



Tool Box Talk

Focus on Performance

Dormice

Sust. 19

What?

Native common or hazel dormice are small mammals (body length 6-9cm, tail length 5-8cm). They are orange brown in colour with white bellies, black eyes, round ears and long furry tails. They should not be confused with the larger grey introduced fat or edible dormouse. They are largely nocturnal and spend much of their lives at rest in their nests which are woven balls of grass and leaves approximately 150mm wide. They can be found in woodland, hedgerows and scrubland. Dormice are generally only active between May and October, but their nests can be found all year round.



Why?

The dormouse is a UK Biodiversity Action Plan species, considered as being in decline and extremely vulnerable to loss of habitat. The dormouse is protected by legislation. This includes causing injury or death of dormice and damage or destruction of habitat. Prosecution can lead to fines of up to £5,000 and 6 months in prison. Work that requires the disturbance of dormice requires a licence.



How?

- If dormice are known to be within or adjacent to a work area, a licence for disturbance is required. Ensure you are familiar with all the requirements which may include exclusion zones or shrub clearance under ecologist supervision.
- If you are unsure whether your work may affect dormice, seek expert ecological advice.
- Stop work immediately and report any dormouse or discoveries of nests after works have started.
- Only licensed dormouse workers are permitted to handle or move dormice. Never pick up and move dormice unless you have been trained and it is under direction of a licensed dormouse worker.

If the works are likely to disturb a dormouse or habitat, a licence is needed from the relevant body:

- England: Natural England
- Scotland: Scottish Natural Heritage
- Wales: Countryside Council for Wales

Questions

1. What colour is the legally protected common dormouse?
2. What is the maximum fine per offence for disturbing a dormouse?
3. Where might you find a dormouse or its nest?

If you have any queries regarding the content of this tool box talk please contact your Sustainability Advisor or Line Manager.