of dormice is prohibited, as is damaging or destroying their breeding sites and resting places (note that this is a simplified summary of the legislation).



Dormouse records in Carmarthenshire

The first reference to the common dormouse in Carmarthenshire was in 1885 in an article in The Zoologist by L. Phillips. However, the species appears to have been well known to country people as dormouse appears in such sayings as ‘cyn dewed a phathew’ (as fat as a dormouse) and ‘cysgu fel pathew’ (to sleep like a dormouse). Pathor is the local dialect name. (From Mammals in Carmarthenshire by A. Lucas)



Partneriaeth **Bioamrywiaeth** Sir Gaerfyrddin
Carmarthenshire **Biodiversity** Partnership

www.carmarthenshirebiodiversity.co.uk

The [Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership](#) (CBP) is made up of the following organisations: [Carmarthenshire County Council](#) (CCC), [Wildlife Trust of South and West Wales](#) (WTSWW), [Natural Resources Wales](#) (NRW), [RSPB](#), [Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust](#) (WWT), [Carmarthenshire Bird Club](#) (CBC), [National Botanic Gardens Wales](#) (NBGW), [Butterfly Conservation](#) (BC), [Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust](#) (CRT), [National Trust](#) (NT), [Botanical Society of the British Isles](#) (BSBI), [Llanelli Naturalists](#) (LN), [Bat Conservation Trust](#) (BCT), [West Wales Biodiversity Information Centre](#) (WWBIC), [Amphibian and Reptile Conservation](#) (ARC), [Woodland Trust](#) (WT)