



Harvest mice *Micromys minutus* are the smallest of our British rodents, with a weight of around 6g. They have a semi-prehensile tail, which they use to assist climbing in vegetation, and are the only species of mouse in the UK to build a woven nest above ground. In the summer months they build spherical nests, sometimes as small as 5cm across, in rough grass and reed beds 10-100cm above ground depending on the habitat. During the winter months they adopt a more terrestrial lifestyle when nests are built on the ground. They can have up to three litters in a year, with an average of four to five young per litter.

Herefordshire is at the north western limits of its distribution in the UK. Its national status is unknown but believed to be in decline. Known sites which were re-surveyed between 1970-1975 and 1996-1997 showed a decline of 71% (Sargent et al 1997). The status in Herefordshire is very uncertain due to lack of records and survey effort.

The harvest mouse has no specific legislative protection but is listed as a species of principle importance under the NERC Act (2006) and was added to the UK BAP in 2007.

Threats

- Fragmentation and loss of habitat
- Agricultural intensification
- Inappropriate management and loss of field margins
- Inappropriate management of roadside verges
- Reduction in number of field margins due to increased field size
- Loss of food plants from herbicide use
- Loss of invertebrate food source due to insecticide use
- Predation by domestic cat

Current Action

- PTES funded Moulton College sniffer dog project
- No other current actions known:
 - Mammal Society national survey ended in 2013
 - HMG survey ended 2013

	Objective	Action
A	Re-survey known populations	1
B	Locate and map existing populations	1,2,4
C	Increase awareness of habitat requirements and full range of habitats used	1,3
D	Maintain suitable range of habitats within the county	3

	Actions	Target
1	Run training sessions in harvest mouse ecology and survey techniques (HMG)	2020
2	Map distribution and publish in mammal atlas	2020
3	Produce information on species for land owners	2020
4	Run owl pellet analysis workshops to identify previously unknown populations	2020
5	Run training sessions in harvest mouse ecology and survey techniques	2020

Lead Partner	HMG
Key Partners	HMG, HWT, PTES