

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



SIF/GWE/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, hooved 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

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.

ANIMAL NEWS



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.

ANIMAL NEWS



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.

TEACHER ANSWERS

AIM OF THE NEWS COMPREHENSIONS: News reports are unique non-fiction texts. Being real, they naturally engage students, and with the range of topics that are covered, help to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of the wider world outside the classroom. The reports are ideal for short, focused comprehension or discussion activities. Along with the opportunity to find fascinating facts and appreciate the opinions of those involved, there is plenty to be inferred and deduced to understand in more depth what is being reported. Like authors, journalists play with language, so news 'stories' are rich nuggets of text to investigate and provide the opportunity for literacy programmes.

TEACHER ANSWER GUIDE: The teacher answers are intended to provide a quick reference guide. Suggestions are given for the 'Expected response' or starting point that pupils could give. The 'Development' then gives more in-depth ideas that students can work towards as they develop their reading comprehension skills.

For a list of the reading skills used, please email schools@firstnews.co.uk.

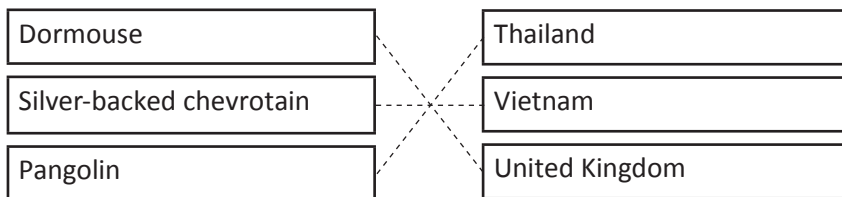
■ Look at all three articles.**1. Fill in the missing numbers**

READING SKILL – Find and explain information (NC 2a)

- The silver-backed chevrotain was rediscovered after **30** years.
- The baby pangolin weighed just **one** kilogram when it was rescued.
- The hazel dormouse is extinct in **17** counties.

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

READING SKILL – Find and explain information (NC 2a)

**3. What does the word extinct mean?**

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories (NC 6, 7 & 8)

Starting point

- Extinct means that it doesn't exist any more.

Developed response

- Extinct means that something (for example an animal) doesn't exist any more. There are no more of a particular type of creature in existence, they have all died out.

■ Look at the article 'Shh! Dormouse sleeping'.**4. What word does the journalist use that means sleep?**

READING SKILL – Find and explain information (NC 2a)

Answer: slumber

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

READING SKILL – Summarise information (NC2e)

Answer:

- Allow brambles to grow in woodlands and hedges
- Let ivy grow over log piles
- Report any sightings of hazel 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’?

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories (NC 6, 7 & 8)

Starting point

- There aren’t as many suitable habitats for the dormice to sleep in.

Developed response

- The hazel dormice can’t find anywhere suitable to sleep for the winter because there are fewer suitable places around. This could be due to humans destroying the habitats through their activity or development and building.

■ **Look at the article ‘Caught on camera’**

7. How was the photograph taken?

READING SKILL – Find and explain information (NC 2a)

Starting point

- A video was taken.

Developed response

- Video footage was taken by a camera trap. A camera trap is where a camera is set up and is automatically triggered when the animals come near.

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

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories (NC 6, 7 & 8)

Starting point

- Scientists know so little about the animal because the silver-backed chevrotain has only been seen a few times, ever!

Developed response

- Scientists know so little about the silver-backed chevrotain because the animal has only been seen a few times in history. It has also been a very long time since one was last seen. This could be to do with the way the animal lives, its speed or temperament, or perhaps the low numbers of the creatures in existence.

■ **Look at the article ‘Saved!’**

9. Why do you think people are poaching pangolins?

READING SKILL – Summarise information (NC2e)

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories (NC 6, 7 & 8)

Starting point

- I think people are poaching pangolins because they are worth a lot of money.

Developed response

- I think people are poaching pangolins because they are so valuable and locals can earn three months' wages quickly and easily. They may really need the money to support their families and survive. Lack of education and understanding about the endangered animals may also be a factor.

■ **Consider all the articles**

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

READING SKILL – Develop personal ideas from reading news stories (NC 6, 7 & 8)

Example response

- Yes, I think it is important to protect endangered animals because if we don’t then they may become extinct and lost forever! I don’t believe it is fair that these animals are in danger of becoming extinct because of human behaviour. Also this has an impact on us, too, as each living thing affects the environment around it and the food chain.