

Dormouse 'Nutters' Wanted!

Come and join the Carmarthenshire Great Nut Hunt!

The Carmarthenshire Biodiversity Partnership needs people to help them out with a 'nutty' survey in the county this autumn. We want to find out as much as possible about the rare and secretive dormouse and need lots of people to help us search for signs of one of Carmarthenshire's most special mammals.

Like the dormouse immortalised in *Alice in Wonderland*, dormice spend a lot of time asleep - over three-quarters of their lifetime! - and are rarely seen (though unlike Alice's dormouse they aren't found in teapots!). To track down where they are found it is best to look for signs of their favourite food - hazelnuts. Dormice leave very distinctive gnaw marks on the shells, distinctive from other mice or voles. All you need to do is look for the nibbled nuts in a hazel-rich wood or hedgerow around where you live (along a public footpath or with public access of course!) and let us know what you find.

There is a handy pack available with a booklet to help you become a nutty detective, and an envelope to return your nuts to the chief 'nutter' in the county who can let you know which species has chewed your nuts.

For a dormouse day out why not join the Great Nut Hunt team of 'Nutters' at the National Botanic Garden Wales on Saturday 18th September 2010. You can follow the nut trail and search for the dormouse's favourite food, join us for a walk to look at where dormice like to live (11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.) and pick up a pack to become a Great Nut Hunt detective.

Biodiversity Officer, Isabel Macho, said 'the dormice may be one of our most elusive mammals but their signs are some of the easiest to identify and this is a survey that everyone can get involved with. We need all the detectives we can get so we can find out as much as possible about where this rare and beautiful animal lives in the county'.

For more information or to request a Great Nut Hunt pack please contact Isabel Macho on 01267224653 or IMacho@carmarthenshire.gov.uk.

For details of the location and admission prices of the National Botanic Garden of Wales, visit www.gardenofwales.org.uk