APPENDIX 11.2

EAST HILL, HEMPSTEAD, MEDWAY

Hazel Dormouse Report

Date of report	07th March 2019
Date of surveys	March – November 2018
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CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Corylus Ecology has undertaken presence/likely absence surveys for hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* at East Hill, Hempstead, Medway, hereinafter referred to as 'the Site'.

Summary

1.2 During the Extended Phase I Habitat Survey the habitat was assessed for the potential for dormice. The majority of the Site consists of arable wheat fields that are not suitable for use by dormice. However, the boundaries comprise of mature treelines, ancient woodland boundaries, species rich hedgerows and dense scrub, which provide suitable habitat for hazel dormice. The Site is situated within the large Medway Towns area approximately 1.5km to the west of Hempstead and 2.7km to the south of Chatham. The Site is adjacent to two small blocks of ancient woodland which can be highly suitable for dormice as they can contain many species of woody plants providing a range of food sources. This report summarises the results of the dormouse surveys.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 Records of dormice were sought from the Kent Biodiversity Records Centre. Records of EPS Licences for dormice within 3km of the Site were also sought from freely available internet resources such as the MAGIC interactive mapping service. Figure 1 shows the approximate locations of the records.

2.2 Dormouse Surveys

2.2.1 The surveys followed the guidance from Natural England in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd edition (English Nature, 2006). A total of 30 boxes and 66 tubes were installed at approximately 10 metre intervals across the Site on 15th May 2018. They were installed throughout the hedgerows and tree lines at the boundaries of the Site and within the Ancient Woodland blocks Whites Wood and North Dane Wood as well as within the dense scrub between Fields 2 and 3. The tubes and boxes were located in the areas with the best structure to maximise the probability of detecting any population which may be present. Boxes were positioned on coppiced hazel where possible within areas of habitat with suitable aerial connectivity. The northern part of the western boundary of field 2 was not subject to surveys even though the habitat was suitable due to potential issues with disturbance and difficulties in hiding dormouse tubes within the scrub. Figures 2 and 3 shows the locations of the tubes and boxes.

2.2.2 Surveys of the tubes were undertaken on 2rd July, 31st July, 28th August, 1st October and 5th November 2018. The licenced dormouse surveyors were Kate Baldock (licence number 2016-22541-CLS-CLS) of Baldock Ecology and Alexander Watkinson (licence number 2018-38482-CLS-CLS) of Corylus Ecology.

2.2.3 Each tube and box was surveyed in a linear route, starting in the north-east corner of Field 3 Where a tube could be seen to be empty, no further check was made. Where the inside of the tube could not be easily seen, a material 'stuffer' was used to block the entrance and the end of the tube was then pushed back to inspect it for evidence of nesting material or an animal, this system was also used for boxes as well. If nesting material or leaves were found inside, the tube or box was taken out of the vegetation and placed into a large plastic bag for a detailed check.

2.2.4 Each survey was carried out in suitable, dry weather conditions and completed within one day to ensure no animals found were double counted. The biometric data of any captured dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* or other mammal species, such as wood mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus* and yellow-necked mouse *Apodemus flavicollis*, were taken; animals were weighed using small plastic bags and 50g pesola balances. Any birds' nests were also noted. Full survey results can be found in Appendix 1.

Index of probability

2.2.5 The Dormouse Conservation Handbook provides an index of probability for the presence, or otherwise, or dormice based on a minimum level of survey effort. A scoring system has been devised in which each month during the active period is given a score; a minimum score of 20 points needs to be reached in order to show reasonable survey effort has been made. The scores for the index of probability are shown below in Table 1:

Table 1 – Index of probability

Month	Index of probability
April	1
May	4
June	2
July	2
August	5
September	7
October	2
November	2

2.2.6 Using fifty nest tubes or boxes as standard, and the index of probability table as a value for different months of surveying, a score can be devised as a guide to the thoroughness of a survey, with the aim of achieving 20 points (Chanin and Woods, 2003). Under this methodology, fifty tubes or boxes set out for a whole survey season would score 25 points (the sum of the indices for all 8 months), but 25 tubes left out during only April and May would score 2.5 (1+4, divided by 2 because only half as many tubes were installed). Although half of the total score is taken away when using half the standardised fifty tubes, the scoring cannot be 'doubled up' if 100 tubes are used.

2.2.7 A total of 66 tubes and 30 boxes were set at the Site, so the standard of 50 tubes/boxes was achieved. The tubes/boxes were set out from May to November, scoring 24 points.

Survey Constraints

2.2.8 Between the July and August 2018 dormouse survey, the land owner had undertaken management by using a flail to clear back the field margins and vegetated boundaries of the fields. A small number of tubes within Field 3 had either been damaged or destroyed, these were either repaired or replaced to ensure continuation of the survey effort. Some areas of the Site had significant levels of disturbance from the public such as parking, dog walking, fly tipping and recreation use and a decision was made not to install dormouse tubes or boxes in these location to avoid potential animal welfare issues. Figure 1 shows the location of these areas.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Dormice have been recorded within multiple areas of the Darland Banks LNR, with the nearest record being located 210m to the north of Field 3 from 2003 and the most recent record from 2006 located in woodland to the east of Pear Tree Lane approximately 580m to the east of Field 3. There are also multiple records from 'Capstone Farm' from 2011 ranging from 260m to 280m to the east of Field 1. There is also a record of dormouse approximately 680m to the south of Field 1 within 'Hook Wood' from 2009.

3.2 Dormouse Surveys

3.2.1 Dormice have been confirmed as present across the Site with the first nest identified during the first July check with all subsequent checks finding additional nests and dormice, with a peak count of 18 dormouse found during the November survey. All survey results and tube/box locations are shown on Figures 2 and 3.

3.2.2 In early July a single dormouse nest was found in tube T35 on the north-east edge of Field 2 and an APO nest was found in tube T52 on the western edge of Field 3.

Table 2 – Dormouse survey results 2nd July 2018

Tubes/boxes	Species	Evidence
T35	Dormouse	Nest
T52	*Apodemus* sp.	Nest

3.2.3 In late July two dormouse nest were found with a nest with four pink juvenile dormouse found in tube T20 on the eastern edge of Field 2 and the same dormouse nest found in tube T35 as before.

Table 3 – Dormouse survey results 31st July 2018

Tubes/boxes	Species	Evidence
T20	Dormouse	Nest with four 'pinkies' (new born babies)
T35	Dormouse	Nest

3.2.4 In late August it was apparent that the land owner has undertaken hedge flailing works around the fields and as such multiple tubes had been damaged and were replaced within Field 3 only. During this survey five dormouse nests were found within tubes T20, T21, T22 and T24 as well as same dormouse nest found in tube T35 as before in Field 2.

Table 4 – Dormouse survey results 28th August 2018

Tubes/boxes	Species	Evidence
T20	Dormouse	Nest
T21	Dormouse	Nest
T22	Dormouse	Nest
T24	Dormouse	Nest
T35	Dormouse	Nest

3.2.5 In October eight dormouse nests and dormice were found across the Site with the first records within Field 3. Within Field 1 tube T10 on the eastern boundary a single male dormouse weighing 14g was recorded. A single male dormouse weighing 10.5g was recorded within box B1 in the south-west boundary. Within Field 2 tubes T20, T21, T22 and T24 had the same dormouse nest within, tube T23 had a dormouse nest and a single dormouse ran out on approach and tube T29 had two dormouse in that ran out on approach. Within Field 3 a single male dormouse weighing 15.5g was recorded within tube T40 and a single male dormouse weighing 17g was recorded in box B28. Dormouse nests were found in tube T47 and T60.

Table 5 – Dormouse survey results 1st October 2018

Tubes/boxes	Species	Evidence
T10	Dormouse	male weighing 14g
B1	Dormouse	male weighing 10.5g
T20	Dormouse	Nest
T21	Dormouse	Nest
T22	Dormouse	Nest
T23	Dormouse	Single dormice ran out of tube
T24	Dormouse	Nest
T29	Dormouse	Two dormice ran out of tube
T40	Dormouse	male weighing 15.5g
B28	Dormouse	male weighing 17g
T47	Dormouse	Nest
T60	Dormouse	Nest

3.2.6 In November a total of 18 dormice were recorded across the Site. Within Field 1, six dormouse nests were found within tubes T7, T9, T10 and within boxes B1, B6 and B20. A dormouse nest and a single male dormouse weighing 17.5g was recorded in tube T7. A dormouse nest and four adult dormice were recorded in box B6, a female 27g, female 25g, male 17g and male 31g. A dormouse nest and three adult dormice were recorded in box B20, a female 19g male 17g and male 18g. Within Field 2, 12 dormouse nests were found within tubes T17, T20, T21, T22, T23, T24, T29, T30, T31, T33, T35 and box B21. A single dormouse ran out from tube T23 on approach and two dormice ran out from tube T24 on approach. A dormouse nest and a single male dormouse weighing 23g was recorded in tube T33. Within Field 3, nine dormice nest were found within tubes T40, T47, T50, T57, T60, T62, T68 and box B26 and B28. A single dormouse ran out from tube T40, T50 and T57 on approach. A dormouse nest and a single male dormouse weighing 19g was recorded in tube B26 and a dormouse nest and a single male dormouse weighing 19.5g was recorded in tube B28. A wood mouse and nest was found in tube T13 and wood mouse nest found in tube B22.

Table 6 – Dormouse survey results 5th November 2018

Tubes/boxes	Species	Evidence
T7	Dormouse	male weighing 17.5g
T9	Dormouse	Nest
T10	Dormouse	Nest
T13	Wood mouse	Single wood mouse ran out of tube
B1	Dormouse	Nest
B6	Dormouse	female 27g, female 25g, male 17g, male 31g
B20	Dormouse	female 19g, male 17g, male 18g
T17	Dormouse	Nest
T20	Dormouse	Nest
T21	Dormouse	Nest
T22	Dormouse	Nest
T23	Dormouse	Single dormice ran out of tube
T24	Dormouse	Two dormice ran out of tube
T29	Dormouse	Nest
T30	Dormouse	Nest
T31	Dormouse	Nest
T33	Dormouse	1xDM male 23g
T35	Dormouse	Nest
T40	Dormouse	Single dormice ran out of tube

T47	Dormouse	male weighing 22.5g
T50	Dormouse	Single dormice ran out of tube
T57	Dormouse	Single dormice ran out of tube
T60	Dormouse	Nest
T62	Dormouse	Nest
T68	Dormouse	Nest
B26	Dormouse	male weighing 19g
B28	Dormouse	male weighing 19.5g
B22	*Apodemus* sp.	Nest
T39	*Apodemus* sp.	Nest
T51	*Apodemus* sp.	Nest

4.0 EVALUATION

4.1 Surveys to establish the presence or likely absence of dormice have been carried out at East Hill, Hempstead in 2018. The surveys confirmed that dormice are present within the Site, with nests, active dormice and evidence of breeding dormice found in all suitable habitats within the Site and within the boundary habitat of all three fields. Dormice nests were found along all surveyed boundaries of the Site. The northern section of the western boundary of field 2 was not subject to surveys due to concerns about disturbance by people of any dormouse tubes/boxes set in the area. This area of scrub is relatively fragmented from the rest of the scrub and woodland habitat with sections of vegetation along the northern boundary having been removed and replaced with close board fencing of the adjacent house to the north.

4.2 The majority of the Site boundaries all provide high quality habitat for dormice, with two blocks of ancient woodland within Field 1 and the other boundaries including hedgerows, treelines and dense scrub. There are recent records of dormice from within 1km of the Site. Dormice have been recorded within multiple areas of the Darland Banks LNR, with the nearest record being located 210m to the north of Field 3 from 2003 and the most recent record from 2006 located in woodland to the east of Pear Tree Lane approximately 580m to the east of Field 3. There are also multiple records from 'Capstone Farm' from 2011 ranging from 260m to 280m to the east of Field 1. There is also a record of dormouse approximately 680m to the south of Field 1 within 'Hook Wood' from 2009.

4.3 It can therefore be assumed that dormice are likely to be present in any of the Site's connected vegetated boundary features and the two areas of ancient woodland (White's Wood and adjacent North Dane Wood) both in the south of the Site as well as any connected dense scrub and tree lines.

4.4 Due to the extent of the suitable habitats within and adjoining the Site, it is considered that the dormouse population capable of being supported is likely to be relatively high. The species-rich hedgerows and scrub provide good quality foraging and nesting habitat in the summer and autumn period when soft fruits like blackberries and sloes are at their most abundant. The bases of the hedgerow and dense scrub also provide opportunities for hibernation, as they are well established and raised on banks and on slopes to prevent flooding. The two areas of ancient woodland within Field 1 also provide high quality habitat for year-round life cycles.

4.5 A single nest with pink, new born dormice was found during the surveys, within tube T20 on the eastern boundary of Field 2 on 31st July 2018. Therefore this confirms that the vegetated boundaries here are used for breeding. Adult dormice are estimated to live in densities of around ten per hectare even in the best habitats. It is difficult to estimate the dormouse population size in areas of linear habitat such as hedgerows, but it is estimated that less than 80 animals, including juveniles, would be present within the suitable habitats within the Site: the whole Site measures c.50ha, however suitable habitats are restricted to the margins of

the three fields, the two blocks of ancient woodland adjacent to Field 1 and the area of dense scrub connected Fields 2 and 3 in the north of the Site amounting to c.8ha of suitable habitat across the entirety of the Site boundaries. It is considered that the dormouse population within the Site is of **Local Importance**.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Surveys to determine the presence or likely absence of dormice have been undertaken at East Hill, Hempstead, Medway. The tubes and boxes were installed in May 2018 and surveys during July – November 2018 have been carried out. Evidence of dormice have been recorded in a total of 30 tubes/boxes around the Site's boundaries, including a peak count of 18 dormice seen by the surveyors during one survey.

5.2 Due to extent of the dormouse evidence recorded across the Site, it can be assumed that dormice are likely to be present in any of the suitable habitat, including all vegetated Site boundaries and adjacent areas of scrub and woodland.

5.3 The boundary habitats and adjacent habitat including the blocks of ancient woodland and dense scrub are of high quality and capable of supporting a high population of dormice. It is considered that the dormouse population on Site is of **Local Importance.**

REFERENCES

Battersby, J. ed. 2005. UK Mammals: Species Status and Population Trends. JNCC/Tracking Mammals Partnership.

Chanin, P. & Woods, M. 2003. Surveying dormice using nest tubes: results and experiences from the South West Dormouse Project. English Nature Research Report 524. Peterborough: English Nature 34pp.

English Nature. 2003. *Surveying for Dormice with Nest Tubes. Version August 2001.* English Nature Peterborough.

English Nature. 2006. *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook: Second Edition.* English Nature Peterborough.

Appendix 2 - Dormouse Legislation

Dormice receive the same level of protection as bats and great crested newts in the United Kingdom. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended) transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). The 1981 Act was recently amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 and the more recent Habitats Regulations amendments (2010). Dormice are listed under Schedule 5 of the 1981 Act, and is therefore subject to the provisions of Section 9, which makes it an offence to:

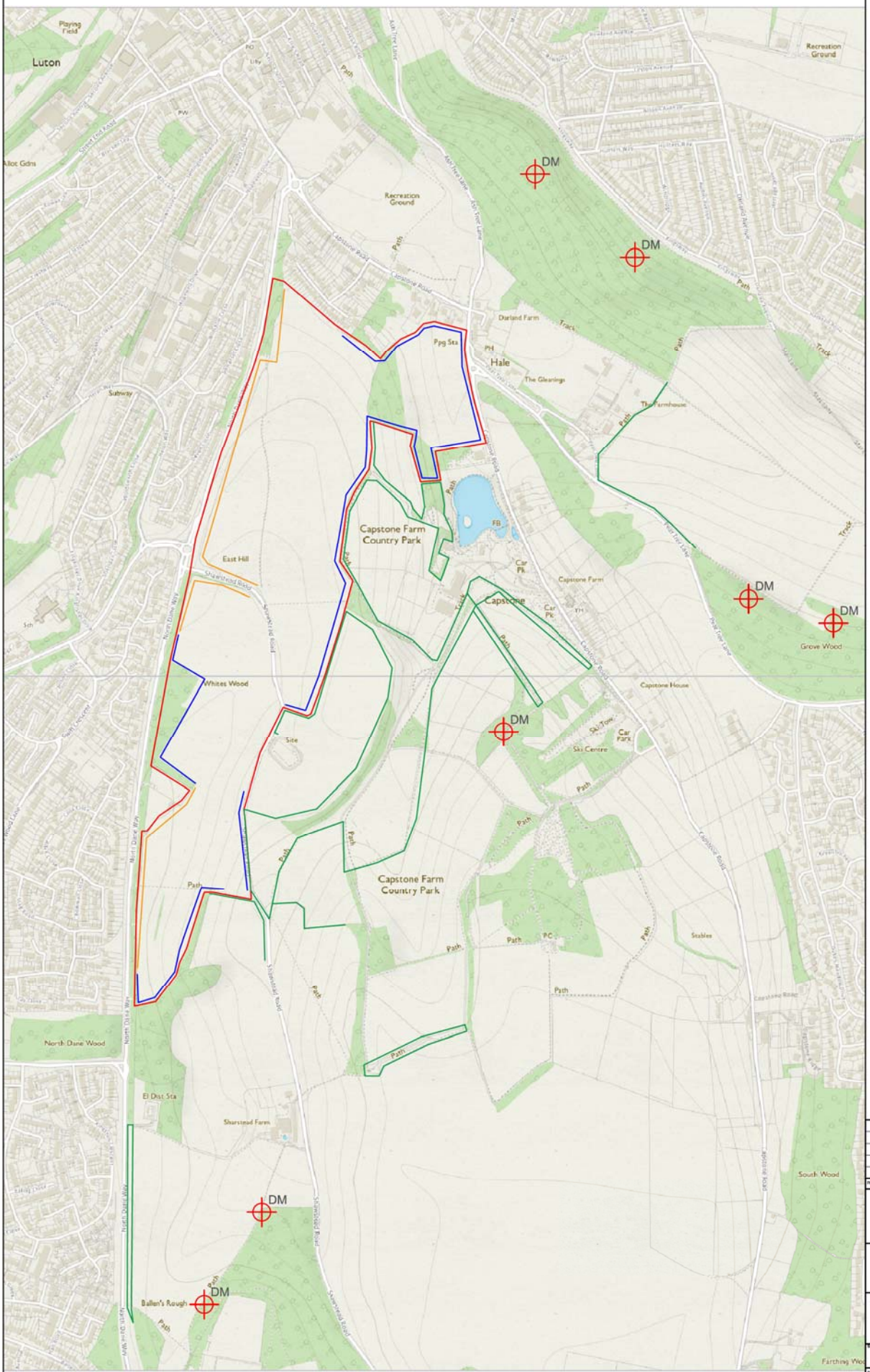
- Intentionally kill, injure or take a dormouse [Section 9(1)];
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a dormouse [Section 9(2)]
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection [Section 9(4)(b)];
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructs access to any structure or place which a dormouse uses for shelter or protection [Section 9(4)(c)]; and
- Sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisements to buy or sell a dormouse [section 9(5)].

Dormice are also included on Annex IV of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (known as the Habitats Directive). As a result of the UK ratifying this directive, dormice are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (The Conservation Regulations). Annex IV of the Habitats Directive requires member states to construct a system of protection as outlined in Article 12, this is done through Part 3 of the Regulations whereby Regulation 41 makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a dormouse [Regulation 39(1)(a)];
- Deliberately disturb a dormouse in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect i) the ability of any significant group of animals of that species to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young, OR ii) the local distribution of that species. [Regulation 39(1)(b)]; and
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a dormouse [Regulation 39(1)(d)].

Dormice are a UK BAP Priority Species and a Red Data Book species for UK and Kent (Waite, 2000). They are also on the UK Biodiversity Steering Group Short List of Globally Threatened/Declining Species. The population is suggested to be declining due to changes in woodland management (reduction of food sources and viable habitat) and fragmentation of woodland leaving unviable populations (Harris et *al*, 1995).

In 2001 the dormouse population in the United Kingdom was estimated in the region of 500,000 (Macdonald and Tattersall, 2001). More recently the latest data published by the JNCC (Battersby, 2005) indicates that the present UK population may be as low as 40,000. Although declining in the UK, dormice are believed to be widespread in southern counties (from Devon to Kent) but with only a patchy distribution. The Red Data Book for Kent describes Kent as one of the strongholds for dormice and that they have been recorded from suitable woodland throughout the county (Waite, 2000). Population densities are generally thought to be a maximum of 10 adults per hectare, even in good habitats.



Key

- Site Survey Area
- Dormouse Found Present
- Dormouse Assumed Present
- Dormouse Desk Study Record
- Dormouse Habitat
- Dormouse Habitat

revision	description	date	checked by

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Project:

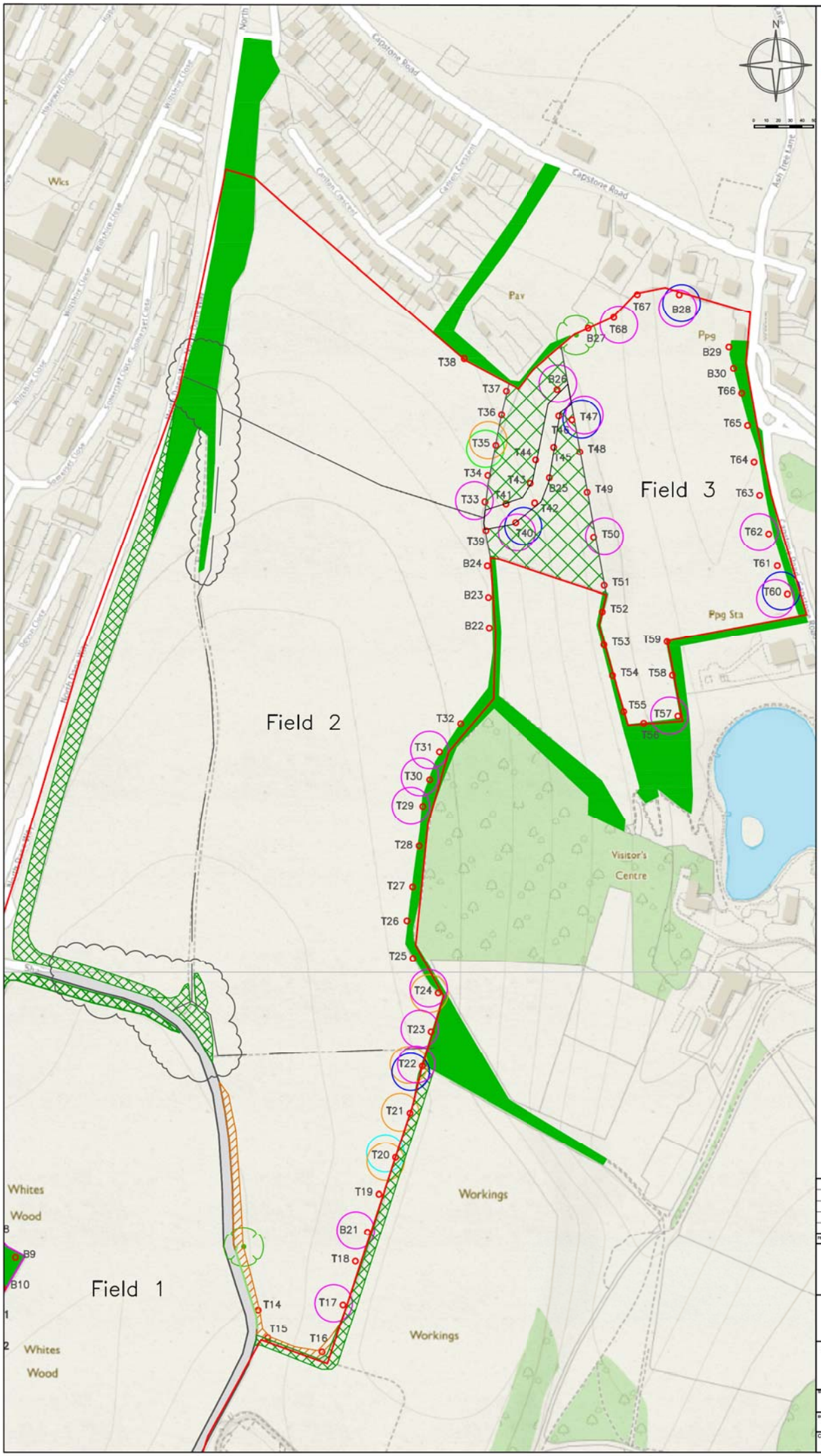
17032 East Hill, Hempstead

Title:

Dormouse Desk Study and Connecting Habitat Plan

status	drawing no.			
	Figure 1			
scale	size	date	drawn	checked
NTS	A3	24.02.2019	AW	HL

CAD filename: Figure_1.dwg



revision	description	date	checked by

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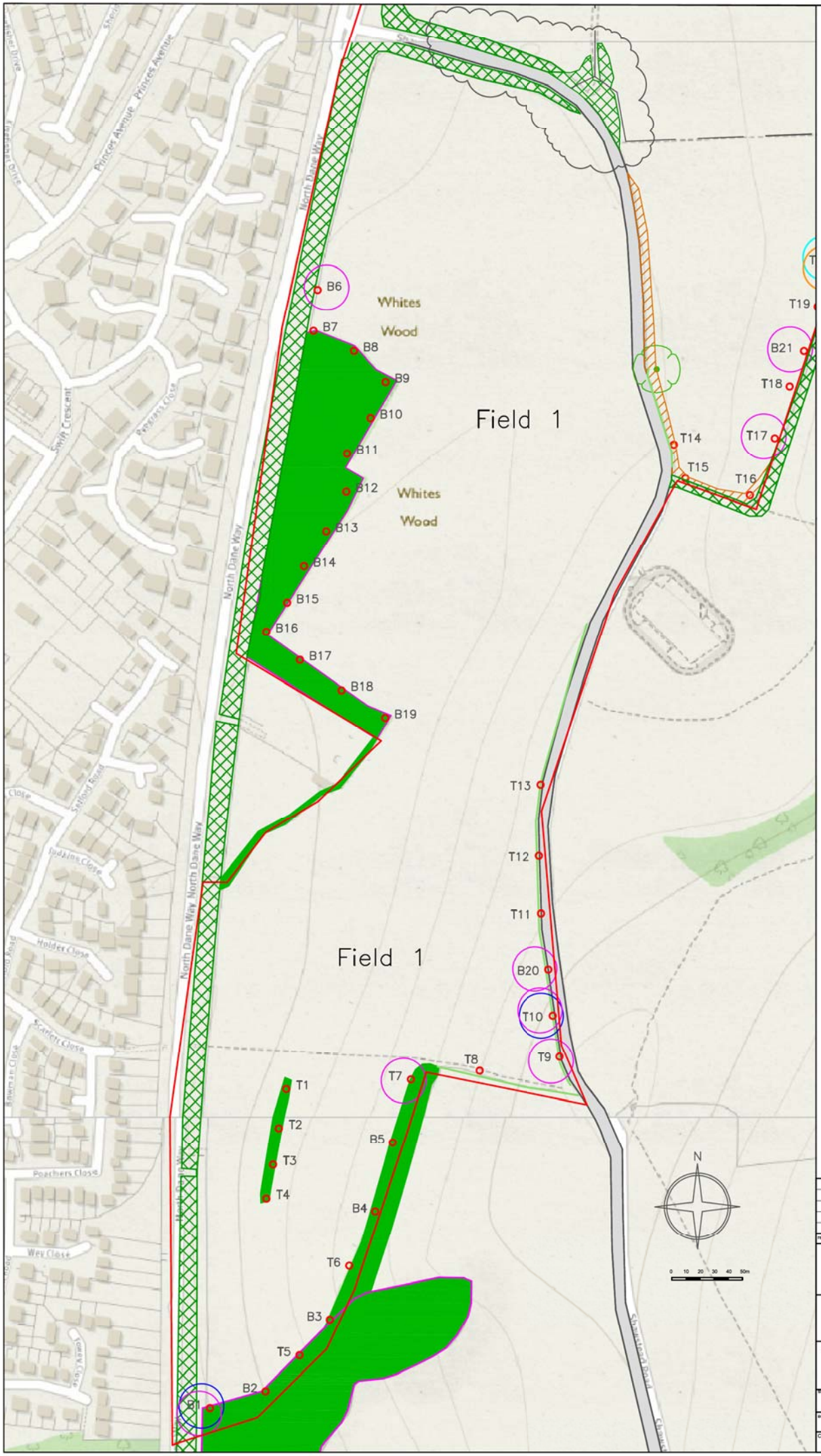
Project:
17032 East Hill, Hempstead

Title:
Dormouse Survey Results
Field 2 and 3

status:
drawing no.
Figure 2

scale	size	date	drawn	checked
NTS	A3	20.02.2019	AW	HL

CAD filename:
Figure_1.dwg



revision	description	date	checked by

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CORYLUS ECOLOGY

Project:
17032 East Hill, Hempstead

Title:
Dormouse Survey Results - Field 1

status:

drawing no.
Figure 1

scale	size	date	drawn	checked
NTS	A3	19.02.2019	AW	HL

CAD filename
Figure_1.dwg

Appendix 1 - Dormouse Survey Results 2018

Key: empty tubes/boxes = -

2nd July 2018 (Field 1)		31st July 2018 (Field 1)	28th August 2018 (Field 1)	1st October 2018 (Field 1)	5th November 2018 (Field 1)
T1	-	-	-	-	-
T2	-	-	-	-	-
T3	-	-	-	-	-
T4	-	-	-	-	-
T5	-	-	-	-	-
T6	-	-	-	-	-
T7	-	-	-	-	1xDM male 17.5g
T8	-	-	-	-	-
T9	-	-	-	-	DM nest
T10	-	-	-	1xDM male 14g	DM nest
T11	-	-	-	-	-
T12	-	-	-	-	-
T13	-	-	-	-	wood mouse
B1	-	-	-	1xDM male 10.5g	DM nest
B2	-	-	-	-	-
B3	-	-	-	-	-
B4	-	-	-	-	-
B5	-	-	-	-	-
B6	-	-	-	-	1xDM female 27g 1xDM female 25g 1xDM male 17g 1xDM male 31g
B7	-	-	-	-	-
B8	-	-	-	-	-
B9	-	-	-	-	-
B10	-	-	-	-	-
B11	-	-	-	-	-
B12	-	-	-	-	-
B13	-	-	-	-	-
B14	-	-	-	-	-
B15	-	-	-	-	-
B16	-	-	-	-	-
B17	-	-	-	-	-
B18	-	-	-	-	-
B19	-	-	-	-	-
B20	-	-	-	-	1xDM female 19g 1xDM male 17g 1xDM male 18g

2nd July 2018 (Field 2)		31st July 2018 (Field 2)	31st August 2018 (Field 2)	1st October 2018 (Field 2)	5th November 2018 (Field 2)
T14	-	-	-	-	-
T15	-	-	-	-	-
T16	-	-	-	-	-
T17	-	-	-	-	DM nest
T18	-	-	-	-	-
T19	-	-	-	-	-
T20	-	DM nest with 4 pink juviniles	DM nest	DM nest	DM nest
T21	-	-	DM nest	DM nest	DM nest
T22	-	-	DM nest	DM nest	DM nest
T23	-	-	-	DM nest - 1xDM ran out on approach	DM nest - 1xDM ran out on approach
T24	-	-	DM nest	DM nest	DM nest - 2xDM ran out on approach
T25	-	-	-	-	-
T26	-	-	-	-	-
T27	-	-	-	-	-
T28	-	-	-	-	-
T29	-	-	-	DM nest - 2xDM ran out on approach	DM nest
T30	-	-	-	-	DM nest
T31	-	-	-	-	DM nest
T32	-	-	-	-	-
T33	-	-	-	-	1xDM male 23g
T34	-	-	-	-	-
T35	DM nest	DM nest	DM nest	DM nest	DM nest
T36	-	-	-		-
T37	-	-	-		-
T38	-	-	-		-
B21	-	-	-	-	DM nest
B22	-	-	-	-	APO nest
B23	-	-	-	-	-
B24	-	-	-	-	-

2nd July 2018 (Field 3)		31st July 2018 (Field 3)	31st August 2018 (Field 3)	1st October 2018 (Field 3)	5th November 2018 (Field 3)
T39	-	-	-	-	APO nest
T40	-	-	-	1xDM male 15.5g	DM nest - 1xDM ran out on approach
T41	-	-	-	-	-
T42	-	-	-	-	-
T43	-	-	-	-	-
T44	-	-	-	-	-
T45	-	-	-	-	-
T46	-	-	-	-	-
T47	-	-	-	DM nest	1xDm male 22.5g
T48	-	-	-	-	-
T49	-	-	damaged - replaced	-	-
T50	missing - replaced	-	-	-	DM nest - 1xDM ran out on approach
T51	-	-	-	-	APO nest
T52	APO nest	-	damaged - replaced	-	-
T53	-	-	-	-	-
T54	-	-	-	-	-
T55	-	-	-	-	-
T56	-	-	damaged - replaced	-	-
T57	-	-	-	-	DM nest - 1xDM ran out on approach
T58	-	-	missing - replaced	-	-
T59	-	-	damaged - replaced	-	-
T60	-	-	-	DM nest	DM nest
T61	-	-	-	-	-
T62	-	-	-	-	DM nest
T63	-	-	damaged - replaced	-	-
T64	-	-	-	-	-
T65	-	-	-	-	-
T66	-	-	-	-	-
T67	-	-	-	-	-
T68	-	-	-	-	DM nest
B25	-	-	-	-	-
B26	-	-	-	-	1xDM male 19g
B27	-	-	-	-	-
B28	-	-	-	1xDM male 17g	1xDM male 19.5g
B29	-	-	-	-	-
B30	-	-	-	-	-

Appendix 2 - Dormouse Legislation

Dormice receive the same level of protection as bats and great crested newts in the United Kingdom. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (as amended) transposes into UK law the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). The 1981 Act was recently amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 and the more recent Habitats Regulations amendments (2010). Dormice are listed under Schedule 5 of the 1981 Act, and is therefore subject to the provisions of Section 9, which makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a dormouse [Section 9(1)];
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a dormouse [Section 9(2)]
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection [Section 9(4)(b)];
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructs access to any structure or place which a dormouse uses for shelter or protection [Section 9(4)(c)]; and
- Sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale or publish advertisements to buy or sell a dormouse [section 9(5)].

Dormice are also included on Annex IV of Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (known as the Habitats Directive). As a result of the UK ratifying this directive, dormice are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (The Conservation Regulations). Annex IV of the Habitats Directive requires member states to construct a system of protection as outlined in Article 12, this is done through Part 3 of the Regulations whereby Regulation 41 makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a dormouse [Regulation 39(1)(a)];
- Deliberately disturb a dormouse in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect i) the ability of any significant group of animals of that species to survive, breed or rear or nurture their young, OR ii) the local distribution of that species. [Regulation 39(1)(b)]; and
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a dormouse [Regulation 39(1)(d)].

Dormice are a UK BAP Priority Species and a Red Data Book species for UK and Kent (Waite, 2000). They are also on the UK Biodiversity Steering Group Short List of Globally Threatened/Declining Species. The population is suggested to be declining due to changes in woodland management (reduction of food sources and viable habitat) and fragmentation of woodland leaving unviable populations (Harris et *al*, 1995).

In 2001 the dormouse population in the United Kingdom was estimated in the region of 500,000 (Macdonald and Tattersall, 2001). More recently the latest data published by the JNCC (Battersby, 2005) indicates that the present UK population may be as low as 40,000. Although declining in the UK, dormice are believed to be widespread in southern counties (from Devon to Kent) but with only a patchy distribution. The Red Data Book for Kent describes Kent as one of the strongholds for dormice and that they have been recorded from suitable woodland throughout the county (Waite, 2000). Population densities are generally thought to be a maximum of 10 adults per hectare, even in good habitats.