

# The North Wales Dormouse Nut Hunt Guide 2009



people's trust for  
**endangered  
species**



## **Dormice**

Dormice are a distinctive native mammal. They are a golden sandy colour with a white chest patch and a furry tail. Dormice are very easily distinguishable from other small mammals such as woodmice, bank voles and shrews. They are nocturnal and spend the majority of their time up in the trees, only really coming down to the ground to hibernate.

Dormice are usually found in woodlands, and their preferred habitat seems to be ancient woodlands, however they are now being found in different habitats, it is not clear if this is due to the decline of their favourite habitat or if they are diversifying.

The common food sources which are associated with dormice are:-

- Hazel
- Honeysuckle
- Bramble

These are very important food sources for the dormice, however for dormice to survive they have to be able to feed on a large variety of food available at different times of the year such as insects, flowers and fruits.

## **Why do nut hunts?**

Dormice are nocturnal and live up in the trees, therefore finding new dormouse sites is not very easy! They are very hard animals to see once they are up in the trees. The way we monitor by dormice is by putting up dormouse boxes, these are like bird boxes but with the hole in the back, facing the tree. To work out where to put these boxes, we like to know if there are dormice in the area. As it is not easy to see dormice, the easiest way to discover new dormouse sites are by looking for their signs.

Dormice leave very characteristic marks on hazelnuts so it can be determined if the nut was opened by a dormouse or another small mammal.

## **The Nut Hunt**

How to go about doing a Nut Hunt:-






Choose a local wood, which has fruiting hazel trees present or choose one from our list  
Approach landowner for permission (please let us know the landowner details)  
If organizing for a group do a risk assessment  
Get nutting!!

Best way to get used to looking at different nuts, is to either visit a known dormouse site with a nut guide and look for nuts here or attend one of the nut hunts with us, for more information on this please visit our website <http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/northwales>

I do have nut guides and also dormouse books available so please e-mail [rhianhughes@wildlifetrustswales.org](mailto:rhianhughes@wildlifetrustswales.org) if you would like a copy.

On the day of the nut hunt, depending how confident you feel, you can either identify the nuts in the field, or collect all the nuts and identify the nuts later, this is usually easier if the nuts are quite wet and muddy.

If you have any nuts which you think are dormice or you are not sure about please send them in a film canister to Rhian Hughes at the Wildlife Trust.




Picture	Description	Identification
	The hold has a neat inner rim and the toothmarks are at an angle to the hole on the nut surface	Dormouse
	Neat parallel toothmarks on the inner rim of the hole but no toothmarks on the nut surface	Bank vole
	Parallel toothmarks on the inner rim of the hole and rough marks on the nut surface	Woodmouse
	Nuts opened leaving jagged edges and half shells	Squirrel and birds
	Small holes less than 2mm across (1/10 <sup>th</sup> inch)	Insect

### Dormouse Nut Hunt Form

Date	
Name	
Address	
Phone	
E-mail	
Woodland	
Grid Ref	
Nearest Town	

How many people surveying?	
How long for?	

### Results

	Opened	
	Unopened	
	Dormouse	
	Woodmouse	
	Bank vole	
	Squirrel/bird	
	Unknown	

Please send any possible dormouse nuts to Rhian Hughes, Dormouse Project Officer, North Wales Wildlife Trust, Loggerheads Country Park, Loggerheads, Mold, CH7 5LH

Or e-mail me for more information on [rhianhughes@wildlifetrustswales.org](mailto:rhianhughes@wildlifetrustswales.org)