



HEDGEROWS FOR DORMICE

improving wildlife corridors





hedgerows - a green icon

The hedgerows of the UK are not only an invaluable wildlife habitat but hold iconic status as part of our culture, history and archaeology.

Hedgerows reflect the history of human settlement and landscape changes, marking territorial boundaries and providing stock proof barriers. Hedgerows are a vital component of biodiversity in agricultural landscapes and act as wildlife corridors allowing dispersal between isolated habitats.

Since the Second World War there has been a drastic loss of hedgerows with an estimated 224,000km lost mostly through changes in farming practices. By 1998 the net length of hedgerows had stabilised, with losses through removal and neglect being balanced by hedgerow planting and restoration.

However, recently published results from the Countryside Survey 2007 show that the total length of woody boundaries in England has decreased again slightly since 1998. Agricultural intensification and the loss of traditional management practices such

as coppicing and laying have been key drivers in the massive loss and deterioration of British hedgerows.

Threats range from neglect to incorrect timing of management and over trimming which can lead to the development of gaps and loss of connectivity in the hedgerow network. The diversity of hedgerow plant species can decline through the use of herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers close to the hedge.

regional variation

- hawthorn dominated hedgerows increase in frequency northwards
- blackthorn hedgerows are more often found in the south
- hazel hedgerows are a particular feature of the south-west
- Devon hedges sit on high banks
- holly is a distinctive component of Staffordshire hedgerows

hedgerows for dormice project

Historically, the hazel dormouse was frequently found in hedgerows but their presence is dependent on sympathetic hedgerow management. The current fragmented state of Britain's hedgerows has left dormice in England in isolated populations and there has been a 64% decline of dormouse occurrence in hedgerows since the late 1970s.

The *hedgerows for dormice* project will restore hedgerows to benefit wildlife, particularly dormice, that depend on them by reversing the unfavourable condition of existing hedgerows caused by inappropriate management and by planting new hedgerows where they have been removed.

The the presence and quality of hedgerows around known dormouse sites is being mapped. Working with local partners, we will establish a network of dormouse dispersal routes and potential habitat by restoring hedgerow corridors between isolated populations.

We will work closely with landowners and land-managers to offer advice on hedgerow management to benefit wildlife. In targeted areas, the project can provide teams of volunteers to plant hedgerows and can contribute towards the cost of hedgerow



how can you get involved?

Do you have any spare time to help survey hedgerows near you? We can provide the basic training needed.

Would you like to be involved in practical conservation efforts to help enhance local hedgerows?



Do you have any hedgerows in need of attention or would you like any management advice?

Are you already a hedgerow surveyor or do you know of a project in England that could provide information to help with this project?

To see if the project is currently working near you, please contact Jim on: 020 7498 4533 / jim@ptes.org or visit www.ptes.org/hedgerows

thank you



hedgerow wildlife

Hedgerows play an important role for dormice. In spring they feed on blackthorn and hawthorn flowers, then in early summer ash keys, honeysuckle flowers and insects such as aphids are eaten. Later in the year they rely on blackberries and hazelnuts to build fat reserves for the coming winter. The diversity of hedgerow plants is therefore vital in supporting dormice.

Hedgerows are also used as dispersal corridors and are an important link between copses that are too small to support a viable dormouse population on their own. Crucially they also support breeding populations independent of other habitats. Even small gaps in a hedgerow can be an obstacle to dormouse dispersal.

Well-managed hedgerows support a great diversity of other species. Bats use them to commute between roosting and feeding sites, hedgehogs for nesting and secure travel, bumble bees to guide their foraging activity and stag beetles can be found among their decaying stumps.

Over 20 butterfly species breed in hedgerows, including the brown hairstreak butterfly. Great crested newts use hedgerows close to ponds for dispersal and many farmland and woodland birds, such as bullfinch and turtle dove rely on this green icon.

Images: Pat Morris, Hedgelinek, Rob Wolton, Kate Merry, Harry Green, PTES, Oliver Smart, Isle of Wight Hedgerow Group

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