

# A challenging decade for Britain's mammals

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Whilst brown hare numbers have risen many other mammal species have declined. Photo: Robin Hamilton

(PhysOrg.com) -- This year's [State of Britain's Mammals](#) report shows that over the last decade some of our most endangered mammal species have bounced back but that many others continue to decline.

The report is produced annually in collaboration with Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit (WildCRU) and this year focuses on how our [mammal species](#) have fared over the past ten years – looking in particular at whether the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets set for them have been met, as well as issues surrounding bovine tuberculosis and habitat loss.

The researchers found that whilst four of the original terrestrial mammals BAP- listed in the mid 1990s - otters, water voles, pipistrelles

and greater horseshoe bats - have achieved or, in some cases, exceeded their targets; some species have been added to the list and are still declining, including some of the most endangered species: red squirrels, Scottish wildcats, mountain hares, harvest mice, hazel dormice, and, in rural areas, hedgehogs.

‘Over the last decade, through the monitoring efforts of many, we have gathered evidence of population trends for many of our mammal species in response to the changing health of the environment they depend upon,’ said report author Professor David Macdonald, Director of Oxford University’s WildCRU. ‘This scientific evidence on species and their habitats is essential for prioritising conservation actions at landscape level and is also an essential tool for measuring the success of future conservation action.’

Jill Nelson, CEO of the People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES), which raised and awarded £1m on the conservation of mammals over the last ten years, said: ‘Whilst we are celebrating the £1million that has benefited endangered British mammals such as the hazel dormouse and water vole, we cannot be complacent about the ongoing threats to our wildlife. British mammals and their natural surroundings face new and different threats over the years, from climate change to increased urbanisation to conflict with non-native species.’

‘At PTES, we hope to bring about positive change for our threatened wildlife and natural environment, but this year’s retrospective edition of the State of Britain’s [Mammals](#) highlights that there is still more that we can do in the future to help.’

Provided by Oxford University

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