

Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

Areas and status: The dormouse has declined significantly in the past century. It is has a patchy distribution throughout S & W England and S & E Wales with records in N & C England and N & W Wales; Section 41 Species.

Woodland type: Lowland Broadleaved Woodland, Young Woodland, PAWS and Scrub.

Preferred habitat niches: High forest, glades, rides, edges, clearfell, coppice, and scrub mosaic. Dormice nest between 500mm and 15m above ground or weaving their own or utilising bird nests and tree cavities; they hibernate in a tightly woven nest at or just below ground level.

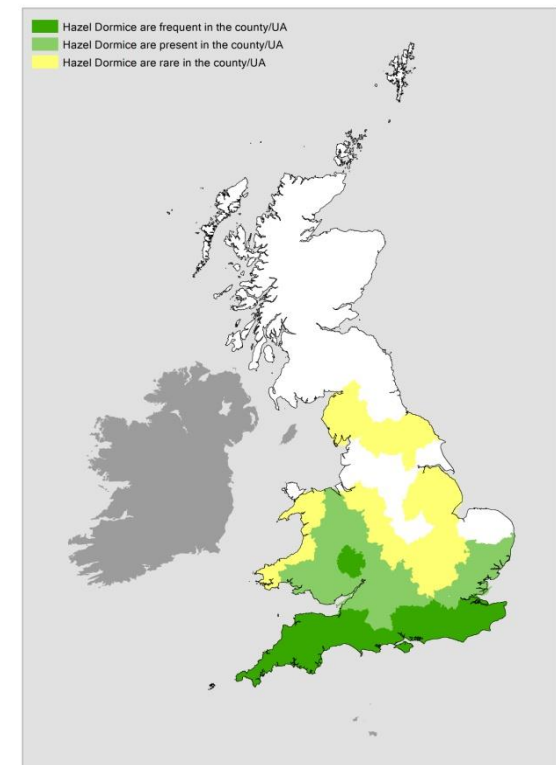
Potential habitat management issues associated with decline:

- Isolation and fragmentation of woodlands
- Deterioration of shrub and scrub layers
- Excessive grazing/browsing,
- Over-zealous tidying of woodlands, e.g. clearing scrub and felling dead trees.

Potential habitat management solutions:	
Prescription	Comment
PAWS	Maintain margins of deciduous trees/shrubs beside the rides, glades and edges of commercial conifer plantations. To prevent overshadowing of margins fell strips of rideside conifers (50m long x 10m wide) in winter.
Thinning/selective felling (25-35% canopy gap)	If required under closed canopies, in winter create canopy gaps of 30x30m to 50x50m but do not clear understorey. To avoid hibernating dormice keep paths, trackways and fires to a minimum.
Minimal intervention/Deadwood	Retain deadwood and trees with crevices and cavities (e.g. woodpecker holes, loose bark and rot hollows). Retain woody species eg Blackthorn, Bramble, Hazel, Honeysuckle especially they are growing in sunny situations.
Rotational coppice (>12yr rotation)/Small group fell	If woodland is being coppiced then create 50x50m coupes on a 20 yr cycle. If managed by group felling then 50x50m coupes on 30-40 yr cycles. For dormice have non-adjacent coupes and 'scatter' them throughout the woodland. Layer/plant hazels to prevent any losses within the woodland.
Rides, Connectivity	Dormice will travel on the ground but prefer to move via arboreal routeways. Ensure that there are connections across wide rides every 50-100m.
Grazing	If necessary, limit grazing/browsing and disturbance by pigs and wild boar.
Connectivity	Manage woodland on landscape-scale. Ensure woodland is connected to woods, orchards, patches of scrub, hedgerows and shelterbelts within 2km.
Woodland creation	Plant up/allow natural succession on areas of low ecological interest beside or within 2km of woodland; if planting, use a diverse mix of locally native trees and shrubs.
Nest boxes	Consider erecting dormouse boxes and/or tubes as they provide a useful monitoring & conservation tool.



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Current dormouse distribution in the UK, including counties where there have been successful reintroductions.
(Data from: National Dormouse Database 2011 - 2016)