

## 1. CURRENT STATUS

### 1.1 Legislation and priority status

International	Habitats Directive <sup>a</sup> (Annex IV) Berne Convention (Appendix III)
UK and Wales	Habitat Regulations <sup>b</sup> (Schedule 2) Wildlife and Countryside Act (Schedules 5 and 6) The Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996 UK BAP Priority Welsh S74 list <sup>c</sup>
Gwynedd	Snowdonia BAP

### 1.2 Status in Wales and beyond

The hazel or common dormouse<sup>d</sup> is found mainly in the southern English counties and in Wales. Surveys in the 1980s and 1990s revealed that dormice have disappeared from a number of northern counties, and are declining southwards. Even in the south, dormice have a scattered and patchy distribution.

Dormice are widely distributed in Wales, but individual populations are small, often scattered and isolated from each other. The dormouse is a very rare mammal in North Wales with few known populations, and a scatter of colonies in South Wales. Surveys in the 1990s revealed a number of previously unknown populations in North Wales. Current information suggests that they are more common in the East than the West.



<sup>a</sup> Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora

<sup>b</sup> European Conservation (Natural Habitats) Regulations 1994

<sup>c</sup> Welsh Assembly Government, *Going Wild in Wales - List of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biological Diversity*. Crown Copyright 2003.

<sup>d</sup> *Muscardinus avellanarius*

## 1.3 Status in Gwynedd<sup>e</sup>

Dormice are known from several areas of Gwynedd (most but not all of which fall within the Snowdonia National Park Authority boundary) - near Corris, Dolgellau, Betws-y-Coed, Llanrwst and within the Dyfi Valley.

There is anecdotal evidence that dormice were present on the Llŷn Peninsula during the 1980s, but the colony is now thought to be extinct.

## 2. FACTORS AFFECTING THIS SPECIES IN GWYNEDD<sup>f</sup>

- Loss of suitable habitat
- Fragmentation and degradation of suitable woodland habitat - dormice do not readily cross open ground, and do not occur in very large populations at any one site, therefore are unlikely to colonise new sites.
- Reduction in woodland understorey vegetation through sheep grazing.
- Reduction in traditional woodland management, in particular coppicing, which creates a suitable understorey of sprawling branches, pathways and shrub species for food vegetation and not too much shading from larger trees.
- Climate change - warmer winters may decrease dormice survival rate, as hibernation patterns become disrupted. Wet, cool summers dramatically reduce the survival prospects of new-borns.

## 3. ASSOCIATED GWYNEDD SAPS / HAPS

Upland mixed ashwoods, Hedgerows

## 4. CURRENT ACTION IN GWYNEDD

### 4.1 Site and habitat protection

- Dormice may occur in areas of Gwynedd identified as potential Wildlife Sites, or designated as LNR, SSSI, NNR or candidate SAC, however no details are available.
- Where EIA's are required for proposed developments (e.g. for road building schemes), these should include surveys for protected species including dormice. Where found to be present mitigation measures may be required.

---

<sup>e</sup> Within this document the term "Gwynedd" refers to areas outside the Snowdonia National Park area, except where specified otherwise

<sup>f</sup> See also associated HAPs for more general factors affecting this species habitats

## 4.2 Management and programmes of action

- On some Forest Enterprise sites, including Pantperthog near Corris, management has been instigated to create suitable conditions for dormice.
- Grant Schemes for woodland management (e.g. Woodland Grant Scheme) and agri-environmental management (e.g. Tir Gofal), may contribute towards maintaining and enhancing habitat suitable for the dormouse.
- The dormouse is one of the species eligible for funding from Countryside Council for Wales Species Challenge Fund.
- Where EIA's are required for proposed developments (e.g. for road building schemes), these include surveys for protected species including dormice, and where found to be present mitigation measures may be drawn up to minimise impacts.

## 4.3 Survey, research and monitoring

- Nest boxes were set up at Pantperthog in 1994, and monitored regularly, as part of a UK wide nestbox scheme established by the Mammal Society.
- Local Forest Enterprise staff are involved with a wider Forest Research project looking at habitat requirements of dormice, especially in relation to conifers and restoration of Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites.
- The 2001 Great Nut Hunt was promoted in Gwynedd.

## 5. ACTION PLAN OBJECTIVES

1. Establish the status and distribution of dormice within Gwynedd.
2. Protect, maintain and increase the size of existing dormouse populations, by conservation and enhancement of associated habitats
3. Encourage the sympathetic management of suitable woodlands and hedgerows for dormice where appropriate, especially areas of habitat adjacent to or connecting existing dormouse populations
4. Use the dormouse as a flagship species to raise awareness of the importance of appropriate management of its associated habitats

## 6. PROPOSED ACTIONS

Code	Action	Partner(s) <sup>9</sup>
<b>Policy and legislation</b>		
1	Use planning conditions to ensure developments in sensitive locations are compatible with conservation of hazel dormouse TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>GC</b> , Relevant partners
2	Continue to require hazel dormouse surveys and mitigation where appropriate for all developments infringing upon or isolating potentially suitable woodlands, hedgerows or scrub TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>GC</b>
3	Consider designating suitable sites of importance for hazel dormouse as Wildlife Sites TARGET/TIMESCALE: Start process of designation by 2005	<b>GC</b> , <b>CCW</b> , <b>FC</b> , <b>NWWT</b> , <b>VWT</b>
<b>Species / habitat management and protection</b>		
4	Ensure that the potential presence and management requirements of hazel dormice are considered within any relevant management plans or grant schemes (e.g. NWMPs, WGS) by liaison (including consultation and provision of comments) between key organisations TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>CCW</b> , <b>FC</b> , <b>GC</b> , <b>VWT</b>
5	Promote and support grant schemes including <b>FC</b> grant schemes and / or use management agreements where appropriate to secure favourable habitat management at known dormouse sites and in adjacent areas, taking into account the needs of associated LBAP species and habitats TARGET/TIMESCALE: To be set / Ongoing	<b>CCW</b> , <b>CC</b> , <b>CLA</b> , <b>FC</b> , <b>FUW</b> , <b>GC</b> , <b>NFU Cymru</b>
6	Seek funding for land management by developing a biodiversity grant scheme, which would include grants for appropriate management, restoration and creation of hazel dormouse habitat TARGET/TIMESCALE: By 2005	<b>GC</b> , Relevant partners
<b>Advisory</b>		
7	Inform all relevant landowners, managers and / or advisors (including staff of <b>FC</b> , Coed Cymru officers) of the presence of dormouse colonies and provide advice on appropriate management options. TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>VWT</b> , <b>CC</b> , <b>CCW</b> , <b>FC</b> , <b>GC</b>
<b>Survey, research and monitoring</b>		
8	Provide advice and regular training on hazel dormouse conservation issues to development control officers, highways engineers, staff of Environment Agency Wales, including promoting future training events organised by Roads and Otters Steering Group TARGET/TIMESCALE: To be set, Ongoing	<b>GC</b> , <b>CCW</b> , <b>NWWT</b>
9	Wherever evidence of dormice is found, carry out a Phase Two vegetation survey of the immediate surroundings as soon as possible. Ensure data is integrated into any research being carried out into dormice habitat requirements, e.g. by Forest Research TARGET: Ongoing	<b>CCW</b>
<b>Communications and publicity</b>		
10	Encourage the recording of dormouse sightings by the general public, to be passed to <b>NWWT</b> for collation, following the Great Nut Hunt format, through submission of press releases to local newspapers, and the organisation of occasional one-day events TARGET/TIMESCALE: Ongoing	<b>GC</b>

<sup>9</sup> Lead partner for this action is indicated by bold typeface, see section 7.2 for explanation of abbreviations

## 8 PARTNERS & OPPORTUNITIES

### 8.1 Overall Lead Partner for SAP

Countryside Council for Wales (CCW)

### 8.2 Key Partners

Coed Cymru (CC)

Country Land and Business Association (CLA)

Farmers Union of Wales (FUW)

Forestry Commission (FC)

Gwynedd Council (GC)

National Farmers Union Cymru (NFU Cymru)

North Wales Wildlife Trust (NWWT)

Vincent Wildlife Trust (VWT)

### 8.3 Opportunities

Volunteers, students, farming unions, landowners and managers

## 9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Principal Author: Jane Stott

Consultation: Jack Grasse, Pat Thompson, Jean Matthews (CCW), Robert Greig (Anglesey Otter Project), Jill Jackson (GC), John Messenger (VWT)

## 9. ABBREVIATIONS

BAP: Biodiversity Action Plan, EIA: Environmental Impact Assessment, HAP: Habitat Action Plan, LBAP: Local Biodiversity Action Plan, LNR: Local Nature Reserve, NNR: National Nature Reserve, NWMP: Native Woodland Management Plan, SAC: Special Area of Conservation, SAP: Species Action Plan, SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest, WGS: Woodland Grant Scheme

Version 1, 2004