

I'w ryddhau AR UNWAITH -
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Cefnogwyd gan
Y Loteri Genedlaethol
trwy Gronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri

Heritage Lottery Fund to help protect dormice



The Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) has awarded a grant of £23,100 to the North Wales Wildlife Trust to support the 'Dormice Forever Project'. The project will help conserve and benefit Hazel Dormice populations across North Wales and the habitats they are found in. The Trust will be working closely with schools and community groups to raise awareness about dormice and give people the opportunity to help work with and protect this rare species. It is also hoped that, with help from the public, new dormouse populations will be discovered.

The Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* is a rare small mammal, native to the UK. They are golden-coloured with a furry tail, white chest patch and large black eyes. Dormice are not easy to see as they are nocturnal, spend most of their time in the tree canopy in summer and hibernate underground in winter.

During spring, summer and autumn they make a ball-shaped summer nest, approximately grapefruit sized made out of stripped honeysuckle or ivy bark and green leaves. Dormice like to make nests in old hollow trees and a lack of these may be one factor that limits dormouse populations. Luckily, dormice readily take to using dormouse nest boxes which replicate natural hollow trees, so the placing of them increases the number of nesting sites available. By placing and checking nest boxes we can monitor dormouse numbers and discover new dormouse sites.

Over the last few months dormouse boxes have been made by keen volunteers and erected in suitable woodlands across North Wales. Over the summer, dormouse surveys have been taking place to monitor known dormouse sites and to survey the new boxes. Further surveys will also take place in the autumn.

As dormice are hard to see, another way of checking for their presence is by looking for their signs. This can be done by looking for nests, but the easiest way to discover new dormouse sites is by looking for their feeding remains. In the autumn dormice feed on hazelnuts and by looking closely at the discarded

shells it is possible to see the characteristic marks that they leave on them. Over the autumn there will be numerous nut hunts in North East Wales, please see <http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/northwales/events.html> for more information. Also if you are walking around woods keep your eyes on the ground to see if you can see any nibbled hazelnut shells, some of them may be from dormice. There are numerous sites across North Wales which have been identified as potential sites (please see our website).

Over the winter habitat management work will also be taking place in three known dormouse woodlands, and a kilometre of hedgerows will be improved for dormice, helping to connect up key woodland sites.

Rhian Hughes, Dormouse Project Officer for the North Wales Wildlife Trust said “this is really good news for the North Wales dormice, as well as being able to monitor existing dormouse populations, hopefully discover new populations, it also enables us to improve their habitat and get communities involved in dormouse conservation”.

Jennifer Stewart, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund Wales said: “We are delighted to support the Dormice Forever project and were particularly struck by the opportunities it gives for people to really get involved in the natural heritage around them. It is so important that we learn about and understand these fascinating creatures and make sure that they are protected for the future.”

If you are interested in learning more about dormice or getting involved in the project please email Rhian at rhianhughes@wildlifetrustswales.org or 01352 810469.

Ends

Nodiadau i Olygyddion

Notes to Editors

- **Yr Ymddiriedolaeth Natur www.wildlifetrusts.org**

Ceir 47 Ymddiriedolaeth Natur ar hyd a lled y DU, Ynysoedd Manaw ac Alderney. Rydym yn gweithio dros amgylchedd sy'n cynnig cyfoeth o fywyd gwylt i bawb. Gyda 720,000 aelod, y ni yw'r sefydliad gwirfoddol mwyaf yn y DU sy'n ymroddedig i gadwraeth yr amrywiaeth llawn o gynefinoedd a rhywogaethau yn y DU, boed yng nghefn gwlad, y ddinas neu'r môr. Mae 134,000 o'n haelodau'n perthyn i'r adran lau, sef y Clwb Gwyllo. Rydym yn rheoli 2,200 o warchodfeydd natur sydd yn ymestyn dros fwy nag 80,000 hectar; rydym yn sefyll dros natur; rydym yn ysbrydoli pobl ynghylch y byd naturiol ac rydym yn meithrin byw cynaliadwy.

- **The Wildlife Trusts www.wildlifetrusts.org**

There are 47 local Wildlife Trusts across the whole of the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney. We are working for an environment rich in wildlife for everyone. With 720,000 members, we are the largest UK voluntary organisation dedicated to conserving the full range of the UK's habitats and species, whether they be in the countryside, in cities or at sea. 134,000 of our members belong to our junior branch,

Wildlife Watch. We manage 2,200 nature reserves covering more than 80,000 hectares; we stand up for wildlife; we inspire people about the natural world and we foster sustainable living.

- **Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Gogledd Cymru** www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk
Ein gweledigaeth yw amgylchedd cyfoethocach o ran byd natur i bawb. Y ni yw'r brif elusen yng ngogledd Cymru sy'n gwbl ymroddedig i gadwraeth pob cynefin a phob rhywogaeth. Gydag aelodaeth o fwy na 5,000 o bobl, rydym yn ymgyrchu dros amddiffyn bywyd gwylt a buddsoddi yn y dyfodol drwy helpu pobl o bob oedran i werthfawrogi a deall bywyd gwylt yn well. Rydym yn edrych ar ôl 33 o warchodfeydd natur sy'n cynnwys dros 700 hectar. Am ragor o wybodaeth ynghylch Ymddiriedolaeth Natur Gogledd Cymru ffoniwch 01248 351541 neu e-bostiwch nwwt@wildlifetrustswales.org.
- **North Wales Wildlife Trust** www.northwaleswildlifetrust.org.uk
Our vision is 'an environment richer in wildlife for everyone'. We are the leading charity in North Wales dedicated exclusively to conserving all our habitats and species, with a membership of more than 5,000 people We campaign for the protection of wildlife and invest in the future by helping people of all ages to gain a greater appreciation and understanding of wildlife. We care for 33 nature reserves spanning over 700 hectares. For further information about North Wales Wildlife Trust please phone 01248 351541 or e-mail nwwt@wildlifetrustswales.org

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported more than 26,000 projects allocating over £4billion across the UK, including more than 1,700 projects totalling over £192 million in Wales. To find out more, please visit www.hlf.org.uk

This project is also funded by Peoples Trust for Endangered Species, Countryside Council for Wales and Chester Zoo.