

ADVISORY INFORMATION – DORMICE



Dormice are protected by law because their numbers and distributional range have declined by at least half during the past 100 years.

Key Points

- Dormice are protected principally under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010), with additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended, making Dormice a European Protected Species. It is an offence to:
 - Deliberately kill or injure dormice.
 - Damage or destroy the breeding site or resting place of dormice (even if unintentional or even when the animal is not present).
 - Deliberately disturb a dormouse while occupying a place of shelter; or to disturb them in such a manner as to significantly affect their ability to survive, hibernate and breed; or to disturb them in such a manner as to significantly affect the local population.
 - To obstruct access to a place of shelter.
- **Criminal offence carries a fine of up to £5,000 per offence and also carries a custodial sentence of up to six months imprisonment.**
- The potential presence of dormice should be considered when habitat management or land-use change is planned that affects any type of woodland, hedgerow or scrub.

Ecology

The dormouse is a native British species seldom seen owing to its rarity and nocturnal habits. Dormice occur in a wide variety of woody habitats, ranging from ancient woodlands to species rich scrub and conifer plantation. Dormice can also be found in species rich hedgerows. Dormice hibernate under the ground from about October until March or April. Dormice feed on a variety of nuts, berries, insects, flowers and pollen. They are particularly fond of hazelnuts leaving distinctive gnaw marks. Dormice can have up to 2 litters a year, usually comprising of around 4 young.

The Mammal Society works to protect, halt the decline of threatened species, and give advice on all issues affecting British mammals www.mammal.org.uk