

ANIMAL NEWS



SHH! DORMOUSE SLEEPING

National Trust



WINTER is here, which means it's time for tiny hazel dormice to prepare for their long winter sleep.

The National Trust is asking members of the British public to help these tiny animals find a suitable place for their slumber. Hazel dormice can usually be found in rural, woodland areas. If you live close to a woodland you can help dormice this winter by allowing brambles to grow, ivy to cover log piles and by reporting any sightings of the tiny creatures.

In the UK, the hazel dormouse is now extinct in 17 counties and numbers have fallen by around a third since 2000.

Experts believe habitat loss is the main reason that the species is struggling for survival. George Holmes, lead ranger at the National Trust, said: "Sadly, they're so rare now that most people will never see one in their lifetime."

If you're lucky enough to spot a hazel dormouse, you can report it to the People's Trust for Endangered Species at <https://surveydata.ptes.org/dormouse-database>.

CAUGHT ON CAMERA



SHE/GWC/Leibniz-IZW/NCNP

A species of mammal that has been "lost" for 30 years has been rediscovered in Vietnam.

The silver-backed chevrotain, a small, hoofed mammal, was caught on video by a camera trap. Scientists feared the animal had become extinct after finding no evidence of the species for decades.

Now, footage of the animal in the wild has boosted hopes that the species can still be saved. Very little is known about the animals, which have only been spotted a handful of times throughout history. New conservation efforts are being planned for the species in a bid to not only protect them but to learn more about them too.

The full report is published in the journal *Nature Ecology & Evolution*.



Yingboon Chongsomchai, ZSL

SAVED!

THIS rare baby Sunda pangolin is taking his first steps back into the wild after being rescued from illegal wildlife traffickers in Thailand.

The young animal was being kept in cramped, dark conditions by the poachers who had snatched him. He was saved by local park rangers and staff from ZSL, who estimate that he is just under a year old.

He weighed just 1kg when he was rescued, but after a brief period of monitoring he was declared fit and healthy for release. A specialist team transported the pangolin to a remote part of the forest, far away from any poacher hotspots.

Pangolins are the most illegally trafficked mammals in the world. It is said that around 300 pangolins are poached from the wild every day and that all eight species of pangolin are under threat of extinction. A single pangolin can be worth more than three months' wages for a villager from a remote Thai community.

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GLOSSARY

conservation – Protecting and preserving wildlife and the environment

county – Areas within the UK

extinct – No longer in existence

habitat – The environment that an animal lives in

handful – A few/ not many/ between 1 and 5

illegal – Against the law

mammals – Animals that give birth to their young

poacher – Person who takes animals illegally

traffickers – People who transport and trade animals illegally

■ Look at all three articles.

1. Fill in the missing numbers

The silver-backed chevrotain was rediscovered after _____ years.

The baby pangolin weighed just _____ kilogram when it was rescued.

The hazel dormouse is extinct in _____ counties.

2. Match the animal to the country it is in, in the reports.

●Dormouse

●Thailand

●Silver-backed chevrotain

●Vietnam

●Pangolin

●United Kingdom

3. What does the word extinct mean?

■ Look at the article 'Shh! Dormouse sleeping'.

4. What word does the journalist use that means sleep?

5. Identify three things you could do to help dormice.

6. The article suggests 'loss of habitat' has caused the decline in dormouse numbers. What do you think could be the reason for 'loss of habitat'?

■ Look at the article 'Caught on camera'.

7. How was the photograph taken?

8. Why do scientists know so little about the silver-backed chevrotain?

■ Look at the article 'Saved!'

9. Why do you think people are poaching pangolins?

■ Consider all the articles.

10. Do you think it is important to protect endangered animals? Explain why/why not.