

Ecology advice note 5: Dormouse

The Dormouse is one of Britain's most endangered mammals. Dormouse populations have significantly declined over the last century due to habitat loss and fragmentation together with changes in woodland management.

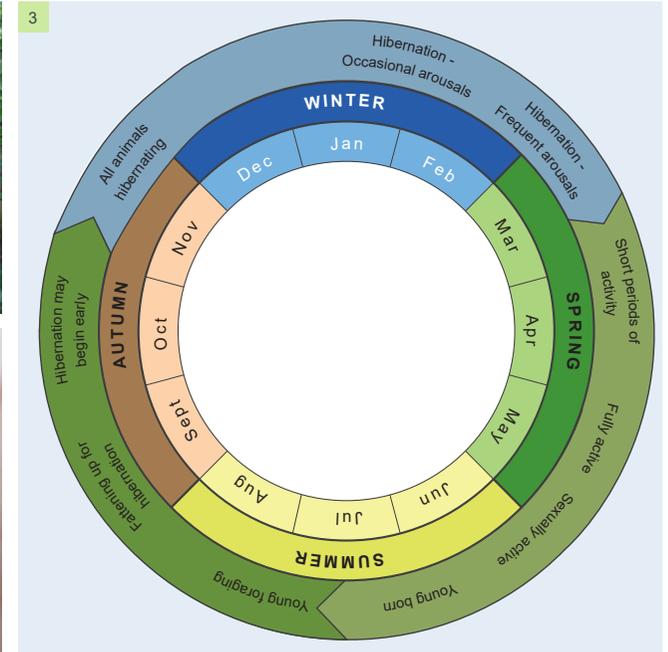
The Landscape Partnership is able to undertake dormouse consultancy services, ranging from survey to mitigation design and translocation and reintroduction projects, including:

- Presence/absence surveys and population size assessments
- Mitigation/enhancement design and Method Statements
- European Protected Species (EPS) licence applications
- Translocation and population monitoring
- Habitat enhancement and creation
- Negotiation with environmental regulators
- Legislation advice

Dormice are highly arboreal during late spring to early autumn. During winter months they will often hibernate close to the ground or underground in a nest of leaves and grass. Optimal habitat for this species is deciduous woodland and coppice connected to species-rich hedgerows. However, they are found occasionally in less suitable habitats such as coniferous woodland.

Ecological surveys are subject to seasonal constraints, and the timing of survey work is sometimes restricted to a small window annually. It is best practice to plan ecology survey in as early as possible in the planning application process.

The programme gives an indication of how survey timing constraints apply to the calendar year. Dormouse survey method varies according to season but can involve searches for characteristically gnawed nuts and searches of artificial nest tubes. Survey will usually take several months so it is worth considering early on in the planning process.



1. Dormouse nest 2. Dormouse box 3. Dormouse 4. Annual Dormouse activity schedule 5. Dormouse survey

Early identification of Dormouse presence can save money and prevent lengthy delays: If surveys are carried out sufficiently early, there should be time to plan for carrying out any mitigation that may be necessary without delays to the project programme. Later identification may mean that on-site project delay is incurred while waiting for the necessary survey season.

When is a survey required?

A license is required for any activity which would otherwise be unlawful. Such activity could include loss of habitat used for nesting and breeding, or activities which would disturb dormice occupying such habitat.

Dormice are given full protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Protection is also given by Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, making the hazel dormouse a European Protected Species.

Under the provisions of Section 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of habitats and species Regulations, 2010, it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a dormouse
- Deliberately disturb a dormouse
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange a live or dead dormouse or any part of a dormouse
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a dormouse
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose
- Possess or control a live or dead specimen or anything derived from a dormouse (unless it can be shown to have been legally acquired)

The dormouse is a Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP), and has been adopted as a Species of Principal Importance in England under section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (section 42 in Wales).



6,7. Typical Dormouse habitat



Timing of dormouse surveys

