



Common or Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*

Body Length 6-9cm Tail Length 5.5-8cm Weight 15-30g Lifespan Up to 5 years

With its golden-brown coat, large beady eyes and rounded ears the Hazel Dormouse is arguably one of nature's 'cutest' of mammals. The adults weigh about 20g in summer, but by gorging themselves on berries, fruits and nuts prior to hibernation they are able to increase their weight up to 35g. Animals that successfully make it through the winter to the following spring have often lost up to half of their body weight. They build a nest often in a tangle of underground roots in which to hibernate leaving them vulnerable to ground disturbance and flooding during the winter.

By allowing its body temperature to drop to match that of its surroundings, slowing its breathing and reducing its heart rate by about 90% and relying on its body fat reserves the dormouse spends its winter in this condition until the ambient temperature rises again in spring.

With its shy and retiring nature they are extremely difficult to observe in the wild. Proof of their presence is usually by finding the remains of nibbled hazelnuts, Dormice make round holes with chisel-like tooth marks on the outer rim and leaving a smooth inner surface reminiscent of a miniature clog

Dormice are nocturnal, alternating bursts of activity with periods of rest. They are associated with ancient deciduous woodland, thick overgrown hedgerows and Hazel coppice. A closed canopy is vital as they are strictly arboreal, will not willingly come to the ground to move from tree to tree. The flowers and pollen of

Pedunculate Oak and the associated insects are a particularly important source of food in spring. Bramble provides pollen in the spring and berries in the autumn.

The females give birth in late July or August to 3-7 blind and naked young. The young remain with their mother in her nest for about 2 months.





Snowdrop *Galanthus nivalis*

A welcome sign that winter is coming to an end and spring is not very far away!

Appreciated by bees for the early source of food that the snowdrop provides, as the bees forage they collect pollen on their bodies and transfer this to other flowers

A protective sheath covers the flowering stem allowing it to push through the snow - hence a common name of 'snow-piercer'.

Attribution: **Andreas Eichler**

Work Parties for February, March & April 2016

| Date | Meeting Point |
|------------------------|--|
| Sunday 7th February | Old Orchard. Kendal Gardens |
| Thursday 18th February | The Old Hedgerow. Footpath between Coniston Road & Down Grange, behind 77-155 Coniston Road. |
| Sunday 28th February | Down Grange Meadow. Homestead Road interpretation board |
| Thursday 10th March | Old Orchard. Kendal Gardens |
| Sunday 20th March | The Old Hedgerow. As above |
| Thursday 7th April | Down Grange Meadow. As above |
| Sunday 17th April | Old Orchard. Kendal Gardens |

Times: - Sundays 10:00 - 12:00. Thursdays 14:00 – 16:00.

If you would like to join us for the first time please ring Marion on 470171.

Please bring work gloves, tools are provided.

Contact us:- e-mail on kempshott-serve@tiscali.co.uk or via the website www.kempshotconservationgroup.org.uk. For anything that requires urgent action, such as fallen trees on any of our sites please contact Marion Wolstencroft on 470171