

Nest sites used for daytime rest in urban Garden Dormice (*Eliomys quercinus*) in Wiesbaden, Germany

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Abstract

Garden Dormouse (*Eliomys quercinus*) populations have declined by 50% throughout Europe over the last 30 years. They are increasingly found in German cities, but little is known about their urban lifestyle. A radiotelemetry study was performed in the city of Wiesbaden, to investigate the daily resting habits of Garden Dormice. The location and structure of nest sites used for daytime rest (DNS) of five individuals (one female, four males) were recorded each to every second day during the months of May to July 2021. The animals were located 90 times in total in a DNS, and two to six different DNS per animal were identified. DNS were found in hedges, trees, bird nests, facade greening, nest boxes, and inside buildings. Garden Dormice in this study were often located in DNS that provide consistent temperatures (false floors, walls) and a high degree of protection from predators. DNS with visual cover and possible food supply (facade greening, hedges) were also often used. The frequency with which DNS were changed varied greatly depending on the individual. The dormice in this study showed adaptations to urban living, as each animal used at least one anthropogenic structure as DNS. Recommended conservation measures for Garden Dormice in urban areas, based on this study, include raising public awareness and protection and promotion of facade greening (climbing plants on walls and fences), hedges and old buildings. Further research on the life of Garden Dormice in urban areas is needed.

Keywords

In Search of the Garden Dormouse, radio tracking, urban environment

Presenting author

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Presented at

Poster presentation at the 11th International Dormice Conference (May 9-13, 2022)

Funding program

This project is/was funded by the German Federal Agency for Nature Conservation with resources from the German Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection.

Conflicts of interest