

CARMARTHENSHIRE NATURE RECOVERY PLAN – MAMMALS





Environment (Wales) Act 2016 – Section 7 - Biodiversity lists and duty to take steps to maintain and enhance biodiversity





The species listed in this table have been identified by Welsh Government as part of a list of species and types of habitat found in Wales that they consider are of key significance to maintain and enhance biodiversity in this country. This list (S7 list) is currently under review by WG and Natural Resources Wales.






Public authorities (e.g. WG, councils) must take reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the species and types of habitat included in Section 7, and encourage others to take such steps. By safeguarding these species and habitats, improving their management and raising awareness about them it is hoped that a resilient natural environment in Wales will be sustained into the future.




Please refer to <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5636785878597632> for more detailed species description information.

The Wales Action Plans for these species can be found at: <https://www.biodiversitywales.org.uk/Terrestrial-Mammals>

SPECIES		HABITAT/ CARMARTHENSHIRE SITES	ISSUES/ACTION REQUIRED
<p><i>Arvicola terrestris</i> Water vole</p> <p>© Dyfrig Jones</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshwater/Wetlands • Once much more widely distributed now the main populations are on the Llanelli levels and the Laugharne–Pendine area. • There a few records from upland areas and water voles are probably under recorded in these areas of the county. • In Wales the water vole’s conservation status is currently listed as ‘Critical’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat loss/fragmentation and degradation, mink predation and development have all caused declines in this animal in the county. • Llanelli is a National Key Site for water vole in the UK. • About 450 water voles have been released in the Pembrey area as part of NRW’s Water Vole Strategy for south Wales. Along with habitat management and mink control, this should significantly improve the future viability of this endangered species.
<p><i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> Barbastelle bat</p> <p>© Hugh Clark/ www.bats.org.uk</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodland • Probably occurs in the larger and more mature and diverse steep-sided valley woods but no confirmed records. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat Conservation Trust are undertaking a project to look for autumn swarming sites, which may pick up records for this species.
<p><i>Erinaceus europaeus</i> European hedgehog</p> <p>© R. Burkmar</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat varies from hedge bottoms, back gardens and the grassy fringes of fields. • In Wales the hedgehog’s conservation status is currently listed as ‘Vulnerable’ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little is known of their numbers or distribution in the county but, along with the rest of the country, there seems to be a decline in their numbers. • The biggest threat to hedgehogs is probably habitat loss, with decline of mixed farming, and increasing field size with the removal of hedgerows. • The use of chemicals in gardens and for intensive farming kills the prey hedgehogs need for food and may also poison them directly. Many are also killed on the roads.
<p><i>Lepus europaeus</i> Brown hare</p> <p>© Mark Newton</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lowland Grassland and Heathland/Coastal/ Brownfield /Woodland/Upland • Once much more widely distributed now the main populations are in the in hilly, less intensively farmed areas in the north and east of the county. Also the Pembrey peninsula is also important in the county for hares. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of habitat diversity in the agricultural landscape, changes in cropping and planting regimes, such as a move from hay to silage, and autumn sowing of cereals are causes for the decline. • Postcard campaign for records has been in place for some time.

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<p><i>Lutra lutra</i> Otter</p> <p>© Mark Newton</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Freshwater/Wetlands/Coastal • Otters are widely distributed on water courses and associated habitats throughout the county. They are occasionally seen in more urban areas such as Llanelli and along the Tywi below Carmarthen. • In Wales the otter's conservation status is currently listed as 'Vulnerable' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After populations recovering nationally, today road traffic accidents are one of the principal causes of death and populations may be limited by a lack of suitable isolated breeding sites and a lack of prey species, especially freshwater eel. • A number of otter pipes have been installed as part of road schemes or upgrades. • A project to install a dry pipe at a road death 'hot spot' at Kidwelly is underway. • An artificial holt was built at one of the county's Local Nature Reserves. • Corpses are taken to Cardiff University for autopsy, to investigate contaminants, disease and population biology.
<p><i>Martes martes</i> Pine marten Bele'r coed</p> <p>© Tony Braithewaite</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pine martens are solitary mammals, living at low densities in deciduous and conifer woodlands as well as more open country such as rocky and craggy areas. • There is likely to be a relict population in the county with records from the north and east, the most recent being in Allt Rhyd y Groes in 2013 in the upper Tywi Valley. • In Wales the pine marten's conservation status is currently listed as 'Critical' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are a number of reasons why pine marten populations are unable to recover by themselves: forest cover is fragmented and in the larger upland plantations prey density is low; suitable trees with cavities are scarce, rocky uplands offering an alternative refuge are heavily grazed and prey poor. • After a feasibility study the Vincent Wildlife Trust have undertaken a Pine Marten Recovery Project in mid Wales. 39 animals from Scotland were released and monitored. Animals have now been recorded in the county.
<p><i>Micromys minutus</i> Harvest mouse Llygoden yr yd</p> <p>© Vaughan Matthews</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wetland/Farmland - lives in long tussocky grassland, reedbeds, hedgerows and around woodland edges. • There are sparse records in the county including Ffrwd Fen, Pembrey and two local Nature Reserves. • It is thought it is thought that they must be present elsewhere. • In Wales the harvest mouse' conservation status is currently listed as 'Vulnerable'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very little is know about this elusive mammal in the county. • Mammals in a Sustainable Environment project surveyed for Harvest Mice in the county in 2014.
<p><i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> Dormouse Pathew</p> <p>© Jacqueline Hartley</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Farmland /Woodland. Woods with well-developed understories are good habitat and hedgerows, scrub and bramble habitat is important. Dormice seem to use <i>Molinia</i> tussocks for their hibernation nests. • The main stronghold for dormice in the county is the triangle formed by Carmarthen, Llandeilo and Llanelli although there are records elsewhere. • In Wales the dormouse's conservation status is currently listed as 'Vulnerable'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss/fragmentation of habitat is a major cause of decline in the county as it causes isolation of populations. • There are a number of sites with dormouse boxes that are monitored in the county and an informal dormouse group and a Facebook page.

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<p><i>Mustela putorius</i> Polecat Ffwlbart</p> <p>© K. Williamson</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polecats are found in a variety of habitats including farmland, woodland, marsh, riverbanks, hedgebanks, sea cliffs and sand dunes • Polecat populations are recovering in the UK following a dramatic decline during the 19th century when mid Wales remained a stronghold for them. • There are records of them throughout the county, but they remain somewhat elusive. Most often sighted as road kill. • In Wales the polecat's conservation status is currently listed as 'Least Concern' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a general lack of understanding on the status and behaviour of polecats. • Recent surveys have shown few records for west Wales – it is not known if this is because of a decline in animals or just that this species is under recorded. • The Vincent Wildlife Trust collected during a 2014-15 survey of wild-living polecats or feral ferrets in the UK. Of the Carmarthenshire records that could be verified, over 95% could be classified as pure polecat.
<p><i>Nyctalus noctula</i> Noctule Ystlum mawr</p> <p>© R.E. Stebbings/ www.bats.org.uk</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common and widespread species in the county. One of our largest bats, it eats small flies and beetles and moths. Associated with wooded areas and parkland areas where mature trees provide good roost sites. 	
<p><i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> Soprano pipistrelle Ystlum lleiaf meinlais</p> <p>© Hugh Clark/ www.bats.org.uk</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common and widespread species in the county. It is a small bat which is usually found in wetland habitats, for example around rivers and lakes. It often roosts in crevices around the outside of houses and buildings. It mainly eats small flies, particularly midges and mosquitos associated with water. 	
<p><i>Plecotus auritus</i> Brown long-eared bat Ystlum hirglust</p> <p>© John Altringham/ www.bats.org.uk</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common and widespread species in the county. They fly close to vegetation or in woodland, often using their large ears to listen for prey sounds and glean insects from the surface of foliage. It eats mainly moths, beetles, flies earwigs and spiders. It normally roosts in small colonies in older buildings, barns, churches and trees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bat Conservation Trust are undertaking a project to look for autumn swarming sites, which may pick up records for this species.
<p><i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i> Greater horseshoe bat Ystlum pedol mwyaf</p> <p>© Tom McOwat</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater horseshoes are probably widespread but in low numbers, being mainly restricted to the southern half of the county but they also occur all the way up the Tywi valley to at least Llandovery and at Dolaucothi. • Most records are from wintering individuals in caves and mines. • It eats mainly larger insects such as chafers, dung beetles, moths and caddis flies. 	

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<p><i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i> Lesser horseshoe bat Ystlum pedol lleiaf</p> <p>© Conor Kelleher/ www.bats.org.uk</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lesser horseshoes have a more restricted distribution but they are also the most secretive and most easily overlooked. The cave systems especially those associated with the limestone ridge are important hibernation sites as are some of the old mineral workings. • There are an increasing number of records of this species in recent years. • It eats a variety of smaller insects. 	
<p><i>Sciurus vulgaris</i> Red squirrel Gwiwer goch</p> <p>© Lizzie Wilberforce</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Carmarthenshire the red squirrel is now mainly confined to of large conifer plantations in the north of the county. There are occasional sightings in deciduous woodland surrounding these forests. • In Wales the red squirrel's conservation status is currently listed as 'Endangered'. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mid Wales Red Squirrel Partnership is working to conserve and enhance red squirrels in mid Wales. • Grey squirrels are an ongoing threat to reds through the domination of habitat and as carriers of the deadly squirrelpox virus. • Fragmentation and loss of suitable conifer species in the mid Wales forests are a local threat. • Project officers work with volunteers/community groups on surveys and grey squirrel control, and with NRW and forest managers on habitat management in the core project area.
<p><i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> Common Pipistrelle Ystlum lleiaf</p> <p>© Hugh Clark/ www.bats.org.uk</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Common and widespread species in the county. It is a small bat which is found in a wide range of habitats including farmland, woodlands and suburban and urban habitats. It often roosts in crevices around the outside of houses and buildings. It mainly eats small flies. 	
