

# Shropshire Hills NL Conservation Fund 2023-24

## Abdon District Dormouse Project Report

**Applicant:** Abdon District Community Wildlife Group

**Project Reference:** CF2324/10



## Project Overview:

The Abdon District Dormouse project was developed to build a community led and delivered project, to help gain a better understanding of the local population of dormice we have present, the condition and connectivity of their habitat and to educate and raise awareness of this endangered species.

The project had four main aspects:

1. **Surveying/Monitoring aspect**
2. **Habitat connection/provision**
3. **Education**
4. **Identifying opportunities**

## Project Outcomes:

### Surveys:

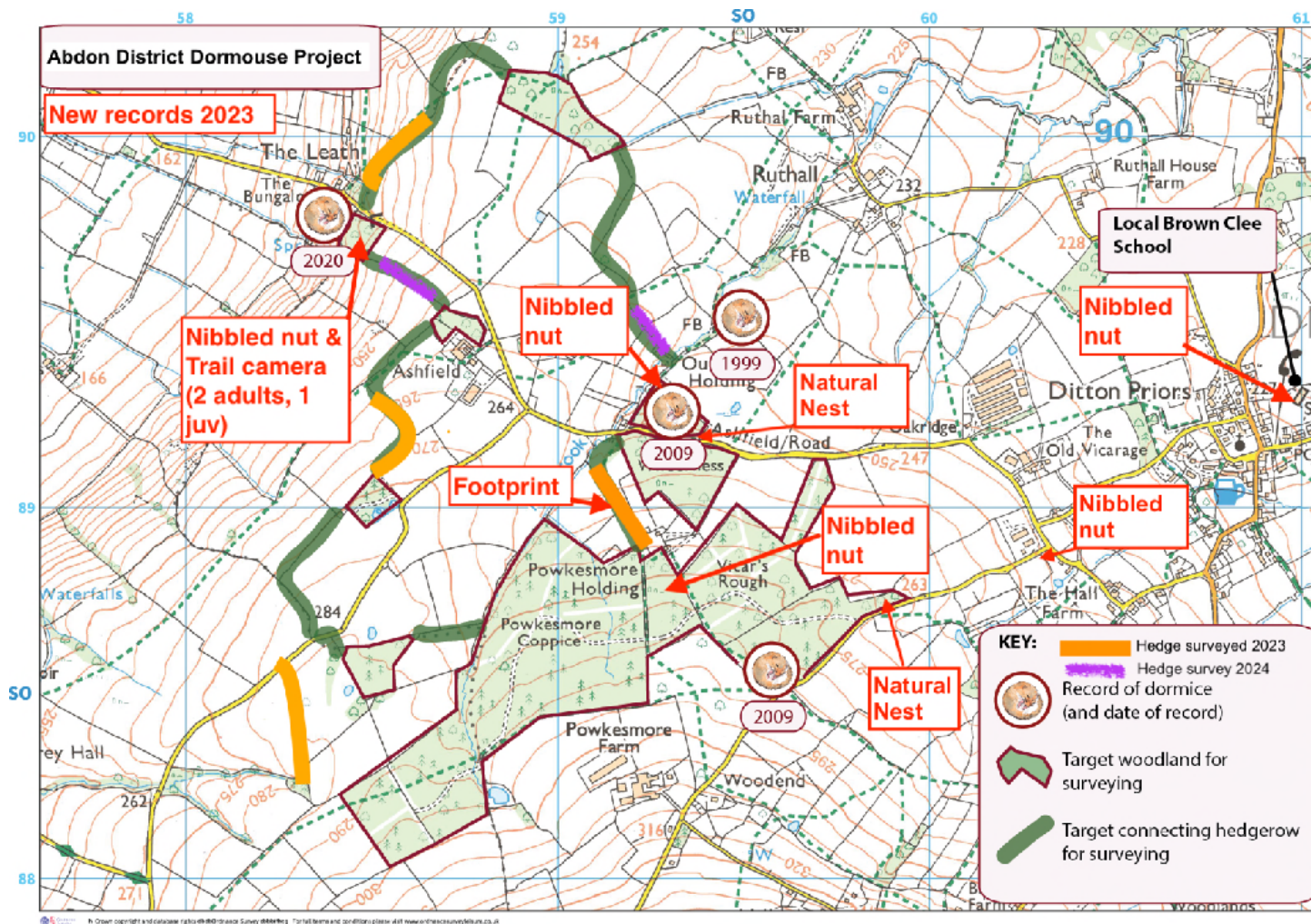
- **4** hedges were surveyed (1200m) using footprint tracking tunnels and carrying out the 'Great British Hedgerow Survey' - **evidence of dormice using one section** of hedge via footprints, important evidence of lack of dormouse use in the other 3.
- The erection of **50 nest boxes** across **8 woodlands** as the start of our long-term monitoring programme in the area
- Nibbled nut hunts undertaken in **2 woodlands and local hedgerows (dormouse nibbled nuts found in both woodland and hedgerow)**
- Trail camera tracking station deployed in **2 woodlands (video of multiple dormice, including juveniles, collected from 1)**
- **3 natural nests** found across 3 locations

These surveys have allowed us to build a much clearer picture of the population of dormice in the project area, and a better knowledge of the condition of their habitats (see map below)

With our newly trained pool of local volunteers (15 +) and survey equipment (nest boxes, footprint tunnels, trail cameras) we have the tools to continue to increase our understanding of the dormice population in across the District.

Twelve landowners gave permission or actively engaged with the surveying, which has opened up the opportunity to support targeted habitat works in the area in the future to improve habitat quality and connectivity for dormice.

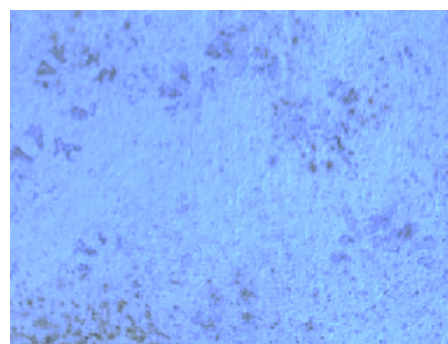




Juvenile dormouse caught on trail camera, evidence of breeding population



Distinctive dormouse nibbled nut found in woodland with no historic records



Distinctive 'starburst' dormouse footprints found in newly surveyed hedge



Natural dormouse nest found in hedge in new location

**Education:** Six education/training sessions were delivered as part of this project:

- Introduction of Dormice and surveying (Abdon Village Hall) – 10 trained
- Trail camera and bait station surveying (Clee St Margaret Village Hall) - 14 trained
- Nibbled nut identification (Powkesmore Holding) – 12 attendees
- Forest School Dormouse session (Brown Clee School) – 2 classes
- Dormice & their habitats (Clee View Farmer Cluster AGM –Clee St Margaret village hall) – 40 attendees
- Coppice management (Karl's Wood) – 7 attendees

### **Looking forward:**

- The group wish to continue survey efforts in the area this coming survey season. Nest box checks will begin shortly (May 24) and Footprint tunnels and Trail cameras will be deployed into previously un-surveyed hedges/woodlands in the area.
- Discussions with two landowners are in progress to make applications to the Farming in Protected Landscape Project, to help improve the hedgerow health and connectivity of one of the hedges that scored poorly on the hedge survey and returned no evidence of dormouse use using the footprint tunnels, and one woodland where evidence of dormouse was found.
- Survey kit is being lent outside of the initial project area around the Brown Clee for wildlife community group members to start surveying for dormice in the wider landscape.

### **Thanks:**

We would like to thank greatly the funding contribution of the Shropshire Hill National Landscape Conservation Fund, the People's Trust for Endangered Species for their kind provision of some equipment and expert guidance, and the local landowners who gave permission for surveys to be undertaken across their land. Special thanks goes to all the local people whom have been involved in the undertaking of this project and the important information it has gathered.

**Lucy Grove, Project Co-ordinator, April 2024**



people's  
trust for  
endangered  
species

