

LAND AT HURSTWOOD FARM, HAYWARDS HEATH

DORMOUSE TECHNICAL NOTE – 3rd OCTOBER 2025

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report provides the results of the dormouse presence/absence surveys carried out on a parcel of land known as Land at Hurstwood Farm, Haywards Heath (OS grid reference: TQ 34095 22447) hereafter referred to as 'the Application Site'.
- 1.2. The Application Site is located to the south-east of the town of Haywards Heath, West Sussex. The Application Site lies on either side of Hurstwood Lane and falls under both the Mid Sussex District and Lewes District.
- 1.3. The Application Site occupies an area of approximately 32.4 hectares (ha) and comprises predominantly other neutral grassland, modified grassland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, other broadleaved woodland, other woodland, mixed scrub and various networks of native hedgerows.
- 1.4. The Application Site was previously subject to dormouse surveys in 2014 by ECOSA. The surveys concluded the absence of hazel dormice along with the habitats on site being assessed as sub-optimal, with a lack of woodland extent and connectivity.
- 1.5. It was concluded that the habitats were sufficiently similar to the 2014 surveys in 2016 and 2021, from update walkover surveys by Ecological Planning & Research Ltd (EPR) and RSK Biocensus.
- 1.6. Given the time that has elapsed since the previous surveys were undertaken, and due to new records of dormice in the local area, it was recommended that updated dormouse presence/absence surveys be carried out within the Application Site. These update surveys were carried out between July and September 2025 by Benjamin Prego, Consultant Ecologist at ACD Environmental Ltd.
- 1.7. Benjamin has several years' experience carrying out a wide range of surveys including UK Habitat Classification Surveys and Phase 2 surveys for protected species and is highly competent undertaking Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessments. Benjamin is a Qualifying Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and holds a Natural England Class Licence for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*.

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2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The Application Site was subject to dormouse presence/absence surveys. The purpose of this survey is to search for any evidence of dormice. These surveys were carried out in accordance with Natural England survey guidelines¹.
- 2.2. A total of 52 dormouse survey tubes were installed throughout the Application Site on 1st July 2025, at distances of 15-20m apart in areas of suitable habitat such as hedgerows and scrub. The approximate locations of the tubes are shown in **Appendix 1**.
- 2.3. Survey tubes are made from stiff, double-walled black plastic sheets or similar material, 25cm long with a 5cm x 5cm cross-section. A thin plywood tray is inserted into the tube with a short projection at one end and an end block at the other which seals the tube. The tubes are then tied in a suitable location along a sturdy horizontal branch in vegetation, positioned between 0.5m to 3m above ground level. Dormice are known to readily use these tubes to build their nests.
- 2.4. Nest tubes were checked for the presence of hazel dormice, nests or feeding remains on one visit per month from July to September 2025.
- 2.5. A nut search was also conducted throughout the course of the dormouse surveys within the Application Site. This involved collecting approximately 100 opened hazel nuts across the site and inspecting them to determine which species opened them.

Limitations

- 2.6. There were no limitations associated with the dormouse surveys.

¹ Natural England (2025). *Hazel or common dormice: surveys and mitigation for development projects* [online]. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/hazel-or-common-dormice-surveys-and-mitigation-for-development-projects>

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3. RESULTS

3.1. The results of the hazel dormouse surveys are shown below in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Hazel dormouse survey results

Date of Survey	Hazel Dormouse Found	Other Evidence/Species Found	Location
29 th July 2025	None	None	-
27 th August 2025	None	None	-
26 th September 2025	None	Possible wood mouse nest Food/nut stores	Tube 18 – E of Site Tubes 26 & 46 – E/NE of Site

3.2. No hazel dormice, or evidence of dormice, was recorded within the nest tubes distributed throughout the Application Site during the surveys. Additionally, no hazel nuts were found within the Application Site that had been opened by dormice.

3.3. A small pile of loose leaves was identified in a tube within the hedgerow along the eastern boundary of the western parcel of the Application Site. The lack of structure and composition of the leaves indicates that this was likely an old wood mouse *Apodemus sylvaticus* or yellow-necked mouse *Apodemus flavicollis* nest. Additionally, two food/nut stores were identified in the nest tubes which are also likely to be attributable to wood mouse or yellow-necked mouse. Photographs of these findings can be found in **Appendix 2**.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1. Updated dormouse presence/absence surveys were carried out on within the Application Site between July and September 2025.
- 4.2. No hazel dormice, or evidence of their presence, was identified during the surveys.
- 4.3. Therefore, it was concluded that dormice are **likely absent** from the Application Site. However, given the confirmed presence of dormice in the surrounding area, it is recommended that any clearance of scrub or hedgerow habitat on-site should be carried out sensitively in a two-phased approach.
- 4.4. The vegetation will first be cut to 300mm during the winter months when dormice are hibernating. The vegetation will then be left and then cut to ground-level in April/May once dormice have emerged from hibernation. This will ensure that no dormice are harmed during the clearance works.
- 4.5. If any dormice are found during the clearance works, then all works must cease immediately, and an ecologist should be contacted to provide advice on how to proceed.

Benjamin Prego

ACD Environmental

3rd October 2025

APPENDIX 1: DORMOUSE SURVEY RESULTS



APPENDIX 2: FOOD/NUT STORES

	
Photograph 1: Evidence of a suspected old wood mouse nest	Photograph 2: Evidence of wood mouse foraging/a nut store.

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