**An assessment of the extinction risk for Britain’s terrestrial mammals**

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species is widely accepted as an effective method of evaluating the conservation status of plant and animal species at global and regional scales. This is the first assessment of Britain’s terrestrial mammals using the [IUCN Red List criteria](http://cmsdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/keydocuments/summary_sheet_en_web.pdf) at a [regional level.](http://cmsdocs.s3.amazonaws.com/keydocuments/Reg_Guidelines_en_web%2Bcover%2Bbackcover.pdf)

The Great Britain Red List for Mammals has been produced alongside [A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals (2018)](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5636785878597632) to assess the status of mammals throughout Great Britain. It is intended that this Red List is used alongside this publication, which contains the detailed information used to carry out the assessments. The Red List categories of a small number of species differ between this Red List and the Review; this is because some data have been updated and some approaches to assessment have changed since the publication of the Review. This applies to the following species: lesser white-toothed shrew; Eurasian beaver; Orkney vole; harvest mouse; house mouse; hazel dormouse; wildcat; European wolf; and wild boar. The assessments presented here supersede all other published assessments for these species.

Separate country-level Red List assessments have also been conducted for England, Scotland and Wales. Assessments were also made for the Orkney vole, which is a naturalised species, because it is officially recognised as an island endemic (it is suspected to have been introduced around 5,000 years ago); and for the lesser white-toothed shrew because of uncertainty about whether it is a naturalised or native species.

At a Great Britain-level, at total of 59 species were assessed, with 26 species assessed as Least Concern (meaning that the risk of extinction in the near future is low). Eleven native species, plus the Orkney vole, were classified under a Threatened category (meaning that they face a high risk of extinction). Five native species, plus the lesser white-toothed shrew, were classified as Near Threatened (meaning that they were close to qualifying as Threatened, or are likely to qualify in the near future). Insufficient evidence was available to allow assessment of the other four native species and these were recorded as Data Deficient (DD).

The European wolf has been classified as regionally extinct as it’s been lost from GB since 1500. Whilst, additional species are known to have been lost, the timing of loss pre-dates the recommended IUCN cut-off date.

**Summary of IUCN Status for All Taxa in this Review**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **IUCN Status (GB)** | **No. of Taxa** | **% of all Taxa in this Review** |
| Least Concern | 26 | 44.07 |
| Data Deficient | 4 | 6.78 |
| Near Threatened | 5 | 8.47 |
| Vulnerable | 5 | 8.47 |
| Endangered | 4 | 6.78 |
| Critically Endangered | 2 | 3.4 |
| Regionally Extinct | 1 | 1.69 |
| Not Applicable | 12 | 20.34 |
| Total | 59 | 100 |

Species are considered naturalised if they were introduced in or before the 12th century: in all cases the timing of the introduction was actually substantially earlier than this point, but post-dated the formation of the English Channel. If they have been present in Great Britain since before the 12th century and their presence was not dependent on the actions of humans, then species are considered native. All species that have been introduced in more recent times are considered non-native.

As part of the assessment process it was determined whether any of these species (and their classification) could be affected by the movement of species throughout the region, essentially ‘rescuing’ a population at a country-level. Details are provided within the Red List itself, but it was not considered likely that any species of mammal within Great Britain could experience the immigration of propagules at a *significant* level (i.e. one which could affect the extinction risk of a regional population and decrease or remove it from a Red List threat category) due to their ecology (e.g. movement of individuals, rather than large groups as for some other taxon groups; inability to disperse long distances) and due to barriers to dispersal (e.g. habitat, infrastructure).

This assessment has been produced by The Mammal Society, in collaboration with Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage.

Mathews F, and Harrower C. (2020). IUCN – compliant Red List for Britain’s Terrestrial Mammals. Assessment by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough ISBN 978-1-78354-734-0