

Parc Hadau, Waunsterw
Interim Dormouse Report

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Issuing office

Merlin House | No 1 Langstone Business Park | Newport | NP18 2HJ
 T: 01633 509000 | W: www.bsg-ecology.com | E: info@bsg-ecology.com

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	Name	Position	Date
Originated	James Garside	Ecologist	10 September 2019
Reviewed	Jim Gillespie	Partner	18 September 2019
Approved for issue to client	Jim Gillespie	Partner	18 September 2019
Issued to client	James Garside	Ecologist	18 September 2019

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Contents

1	Introduction.....	2
2	Methods.....	3
3	Results.....	5
4	References.....	6
5	Figures.....	7

1 Introduction

- 1.1 BSG Ecology was commissioned by Sero Homes Ltd. to conduct dormouse survey as part of a suite of ecological surveys, during 2019. The dormouse surveys are ongoing at the time of reporting (mid-September) and are due to be completed by early October.
- 1.2 This report gives an overview of the methods and results of the survey to date, and summarises the results. A report presenting and interpreting final survey results will be provided following completion of the survey.

2 Methods

Desk study

- 2.1 Data relating to protected species, including dormice, within 2 km of the Site was requested from the South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (SEWBRc).

Field survey

Nest tube / box survey

- 2.2 Dormouse survey work was completed by Caroline O'Rourke¹ and Gareth Lang² and was undertaken in accordance with best practice survey guidance as set out in English Nature's Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bright *et al*, 2006). Under this guidance it is recommended that to determine presence/absence within a site a minimum of 50 nest tubes at a spacing of 15-20 m intervals need to be put out in suitable habitats for several months, and these tubes then need to be checked periodically for indications of use by dormouse. Indications of use include finding animals in residence within the tube during the survey or finding a nest characteristic of the species. Dormice typically make neat nests comprising tightly woven honeysuckle bark (or similar), along with green leaves, normally hazel, though other species are used. This differs from the nests of other small mammals which are typically much messier and lack a distinct structure.
- 2.3 Each month receives a score based on the probability of dormouse occupying the tubes in that month. For a survey to be considered valid a total of 20 or more points are required. The score per month is illustrated in Table A below.

Table A: Monthly index of probability for tube occupation.

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

- 2.4 A total of 60 tubes were deployed in scrub, woodland and woodland edge habitats within the Site on 09 April 2019, and these will be left in place until the end of September 2019, thereby achieving the 20 points required for a valid survey. The tubes have been inspected once every month in accordance with good practice guidance (Bright *et al*, 2006) and the Natural England Advice Note "Hazel or common dormice: surveys and mitigation for development projects"³. The tube locations are presented in Figure 1.

¹ Natural Resources Wales licence number Caroline O'Rourke: S085806-1.

² Natural Resources Wales licence number Gareth Lang: 76038:OTH:SA:2017

³ Available at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hazel-or-common-dormice-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>. There is no Wales-specific guidance available, and the Natural England guidance is generally followed in Wales.

Nut search

- 2.5 The September survey was supplemented by a nut search. Areas of the Site and adjacent woodland edge with fruiting hazel present were selected. Three areas of ground measuring 10 m by 10 m and containing fruiting hazel, were thoroughly searched for characteristically gnawed hazelnuts, for 20 minutes each. The survey was conducted by an ecologist familiar with and experienced in this survey method.

Limitations to methods

- 2.6 On a few occasions, dormouse tubes had been vandalised between surveys. Given the level of public use of the Site, this was anticipated and more than the minimum number of tubes was deployed. Any damaged tubes were repaired and replaced.

3 Results

Desk Study

- 3.1 The data search returned two records of hazel dormouse, both from the same location approximately 1 km east of the Site, one from 2002 and the other from 2005. Aerial imagery suggests that habitat connectivity between this location and the Site is good, consisting of uninterrupted mature broad-leaved woodland and continuous hedgerows.

Field Survey

- 3.2 No dormice or evidence of their presence have been found during the Site surveys to date.
- 3.3 Detailed dormouse survey results will be provided in early October 2019, following completion of the survey.

4 References

Bright, P.W, Morris, P.A. and Mitchell-Jones, T. (2006). *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook Second Edition*. English Nature, Peterborough.

5 Figures

(overleaf)



OFFICE: Newport
 T: 01633 509 000
 JOB REF: P18-859

PROJECT TITLE
 WAUNSTERW (PARC HADAU), PONTARDAWE

DRAWING TITLE
 Figure 1: Dormouse tube locations

DATE: 24/07/2019 CHECKED: JaG SCALE: 1:750
 DRAWN: KW APPROVED: JG VERSION: 1.0

LEGEND

- Site boundary
- 01 Location of dormouse tube